

Evaluation of a didactic innovation unit on the 17th century through historical thinking and visual resources

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Abstract

This article has analyzed the implementation of a didactic unit of innovation based on the 17th century in a third year of ESO during the second period of practices of the master's degree in Teacher Training at the University of Murcia. To do this, a theoretical framework based on historical thinking and the strategies and teaching resources used is provided. Next, a brief description of the didactic unit is made, as well as the method used to carry out the research, exposing its objectives, the context and the information collection instruments, which basically consist of two questionnaires passed before and after implementation of the training unit. Finally, the results of these questionnaires have been presented and analyzed based on the main objectives of the work, and finally the educational implications that the results and conclusions obtained have been discussed. The results and conclusions have been positive.

Keywords: didactic unit, XVII century, innovation, historical thinking, questionnaire

Evaluación de una unidad didáctica de innovación sobre el siglo XVII a través de pensamiento histórico y recursos visuales

Resumen

Este artículo ha analizado la implementación de una unidad didáctica de innovación basada en el siglo XVII en un curso de tercero de ESO durante el segundo periodo de prácticas del Máster de Formación del Profesorado de la Universidad de Murcia. Para ello, se dispone un marco teórico basado en el pensamiento histórico y las estrategias y los recursos didácticos utilizados. Seguidamente, se hace una breve descripción de la unidad didáctica, así como el método utilizado para llevar a cabo la investigación exponiendo sus objetivos, el contexto y los instrumentos de recogida de información, que básicamente consisten en dos cuestionarios pasados antes y después de la implementación de la unidad formativa. Por último, los resultados de estos cuestionarios han sido expuestos y analizados en base a los objetivos principales del trabajo, y finalmente se comentan las implicaciones educativas que pueden tener los resultados y las conclusiones obtenidas. Los resultados y las conclusiones han sido positivos.

Palabras clave: unidad didáctica, siglo XVII, innovación, pensamiento histórico, cuestionario

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Introduction

The main objective of this article is to analyze the changes produced in students, together with the analysis of learning outcomes, after the implementation of a didactic unit (UD) of innovation in 3rd ESO. For this purpose, an evaluative research approach was used for a DU through a quasi-experimental A-B design using two questionnaires. In the first (pretest), the students' conceptions of the History classes they have received prior to the implementation of the DU were collected. These conceptions have been divided into several blocks: methodology, motivation, satisfaction and applicability and transfer of knowledge. In the second (post-test), the same conceptual parameters are dealt with, but in this case assessing the implementation of the DU. This DU is based on historical competences and on more dynamic strategies and techniques in which student activity plays a greater role, the topic chosen being that of the 17th century and the Habsburgs Minor. The reason for choosing this topic was mainly that it coincided with the part of the curriculum being taught at the time of its implementation in the third year of ESO, with the months of April and May being devoted to this final part of the syllabus. The months of April and May have been devoted to this final part of the syllabus, and my personal interest in the subject has also played a part, as, in my opinion, it is one of the fundamental centuries in the history of Spain and Europe. It should also be pointed out that the model of a DU on the same subject by Miralles (2004) has been of great help in the development of this DU, serving as an inspiration to have a basis on which to implement my own ideas.

The historiographical significance of the subject is another of the reasons for choosing it. This is the so-called Golden Age in Europe and, in particular, in what we know today as Spain, when the foundations of European industry and capitalism were laid. It is also the final stage of the Spanish Empire, together with a series of social revolts and strong rivalries between the nobility and the monarchy; in this sense, English parliamentarism and French absolutism are contrasted with the "señorialización" and the "validos" of Hispanic power, which was very weak in this last stage. The strong tradition of Catholicism established in the previous century with the social culture generated by the cleansing of blood was opposed to rationalism and new currents of thought which, little by little, and especially in the last third of the 16th century, partly renewed Spanish science. However, possibly the greatest contradiction lies in an extraordinary culture and universal influence, with figures such as Cervantes, Quevedo and Velázquez, and a crisis which, although it is true that between 1630-1670 there was a strong depression and a collapse of the constants which until then justified the name of Empire, it is also true that research from the second half of the 20th century onwards has overturned the idea that the sixteenth century in Spain was a century of "defeat, exhaustion and decadence" (Palacio, 1963). In the last third of the 17th century, there was a recovery in all areas, and not only in the territories of the Crown of Aragon, but also in various parts of Castile, as was the case of Murcia (Miralles, 2004).

The evaluated DU was intended to develop historical thinking, which advocates the need to change the approach to teaching history based solely on conceptual/factual content, in order to complement it with second-order content or historical thinking skills. This DU is also based on an organization of the contents around relevant social problems in order to try to transfer them to problematic situations in the environment which are significant for the students' experience. But it is also worth highlighting an interdisciplinary organization, integrating the different disciplinary perspectives in an interrelated manner, thus providing a globalized approach with constant references to other human and social sciences such as Art, Literature,

Politics, Economics, Demography, etc. All this added to a methodology and innovative didactic resources such as the use of historical cinema, works of art, visual presentations, literary sources, etc.

Historical thinking is a didactic approach that aims to teach students to *think historically* by deploying different strategies and skills to analyze and respond to different historical questions and to understand the past in a more complex way. In order to learn about history, we must resort to the use of skills focused on reflection, analysis, argumentation and interpretation of the past. Such skills are not innate; therefore, they must be acquired and developed in the classroom (Chapman, 2011; Gómez, Ortuño and Molina 2014). Seixas and Morton (2013) state that historical thinking is a creative process developed by historians to generate new historical narratives through the analysis of sources from the past. These competences and strategies are related to the search, selection and treatment of historical sources, empathy, multi-causal explanation or historical perspective (Peck and Seixas, 2008; Seixas and Morton, 2013).

The importance of teaching historical thinking in the classroom lies in the fact that historical thinking does not develop naturally, but needs explicit teaching (Wineburg, 2001). A turning point in bringing about this change in the teaching and learning of history in the classroom took place in the UK in 1972 with the History Project 13-16 curriculum project, later renamed the School History Project (SHP). The aim was for pupils to ‘do’ history and not just receive and memorize it, i.e., to develop historical thinking. A new teaching approach emerged as an alternative to the traditional one, which had been based on the acquisition of factual and conceptual content. This new approach to history became known as “New History” (Domínguez, 2015). It was, therefore, a constructivist learning model that emphasized methods and techniques of historical research and working with sources. But also, in changing the cognitive skills required of students, trying to overcome the mere memorization of data and facts. Later, in the 1990s, Concepts of History and Teaching Approaches, 7-14 (Project CHATA), led by Dickinson and Ashby between 1991 and 1996 (Lee, Dickinson and Ashby, 1996), emerged. This project, which continued during the first years of this century, like the two previous ones, was based on the acquisition of second-order concepts by students, in this case aged between seven and fourteen (Domínguez, 2015). A few years later, and almost at the same time, in the USA, through Wineburg (2001), work began with cognitive psychology techniques (experts and novices) to investigate the skills that students should acquire. Nowadays, it has been developed by several Canadian and American authors, mainly (Martínez and Gómez, 2018).

The central core of this theoretical approach is occupied by a small group of methodological concepts which identify the historian’s own ways of working. These concepts are variable and do not form a closed and invariable list, but each author gives greater importance to certain aspects. Some of the historian’s most characteristic ways of working include: the use of sources and evidence, changes and continuities, empathy and historical contextualization, causes and consequences, and narratives and interpretations. These concepts of historical thinking play a transcendental role in the assessment framework of historical competences (Gómez, Rodríguez and Monteagudo, 2017; Santiesteban, 2010).

Firstly, we must refer to *historical relevance*. This concept is used to give significance to events and characters from the past, according to their influence on society. In turn, we must understand why we give relevance to certain events in the present day, becoming aware of whether they are part of the construction of a historical discourse. This category of historical thinking can be worked on in class in combination with sources of different kinds: photographs, texts by historians or passages from the textbook. Through the combination of substantive and second-order content, students will be able to reflect on the historical relevance of a character, making justified judgements or arguments (Gómez, Rodríguez and Monteagudo, 2017; Santiesteban, 2010).

The *use of historical sources* and evidence is of great importance in this field. This category consists of the critical analysis and interpretation of sources of various kinds. By means of textual and iconographic sources and from an appropriate approach, students are encouraged to ask questions of the source, reflecting on their knowledge of the content that appears in them. Through the use of sources, the aim is to ensure that students understand that history is a discipline that is constructed, in which the use and questioning of sources is key (Gómez, Rodríguez and Monteagudo, 2017; Santiesteban, 2010).

Working with the concept of *change and continuity* allows us to establish what varies and what remains the same over time. This category, therefore, helps us to define how the different historical rhythms work and how changes are established; it must be approached from a critical perspective that allows reflection on the process and recession within the different historical events, understanding these concepts and periodization as subjective constructions and assessments made by historians to interpret the past (Gómez, Rodríguez and Monteagudo, 2017; Santiesteban, 2010).

Another concept that is of paramount importance is the use of *causes and consequences*. This category of historical thinking emphasizes the need to study the multiple elements that give rise to a given event and its repercussions. The causes and consequences that are established must be preceded by a clear argumentation, with strong arguments and taking into account that both the causes and the consequences of a historical event can be multiple: multi-causal explanation (Gómez, Rodríguez and Monteagudo, 2017; Santiesteban, 2010).

With regard to the *historical perspective*, this concept is key to understanding and correctly interpreting the past. To this end, the differences existing in cultural, intellectual and even emotional terms between today's society and any other historical moment must be taken into account. This competence should be worked on through contextualization exercises, avoiding the imposition of current views. English textbooks provide a good way of dealing with this concept. Through essays, commentaries and, above all, creative questions, contextualization and, subsequently, reflection on different issues is carried out (Gómez, Rodríguez and Monteagudo, 2017; Santiesteban, 2010).

Finally, we must refer to the *ethical dimension* of history. This category of historical thinking stresses the importance of making ethical judgements about certain people and events of the past. These judgements must be made from a historical perspective, using in turn the rest of the categories of historical thinking, as we must analyze the causes and consequences of certain actions, establish their historical relevance and resort to the use of sources. When making these judgements, it is essential to detach oneself from contemporary standards, paying attention to the historical, social, cultural and economic context in which the events took place. Presentism must be rejected. This category of thinking should be worked on in the classroom through the use of sources, dealing with topics that may be controversial and presenting students with different points of view (Gómez, Rodríguez and Monteagudo, 2017; Santiesteban, 2010).

Understanding history involves understanding these categories and processes of historical thought. The assessment model for Geography and History should encourage students to reflect on historical content. It is necessary to establish a cognitive model for learning history in order to correctly assess historical knowledge (Carretero and López, 2009; Carretero and Van Alphen, 2014). This cognitive model that we are going to develop must have appropriate techniques and instruments for assessing first- and second-order historical content and skills (Domínguez, 2015). This requires the collaboration of various social and human disciplines such as history, art, geography and literature.

Historical thinking has various options for assessment. From the more traditional assessment method (examination), some authors propose introducing weighted multiple-choice questions. The answers to these exercises should be related to the interpretation of sources, so that the interpretation of the past can be assessed through the use of evidence. Another useful tool, for example, is the use of tasks in which students are required to produce historical narratives and interpretations, so that the teacher can assess historical thinking and argumentation skills in this area (Chapman, 2011).

This UD is elaborated following a methodological option based on three main threads: primary sources (historical, iconographic and literary); historiographical currents dealing with the history of women, childhood, culture and mentalities; and historical cinema. As will be seen in the assessment system, students must learn to look for *historical sources*, collect them, identify them, classify them, analyse them, criticise them and evaluate them (Prats, 1999), and it is also convenient that there are relations between historiography and the history taught, especially when important changes are taking place in historical research and in the way history is written, some of which can be transferred to the teaching of history (Prats, 2001).

With regard to the use of primary sources, we can highlight the use of historical sources as selected texts in which text commentary activities have been carried out in class with the teaching staff following the

scheme set out in the methodology of the UD. This is an interactive activity in which everyone participates, as the teaching staff ask questions to each of the pupils to help them understand the meaning of each text, its context and its intentionality. All this so that in the future they can carry out the activity autonomously, being now an introductory activity, since the students have never been confronted with a similar didactic activity, as can be seen in the results that will be discussed later (González, 2021).

Literary sources are essential for historical knowledge, as they provide essential data on the history of mentalities, ideas, beliefs, everyday life, women's roles, language and vocabulary, etc., which are difficult to find in other sources (Gomariz and Miralles, 2013; Miralles, 2004). Likewise, literary creation is an excellent didactic resource for students to understand not only historical events but also how they were imagined and experienced by the people of the period studied (Gomariz and Miralles, 2013).

Therefore, iconographic and literary sources have been used through the technique of text and image commentary and participatory discussion, something that is not usual in the classroom, so that they can understand that the commentary model is the same as that of any other historical source, adapted to their cultural and historical context.

The main topics of attention in these interactive commentaries are those related to society, including the treatment of social groups that are little dealt with, such as the role of women; the historical relevance of each event or work and its relation and influence on the present; mentality, with special attention to working on empathy, ethics in today's society in relation to the past and acquiring a historical perspective so as not to judge the past with a presentist mentality; and finally, economics and politics, being the fundamental contexts for making the historical narrative simple and comprehensible with a sequencing of events, strengthening the skills of cause and consequence and change and continuity, which are fundamental for having a mental organization in which to situate the socio-cultural characteristics dealt with.

It should be noted, of course, that all the activities that are dealt with have the fundamental visual guidance of PowerPoint *presentations* and *digital resources* (López García, 2022), in an attempt to reduce the extreme dependence on the textbook and its memorization, although obviously using it as a model so that the transition to more innovative teaching methods is not traumatic for the students.

This use of sources can also include the use of *historical cinema* as one of the fundamental strategies for making classes more attractive and motivating, as it is a much more accessible resource for them than the textbook, as well as being a more innovative way of establishing concepts that is not used much in traditional education (Ambrós and Breu, 2007; Fernández, 1994).

Finally, the continuous treatment of *works of art* and elements of historical heritage in each subject is also highlighted in order to promote the valuation and protection of this historical-cultural heritage, as well as being a perfect resource, as can be seen in the unit, for them to carry out autonomous and group work that will be evaluated taking into account both the content and its presentation in class, in order to promote the competence of oral expression in public.

It is recognised that art and heritage are a resource of great potential for the teaching of history. Works of art produced over the centuries are heritage elements and can be used as teaching resources for teaching history, as they constitute an important historical document for teaching purposes (Zaragoza, 2022). Moreover, they are motivating resources for students who are totally immersed in visual culture.

2. Description of the DU (sessions)

2.1. Session 1. Introduction and background

First of all, the DU will be introduced, and the contents, activities and assessment will be presented, as well as the didactic resources that will be used during the sessions. Then, the questioning method (Morgan and Saxton, 1991) will be used to elucidate what previous ideas they may have about the subject and what may be the usefulness and importance of the contents to be developed and of history in general. The aim is to find among the ideas that the students have those that can be linked to the new knowledge, being convenient to

make periodical explorations to probe them and confront them with the new information by means of brainstorming and discussions at the beginning of each session. Finally, as a motivational activity, they can be shown the YouTube comments section of videos related to the subject, for example, the end of “Alatriste” to see the current image of the population.

2.2. 2nd session. Causes of the decline of the Hispanic empire

Following the outline made in the previous class, a master class is carried out with questioning techniques where the students’ thinking will be activated by means of verbal questions and graphic and visual representations. A PowerPoint presentation will be used as a guide to explain the three main blocks: politics, economics and society, starting with economics and demography. This will include both works of art related to the specific topic being taught, and an outline summarizing the contents so that students can follow the classes. As an activity, there will be a text commentary guided by the teacher through individual questions on the text “Las oportunidades desaprovechadas” by Sancho de Moncada with the following outline: Quick reading, Comprehensive reading, Type or nature of the text, Addressee of the text, Purpose and intentionality, Location, Historical framework, Identification of the theme, Structuring of the main and secondary ideas, Conclusion. Finally, a debate will be held on whether or not it is decadence in contrast to the Golden Age in literature and the arts, and the image of historiography in the face of the Habsburgs Major.

2.3. 3rd session. Demographic and economic crisis

Using a PowerPoint presentation with an outline of the contents as a reference, this first block will be dealt with by means of a master class using questioning methods in which the following contents will be presented: causes and consequences of the economic and demographic crisis in the 17th century. To this end, the song by Paco Ibáñez based on Quevedo’s poem “Poderoso caballero es don Dinero” will be listened to and visualized: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F21w6Ayw35c>. Discussion and debate on the glorification of past eras, the similarity with later crises such as the 2008 crisis and racism.

2.4. 4th session. Habsburgs and their politics. The Thirty Years’ War

Introductory PowerPoint with a master class and questioning techniques on the domestic and foreign policy of the kings. The political and administrative corruption of the Habsburgs was widespread and consubstantial not only to the Hispanic monarchy and administration, but also widespread in the European context (Miralles, 2004); although we should not judge it from presentist attitudes, as it is directly related to the union between public-private and sacred-profane, as well as to family origin and the predominant merits and values in the process of socio-professional mobility typical of the prevailing social system and not the current ones of ability, merit and equality. As an activity, there will be a commentary on the painting “Las lanzas” by Velázquez, following the same scheme as the text commentary adapted to a work of art. Debate on political corruption and war in general and its vainglory.

2.5. 5th session ón. 17th century society

PowerPoint and interactive class dividing the students into social groups as a simulation. It should be noted that learning about the work and living conditions of children and young people in the Golden Age is a motivating topic for students. The role of women will be dealt with in particular: the case of the divorce of Francisca Pedraza will be dealt with. In addition, because of its stylistic, social and even political representativeness, “Las hilanderas” by Velázquez has been selected as a work to be commented on in detail by the teaching staff. We are interested in analyzing works that help us to establish relationships between them and the society for which they were intended. Finally, there will be a viewing and commentary on the most relevant fragments of the films “The Immortal King” and “Alatriste” and a debate on film, literature and history.

2.6. 6th session. The Baroque

PowerPoint presentation in which the general characteristics of Baroque art: architecture, sculpture and painting, which have been introduced in the previous sessions with various examples, will be dealt with in a synthetic way. The aim now is for them to contemplate, enjoy and understand some significant examples of the Baroque. Slides on Baroque architecture, sculpture and painting will then be shown. But always pointing out their limitations and that this is only a means, never an end, to obtain information on which we must then meditate, reflect and draw conclusions.

2.7. 7th session. Presentations and debates

Since the aim is not for students to carry out an exhaustive analysis of the Baroque, but to take from it some representative samples of our artistic heritage, students will develop a commentary on a historical source related to the 17th century (work of art, text, map, film, etc.) in an individual or group work that will be presented in class and submitted in writing with the following sections: introduction: what work/source it is about, when it was done, who did it and why (motivation and intention). Brief biography of the author (characteristics and motivations). Formal characteristics that make it a 17th century work (e.g., Baroque characteristics). Historical context (political/cultural/social/economic) in which the subject matter is set. Relation (if possible) of the subject matter to the present (similarities and differences) with a personal critique to create debate.

3. Research method

The main objective of this work is to analyze the results of the implementation of a Social Sciences innovation DU through a comparison of student perceptions based on two questionnaires (pre-test and post-test). From there, sub-objectives can be established by differentiating the students' opinions after the implementation of the DU according to what is evaluated about the DU:

Assess the methodology used in the DU.

Assessing student motivation in an innovation DU.

Analyzing student satisfaction with an innovation DU.

Analyze the students' perception of learning and its results to check if the DU has been effective.

This DU is applied in its entirety to a group of third year ESO students in a secondary school in the city of Murcia, located in a predominantly working-middle class area with some cases of immigration. This is a diverse group with a clear lack of motivation for the methodology used, as will be seen in the questionnaire before starting the DU. The number of students is twenty-eight, thirteen girls and fifteen boys, between the ages of fourteen and fifteen and one case of sixteen of the only repeaters of the course.

Two closed-response questionnaires based on a Likert-type scale (1-5) were used for data collection. The questionnaires given to the students were entitled "Secondary school students' assessment of the teaching of History" (pretest) and "Secondary school students' opinion of the implementation of the History unit" (posttest). The questionnaires have 37 items divided into four categories: Assessment of the implementation of the DU in the teaching/learning process; Assessment of student motivation in an innovative DU; Analysis of student satisfaction with an innovative DU; Analysis of the perception of student learning and its results to check whether the DU has been effective (Gómez, Rodríguez, Miralles & Arias, 2020; Rodríguez, Gómez, Miralles & Aznar, 2020). On the other hand, it should be noted that information has also been collected through the assessment criteria and instruments set out in the DU, which have given rise to marks that have been compared later with those of the tutor, who has been commenting to the trainee

teacher on a series of indications such as being stricter so that they are not distracted or to review all of the above at the beginning of the class.

It should be noted that these instruments have been developed and validated by experts in Didactics of Social Sciences in the DICSO research group of the University of Murcia within the research project “The teaching and learning of historical competences in baccalaureate: a challenge to achieve a critical and democratic citizenship” (PID2020-113453RB-I00), subsidized by the State Research Agency (AEI/10.13039/501100011033).

Finally, it is worth highlighting a series of difficulties and limitations encountered in this unit, such as the fact that in one class they were more distracted as they had an exam the following hour and it was more difficult to maintain their attention and concentration. The explanation of the work for the evaluation was also complicated, as they had to resolve doubts in all the classes about what they had to do and on what subject, as well as the fact that they had never had to deal with work of these characteristics and at the beginning the presentations were quite weak as they were reading the PowerPoint and it was not very enjoyable for their classmates, but with a series of indications they gradually improved their presentations. It should of course be noted that the first groups were taken into account this inexperience when it came to making a presentation and group work and were not required to do the same as their peers who came later. For the application of this unit, it was necessary to review the textbook to see how the subject was approached, as well as to look for complementary bibliography and the didactic resources referred to above. Other difficulties were the lack of attention on some occasions and having to repeat the organization of the work on several occasions as they were not clear about the methodology or the subject on which to do it. As a proposal for improvement, the activities should have been planned for more sessions due to lack of time, so that the contents could be more firmly established. Also, the trainee teacher should be stricter so that students do not get distracted and review everything that has been given at the beginning of the class.

4. Results

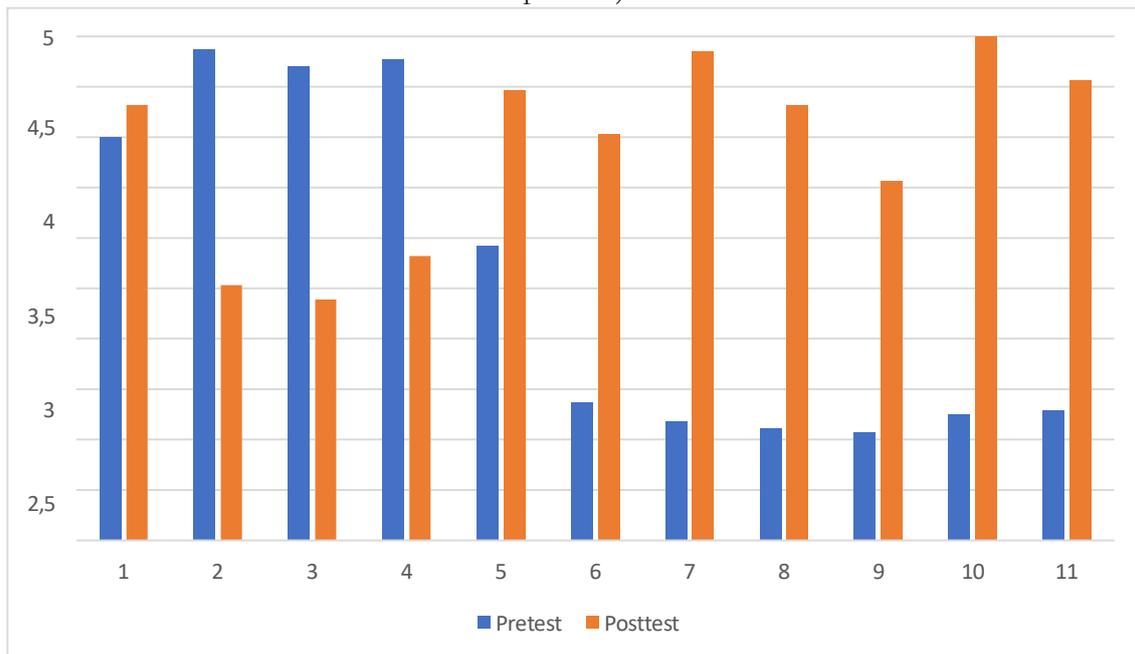
The main objective is to analyze the results of the implementation and evaluation of a Social Science innovation DU. From there, sub-objectives are established according to what is evaluated about the DU. The Likert scale values range from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Undecided (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5).

4.1. Assess the implementation of the DU in the teaching-learning process

In this first block, the following issues are addressed:

1. History lessons are based on the teacher's explanation.
2. The most commonly used material is the textbook.
3. The most important part of the assessment is the written examinations.
4. In order to pass the exams I learn the contents by heart.
5. Different instruments are used for assessment (notebook, written work, rubric, portfolio, etc.).
6. Historical documents are used in the classroom to learn history.
7. In history classes we use audiovisual resources (presentations, films, documentaries, etc.).
8. We conduct research in history class.
9. We put ourselves in the role of a historical character (theatre, simulations, etc.) to understand their actions.
10. We carry out group work.
11. We debate and critically evaluate historical events or processes.

Figure 1. Pretest and posttest results related to the evaluation of the implementation of the DU (teaching process)



Source: Own production.

In question 1 we can see that in the pre-test there is total consensus in agreeing (4) that History classes are based on the teacher's explanation, while in the questionnaire that evaluates the UD, although the average is even higher and therefore there is agreement with the statement, it should be noted that there is a greater disparity of opinions, with cases that strongly agree (5) and are those that raise the average, but also quite a few cases of undecided (3) and those who strongly disagree (1). This shows that, compared to the DU, there is a greater diversity of opinions regarding the importance of the teacher's explanation in the classes as opposed to the use of other didactic resources, which makes it clear that other alternative methods have been used, although the teacher's explanation has been fundamental.

In questions 2, 3 and 4, we can see a clear difference in terms of the methodology used, since before the DU most of the students emphasize that they agree very strongly (5) that the most used material is the textbook, that the most important part of the assessment is the written exams and that in order to pass they learn the contents by heart. This shows us that the methodology used in the current education system is quite traditional and involves merely studying the theory by heart from the textbook in order to pass written exams.

On the other hand, when it comes to evaluating the DU in these three questions, it is worth noting that the vast majority of respondents do not consider these methods to have been the ones mainly used, although it is worth noting that there are several cases in which they agree or are undecided, with the average rising to almost undecided. This, however, can be related to question 5, where it is clear that different instruments have been used in the UD, as opposed to a general undecidedness regarding the evaluation of history teaching.

Finally, it is worth highlighting questions 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11, which have a similar pattern where a great difference can be seen when evaluating the methodology of the UD with respect to the traditional teaching of history. It can be seen that most of them agree, and do not agree with traditional teaching, that in the UD they have used historical documents, audiovisual resources, research, group work and debates, although it should be noted that in question 6 (use of historical documents) there is greater indecision with some cases of disagreement, as they may have used them a little less or they do not know what a historical document is. This shows us that a more innovative methodology has been applied in the UD where historical documents

such as texts and works of art, audiovisual resources such as PowerPoint presentations and film sequences have been used, as well as research, group work and class discussions on historical processes.

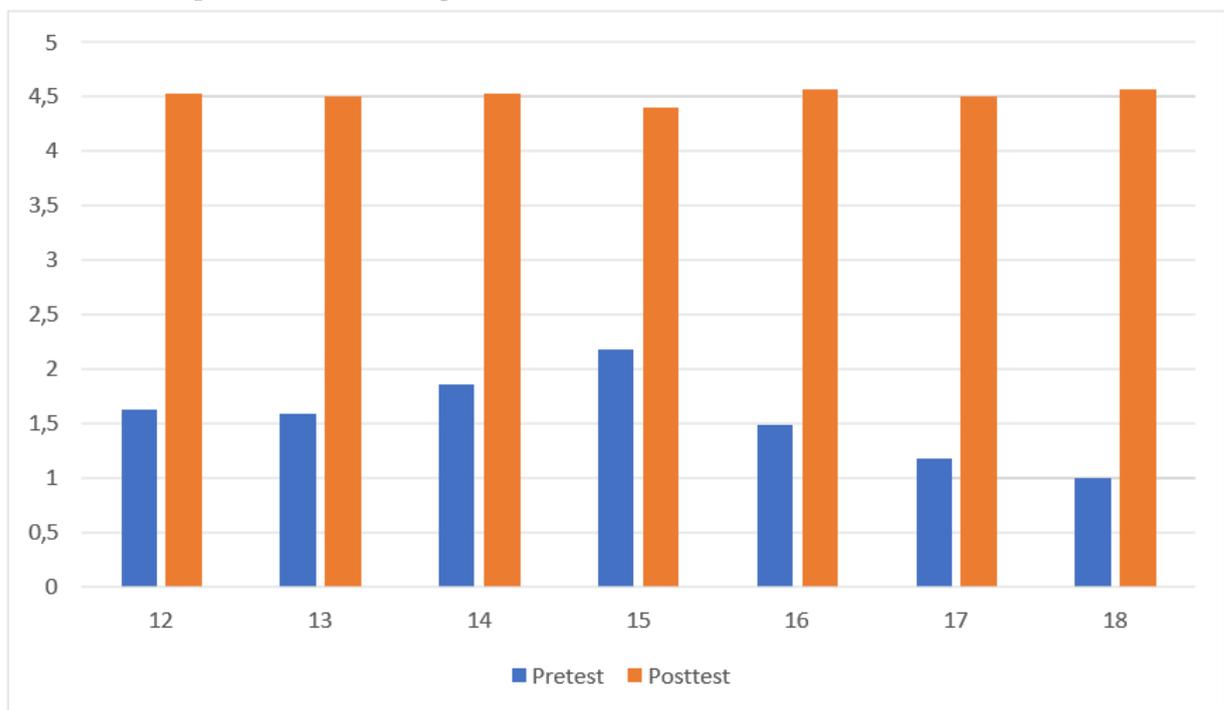
It is worth noting, however, question 9, where a similar pattern to those mentioned above can be seen when it comes to evaluating the teaching of history, but there is greater hesitation when it comes to evaluating the DU, as the didactic resource of simulation and empathy with the historical characters has not been used very much due to the lack of time to carry out a real Roleplay exercise or something similar.

4.2. Assessing student motivation in an innovation DU

The following issues are addressed:

- 12. The classes motivate me to learn more about history.
- 13. History classes improve my motivation to learn and try harder.
- 14. History classes motivate me because I have a better understanding of the social and cultural reality with which I am in contact.
- 15. History classes motivate me to get better grades.
- 16. I am motivated in history lessons because I can contribute my own point of view or knowledge.
- 17. History classes motivate me because we work in a group.
- 18. I am motivated in history classes because we use resources other than the textbook (Internet, audiovisuals, historical documents, etc.).

Figure 2. Pre-test and post-test results related to student motivation



Source: Own production.

In this section, questions 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 have a similar pattern at a general level when evaluating both the DU and the teaching of history. In this respect, we can evaluate that the motivation of students before the implementation of the unit was very low, not wanting to know more about History, not understanding the social reality in which they live, not contributing their point of view, not working in groups or with resources other than the textbook. It is worth mentioning question 15 where satisfaction is slightly higher in some cases, which could mean that the students' only motivation is to get good marks and

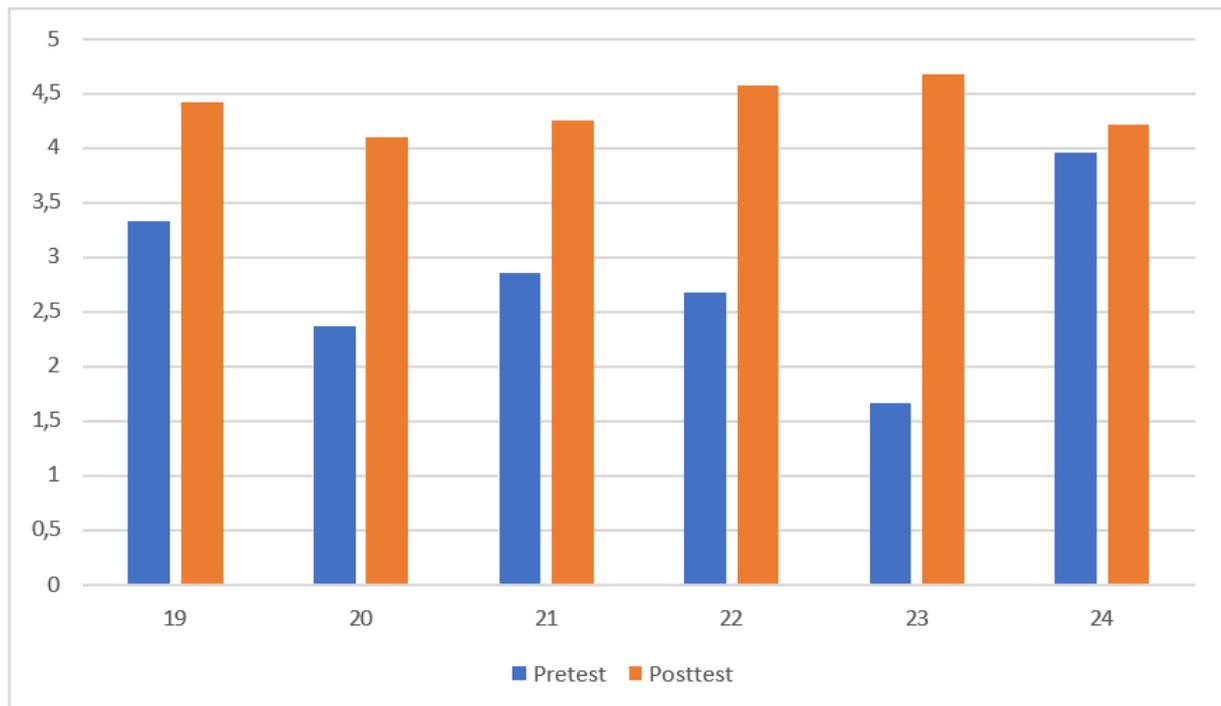
not to really learn. This contrasts sharply with the evaluation of the DU, as the students are quite motivated with all the points covered, with question 15 being paradoxically the lowest point in the marks. It can be concluded, therefore, that the methodology applied has to a large extent motivated students to be interested in learning more about History, to make an effort and contribute their point of view and to better understand the social and cultural reality in which they live.

4.3. Analyzing student satisfaction with an innovation DU

The following issues are addressed:

- 19. I am satisfied with my role as a learner.
- 20. I am satisfied with the working atmosphere in the classroom.
- 21. I am satisfied with the work of my colleagues when we work in small groups.
- 22. I am satisfied with what I learn.
- 23. I am satisfied with the way in which the teacher deals with the subjects.
- 24. So far, I am satisfied with my rating.

Figure 3. Pretest and posttest results related to student satisfaction



Source: Own production

With regard to overall student satisfaction, we can see in questions 19 to 24 that the general tone is one of student satisfaction with respect to the UD, with questions 20 and 24 being those with the lowest values, such as the working atmosphere in the classroom and satisfaction with marking. With regard to the former, it should be noted that the classroom atmosphere was generally good, and the students were quite interested, but it is true that on some occasions there were difficulties in keeping them quiet and concentrated for various reasons, which we shall see in the section on educational implications with proposals for improvement.

As far as satisfaction with the marking is concerned, it is inevitable that there are certain cases where one does not agree with the marking, but as can be seen this does not affect the assessment of the methodology used (question 23).

This contrasts with the assessment of the students' satisfaction with the teaching of history, which is quite low except for question 24; however, despite this positive assessment of the qualification, it should be noted that the greatest point of dissatisfaction of the students is with the way in which the teacher deals with the subjects (question 23), which shows that the methodology used prior to the application of the DU was not pleasant for the students, who were grateful for the modification of the methodology and value better learning.

A certain degree of hesitation also stands out when it comes to assessing the role they had as students (question 19), which shows that they did not quite understand what their role should be in order to achieve better learning, but they valued positively the more active role they had in the DU.

Finally, when it came to assessing the work in small groups (question 21), there was also hesitation, as it was not something they usually did, and they did not want to negatively assess their classmates.

4.4. Analyze students' perception of learning and its outcomes to see if the DU has been effective

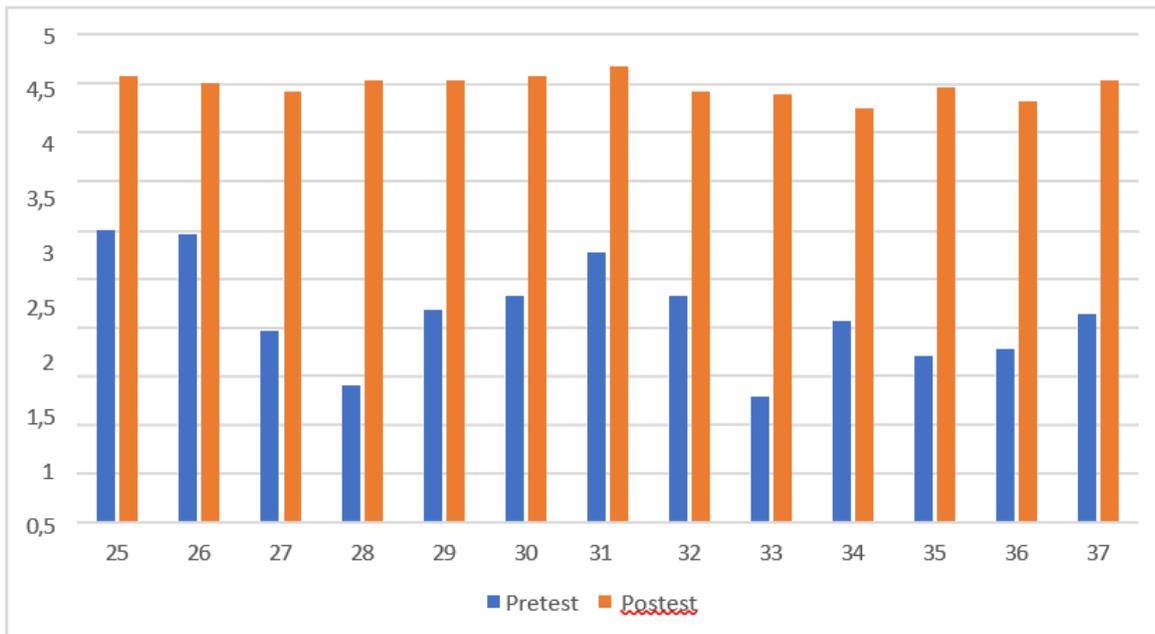
The following issues are addressed:

25. In history lessons I learn the main historical facts.
26. In history classes I learn about historical figures.
27. In history lessons I learn to use chronology.
28. In history lessons I learn how to handle historical documents and sources.
29. In history lessons I learn about changes and continuities in history.
30. In history lessons I learn to value the relevance of historical events, processes or characters.
31. In history lessons I learn about the causes and consequences of historical events.
32. In history lessons I learn about the reasons why people in the past acted in a certain way and critically evaluate their actions.
33. In history classes I learn to work in groups with my classmates.
34. In history classes I learn to better appreciate the heritage of our environment.
35. In history classes, I learn different ways of using ICT for teaching social studies.
36. Thanks to my history lessons, I am more respectful towards people from other cultures and towards opinions different from mine.
37. History classes help me to understand and discuss current issues.

From the analysis of the pupils' perception of their learning, it can be concluded that the DU has been effective due to the positive evaluation of questions 25 to 37, which shows the success of the implementation of the didactic DU in its methodology, contents, didactic resources and evaluation when it comes to fostering historical thinking with its different competences, which we dealt with in the theoretical framework of the work. Among these acquired competences, we can highlight that in principle they have learnt, for the most part, the main historical characters and events that have been dealt with, chronology, the use of historical sources, changes and continuities, the historical relevance of each event, the causes and consequences of the events, the reasons for the actions of the characters, working in groups, valuing heritage, using ICT, being respectful and tolerant, and understanding the world in which they live.

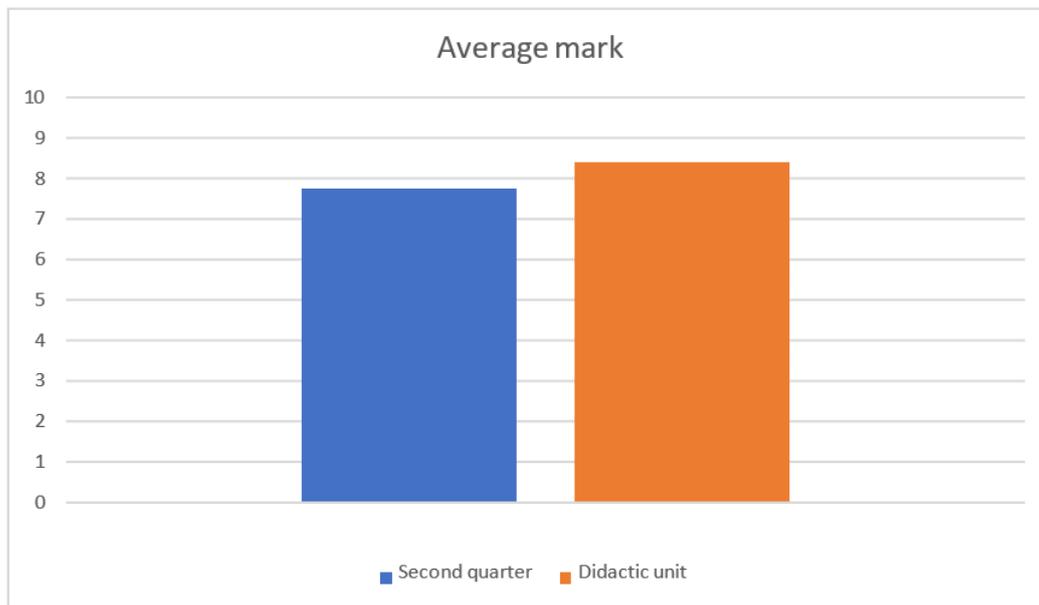
This can be contrasted, however, with the greater general disagreement or indecision about these questions prior to the application of this DU, where questions 28 and 33 stand out as the ones that stand out the most in terms of disagreement. The first question deals with the handling of historical documents and sources, which shows that the methodology prior to the DU was very theoretical and not very practical, and that in this one didactic resource such as historical texts, films and works of art have been used to understand historical processes. This has been modified in the DU where the greatest weight of the evaluation has been carried by a group work commenting on a work of art to be exhibited in class, being the first time that they had done a work of these characteristics, as they commented to the teacher in practice and that, at first, it was complicated for them to adapt as we will see in the last section of didactic implications.

Figure 4. Pretest and posttest results related to students' perception of the effectiveness of their learning



Source: Own production.

Figure 5. Average mark of students in the second trimester and in the UD



Source: Own production.

On the other hand, it is worth highlighting questions 25, 26 and 31, where a greater degree of indecision is noted, as opposed to the general tone of disagreement. In these questions, the main historical events and characters, as well as the causes and consequences of the former, are learnt as they are the basis of a theoretical methodology of following the textbook, which organizes the topics with this structure of causes and consequences so that they can be learnt by heart for a written exam without further critical reflection and implementation, reminiscent of a positivist and outdated historiographical trend.

Finally, we can see in their academic results a slight improvement in the overall average mark of the group from 7.76 to 8.39, which is undoubtedly positive, but should not be decisive when evaluating the application of the UD. It shows, however, that the students have all passed, as the general tone and working atmosphere was good, as a result of the positive assessment by the students of the previous sections. The work was very varied and there were some that were really good, fulfilling all the criteria required for assessment, while others were somewhat lacking for reasons such as lack of motivation, inexperience with this type of methodology or conformism with a pass in view of the workload they had from other subjects, a circumstance that should not be forgotten.

5. Conclusions

The aim of this DU has been to develop historical thinking, learning to *think historically*, changing the teaching approach based on conceptual/factual contents to complement them with contents that enhance the competences previously dealt with on this thinking. The aim has been to develop cognitive processes of historical thinking, so that students understand and reflect on historical content, both first- and second order, by means of a cognitive model for learning history, which has also made it possible to correctly assess historical knowledge (Carretero and López, 2009; Carretero and Van Alphen, 2014). This cognitive model has focused on techniques and instruments suitable for teaching and assessing historical competences.

Therefore, we can conclude, according to the results seen in the previous section, that its implementation and evaluation of the DU has been successful and with good achievements both in the main objective and in the sub-objectives that we have discussed previously. According to Chapman (2011) and Gómez, Ortuño and Molina (2014), in order to learn about history, we must resort to the use of skills focused on reflection, analysis, argumentation and interpretation of the past; these skills are not innate; therefore, they must be acquired and developed in the classroom, which has been achieved in this case. On the other hand, Seixas and Morton (2013) state that historical thinking is a creative process developed by historians to generate new historical narratives through the analysis of sources from the past. These competences and strategies are related to the search for, selection and treatment of historical sources, empathy and historical perspective (Peck and Seixas, 2008; Seixas and Morton, 2013), all of which are well developed in this DU as demonstrated by the positive data obtained. However, it should not be forgotten that the questionnaire method used is a subjective method with limitations, as the students have assessed according to their experience and in some cases, they may not have taken the questionnaire seriously and may have answered according to whether they liked the teacher being assessed better or worse. For this reason, in a more in-depth and complex future research with more time, we would recommend the use of a greater variety of instruments validated by experts in Social Science teaching, such as a competency test.

In conclusion, as has been seen throughout the article with the studies on historical thought and the data reflected in the research, it is necessary to overcome the exclusive use of the textbook, lectures and assessment through memorized exams. This is why the scientific dissemination of works on education should be promoted, as they are fundamental when it comes to improving teaching in educational systems, and their contributions should be taken into account when drafting the ever-changing education laws, which unfortunately are mostly unsatisfactory in Spain, as they are made from a political perspective and with purely political interests, not taking into account the educational community or the results of educational and didactic research (López Serrano, 2019).

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