

Issues In Arts Education In Latin America

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Art Education And Teaching Cultural Heritage: The Chilean Cultural Reforms

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Introduction

This chapter discusses recent developments in arts education in Chile, especially cultural heritage, and the general educational reforms being implemented at elementary and intermediate levels. The chapter has two parts. The first part begins with a brief summary of dominant tendencies in the history of Chilean arts education. It includes an overview of arts education in the new curriculum, the allocation of time at elementary and intermediate levels, curriculum content and aims, and how they are being implemented through the reforms. The second part expands on the guidelines for teaching cultural heritage, focusing especially on their main orientations within primary and secondary education. Finally, some recommendations are provided about how to improve the teaching of cultural heritage.

PART 1: VISUAL ARTS EDUCATION IN CHILE

Historical Trends

To better understand the current situation regarding visual arts education in Chilean schools, it is helpful to summarize its history. Briefly, the following characteristics have shaped provision and practice (Errázuriz, 1994).

- Drawing, painting, sculpting (and some other art forms) and art history have been part of public education for about two centuries. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, art education was predominantly practical. It emphasized the learning of technical skills, particularly in drawing, more than learning about art history or Chilean cultural heritage.
- Although art appreciation was incorporated into the curriculum at the end of the nineteenth century, the dominant orientation during much of the twentieth century was instrumentalist. Art education was conceived of fundamentally, as a means to support or complement other school subjects such as history, geometry, calligraphy, etc. This contributed to its marginal, inferior, and dependent status in the school system.
- Attempts to integrate Chilean native arts and folklore and Chilean or Latin American visual and musical arts, were few and far between in school arts education. Similarly, throughout its history, there has been no coherent link between official policy and Chilean culture.

Arts in the New Curriculum

The transition to democracy in Chile, which began in 1990, was accompanied by a new curriculum orientation and changes to the school arts timetable. The following tables show weekly allocations of hours in elementary and secondary schools under the military regime and in the democratic system.

Since the educational reforms of 1996, Arts Education has consisted of Visual Arts and Music.¹ The subject was allocated three hours per week during the first and second years of elementary schooling, four hours in the third and fourth years, and three hours in the fifth and sixth years respectively. For the seventh and eighth years, two hours were

¹ The area of Scenic Arts was also mentioned in courses for first and second grade elementary school. However, a program capable of being implemented systematically, as is the case for the Visual and Musical Arts programs, has not yet been developed.

allocated for Visual Arts and two for Music. These standards apply to nearly all the educational establishments in the country, since only a very small percentage has individual programs of study.

Table 1: Weekly Schedule for Arts Education in Primary Schools

	Military regime from 1981	Democratic government from 1997
Course	No. of weekly hours	No. of weekly hours
First	2*	3
Second	2*	3
Third	2*	4
Fourth	2*	4
Fifth	2*	3
Sixth	2*	3
Seventh	2**	4
Eighth	2**	4

*Decree 4002 of May 20, 1980, Arts education included Fine Arts and Music. An average time of two hours per week was estimated for it, based on time allotted previously. The same decree specified a minimum of five weekly classes of 45 minutes each for Language and Mathematics in the first, second, third and fourth grades. For fifth, sixth, seventh, and eight grades, the minimum number of classes set out were as follows: Language: 6; Mathematics: 5; History and Geography: 4.

**Only if the educational establishment decided to offer Fine Arts.

Arts in secondary education

The curriculum framework for Secondary Education, approved on May 18th 1998, consists of General Education, Differentiated Instruction (which refers only to the 3rd and 4th years of Secondary Education), and Optional Subjects. The curriculum for General Education consists of nine learning areas, including Arts Education which covers Visual Arts and Music - one of which is a minimum requirement. This means that Arts Education is mandatory between the 1st and 4th years of Secondary Education and schools can alternate the two subjects or choose one.

Summary of 1998 reforms

Combined Arts Plan (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years of secondary education). One subject is chosen from Visual Arts or Music, for two hours per week.

Table 2. Weekly Schedule for Arts Education in Secondary Schools

	Military regime from 1984	Democratic government from 2001
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Grades	No. of weekly hours	No. of weekly hours - Combined plan
First	2-4*	2
Second	2-4*	2
Third	2	2
Fourth	2	2

*Only if the establishment decides to offer Fine Arts and Music, which is unusual. Most institutions chose Fine Arts. With respect to Differentiated Instruction in the 3rd and 4th year of Secondary Education, in addition to the General Education requirements for Arts Education (combined plan of Fine Arts or Music), institutions can offer courses in: Visual Arts, Media (Photography, Film, Video), Drama, Dance, Design, Music Appreciation, Music Interpretation, and Music Composition.

Table 3: Weekly Hours for Arts Education at Secondary Level

	Military regime from 1984	Democratic government from 2001
Grade	No. of Weekly Hours	No. of Weekly Hours - Differentiated Plan
Third	0	3 (optional) *
Fourth	0	3 (optional) *

**If the institution decides to offer Arts within the differentiated plan

In summary, the new educational reforms made arts education mandatory from the beginning of elementary school to the end of the last year of high school. At elementary levels, students should have access to Visual Arts as well as Music education. High schools should offer either Visual Arts or Music.

Criteria Guiding Art Reform

The reforms are underpinned by six important criteria which have significant ramifications for Visual Arts teachers:

1. The first criterion is that arts education should be broadly conceived and flexible. Courses are supposed to be organized around three learning domains, and to engage with a variety of art languages. With this in mind, courses in elementary education for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade students introduce them to art making, appreciation, and knowledge. The idea is that they should explore different modes of production, familiarize themselves with a range of materials and techniques, and begin to study art works and be able to discuss them. In other words, students should be given opportunities to experiment with arts media in ways that reflect the functions of the arts in society, their institutional contexts, and their spheres of influence more accurately than before. From the fifth grade of elementary school and onwards, there are differentiated programs for Visual Arts and Music, with common objectives, content and activities intended to facilitate their integration.
2. The second principle is that teaching-learning strategies and activities should be diverse. Practical arts activities should engage with a wide variety of processes, products, and contexts, reflecting the diversity of arts forms practiced in society. Visual Arts education in schools should reflect the richness of these artistic

experiences, and motivate students to search out different modes of expression, materials, and techniques with which to explore subject matter or content. To this end, examples of optional activities are provided for each course unit offering alternative ways of achieving the Ministry's learning objectives.

3. The third principle is that teachers should develop individual and group projects taking into account their students' interests and abilities as well as the school reality. The idea is that a series of curriculum projects will gradually be implemented, from elementary to secondary education, in a way that motivates students to work, share experiences, and learn from each other. Balance has to be effected between personal development and fulfilling the general program requirements.
4. The fourth principle is that learning in the three domains should be integrated. This implies development of students' expressive, practical, theoretical, and research abilities, at one and the same time, together with knowledge of art history. The guidelines recommend that teachers explore and take advantage of all the resources available to them for art history. For example: illustrations, books, catalogues, leaflets, magazines, photographs, slides, videos, and software (either as reference material or for teaching purposes). They are recommended to use the Internet, if possible, to access national and international museums and plan student visits to architectural sites, galleries, museums, concert halls, seminars, and cultural and artistic events.
5. Fifth: art, design, and crafts are interrelated through common processes/themes, historical contexts, and aesthetic sensibilities. These can change according to course aims and goals, making it difficult to distinguish one from another. Consequently, the programs propose a more interdisciplinary vision of creativity in the arts, one that seeks to promote a greater understanding of things they have in common, and the difficulties of establishing clear limits.
6. The sixth principle is that motivation for art and design work is varied. Consequently, some classroom activities might focus on appreciating and interpreting art from direct observation, or from imagination and fantasy; others might focus on self-expression and on exploring formal aesthetic concepts such as color, form, texture, space, volume, and line. In summary, the need to solve problems, communicate ideas, tell stories, express emotions, observe carefully, investigate, respond critically, or evaluate the work of artists, designers, architects, and musicians all act as stimuli for arts teaching.

Design and Implementation of Reform

The new programs have been designed to conform to the Basic Objectives and Minimum Mandatory Content of Elementary and Secondary Education² within a curricular framework defined by the State. Working groups of university specialists, classroom teachers, and consultants were set up for this purpose. A coordinator³ was charged with the responsibility of designing and editing the syllabuses for each subject, and participated periodically in round-table discussions presided over by the chief of Curriculum Integration with representatives from all the disciplines.

² This curricular framework, as indicated by its name, is mandatory for the whole country (Supreme Court Decree of Education, No. 220). As previously indicated, educational establishments can elaborate on their own programs, provided they are approved by the Minister of Education. Very few schools have created alternative programs.

³ The author of this article coordinated the design of the Visual Arts programs at elementary and secondary levels.

The design and implementation of the programs, from the lower to upper level courses, has been gradual. Work began on the first cycle of elementary education (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th-grade courses). Programs were created simultaneously for the second cycle of elementary education (5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th courses) and for secondary education (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th-grade courses). Hence, beginning in 1999, new syllabuses have been incorporated into the school curriculum each year at both elementary and secondary levels.

Other initiatives have been designed to facilitate curriculum change. Among those worthy of mention are: professional development courses for teachers; a longer school day; an improved school infrastructure (architecture, libraries, etc.); better teaching materials; and the incorporation of new technologies, such as computers and pedagogical equipment. Although the majority were targeted at strengthening Mathematics, Language, and Science (curricular areas that have traditionally received more attention and resources from the State), arts education has also benefited from these measures, albeit on a smaller scale.⁴

The effects of the reforms on classroom practice and on conceptions of the arts within the school culture have not been evaluated yet. According to reports of some professional development courses, art teachers are gradually appropriating and implementing the new programs, with some resistance, as is only to be expected given the magnitude of change.

Of the proposed innovations, the following have been well received:

- Design and development of individual and group projects by teachers, taking into consideration the individual talents, interests, and abilities of their students.
- Exploring a wider range of arts media.
- Affording greater value to the local environment and cultural heritage.

The ones teachers are resisting are:

- Integrating the production, appreciation, and knowledge of arts within each curriculum unit.
- Incorporating new technologies into artistic expression.
- Visiting museums, galleries, concert halls, and art centers.

To summarize, the reforms, which are on-going, imply significant changes in school arts education. Their implementation in diverse educational contexts should improve the quality of teaching and future generations should be better informed about culture and the arts.

PART II. TEACHING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Before and After the Reforms

A fundamental goal of the new arts curriculum is to contribute knowledge, appreciation, and conservation of cultural heritage. Fulfilling this objective is vital in an increasingly globalized world. If we neglect to teach heritage, children and young adults may ignore their cultural roots in future. But globalization is not just a threat to cultural identity; it provides opportunities to re-establish local traditions and disseminate the nation's cultural

⁴ This statement can be confirmed if one considers the quantity of economic resources the Ministry of Education allots to each curricular sector. Even though there are no statistics available on the subject, in the case of Art Education, this situation is reflected, for example, in the sponsoring of comparatively minor publications, didactic materials, and support programs for teachers among others.

assets⁵ with more zeal. Faced with the "growth of stereotyped culture" on the one hand, and "new voices and cultural identities" on the other, what kinds of guidelines are appropriate for teaching arts patrimony?

Historically the Chilean approach to patrimony education has been nationalistic. It has sought to rescue cultural heritage, be it pre-Columbian, colonial, or modern, largely to affirm "a national identity" under siege from foreign influences. Attempts to rescue patrimony have been motivated, consciously or unconsciously, by cultural resistance.⁶ But efforts to promote greater awareness of cultural heritage through arts education in schools should not be justified solely on the need to construct a "hideout" from which the nation confronts the threat that other countries pose to its identity. Cultural resistance and a romantic search for a lost identity have resulted in an emphasis on reclaiming cultural patrimony, the latter understood as something fixed or frozen in the past. As Bernardo Subercaseaux has pointed out, however, when "national identity is defined as a continuous historical process of construction and reconstruction of the imagined community which is the nation, rather than an unchanging essence, then the alterations that occur in its elements do not necessarily imply the loss of the national or collective identity but only that of change."⁷

In summary, nationalism, cultural resistance, voluntarism, nostalgia, and a quota of tourism are some of the attitudes that have informed the precarious business of teaching Chilean cultural heritage in the past. The comparison of traditional and reformist tendencies in Chilean patrimony education in the table below goes some way to explaining what is happening, but does not fully reflect the complex process of transition between two educational models.

Table 4: Approaches to Teaching Cultural Heritage

Traditional	Reformist
Appreciation of great masterpieces of art, especially paintings and sculptures from the European Renaissance and Baroque periods, and the nineteenth century.	Appreciation of diverse art works, design, and crafts at local, regional, national, continental, and universal levels.

⁵ For example, this tendency can be corroborated in the following paragraph from *Historia de un Área Marginal*: "The interest in linking the subject with cultural identity emerged during the economic and social crisis of 1929. A protectionist moment at the time emphasized the protection and diffusion of indigenous art. The interrelationship between cultural identity and nationalism had already been explored in a publication entitled *Indígenas de Chile*, written by the professor and architect Abel Gutiérrez, whose work was destined to reinforce the nationalist orientation that the teaching of drawing had taken in our country" (Op.cit., p.139).

⁶ Bernardo Subercaseaux, Harvard Ph.D. and professor and vice-dean of the School of Postgraduate Studies in Philosophy and Humanities at the University of Chile, shares his complex view of globalization, and analyzes it as a menace and/or opportunity. The author points out: "It is true that globalization increases the growth of a stereotype culture (for some a counter-culture), a loss of the competence of the Nation or State in the realm of culture or communication, and the dissolution of traditional and long-lasting national homogeneous identities. But it is also true that, along with these homogenizing dynamics, there is also a heterogeneous dynamic and the rise of new voices and cultural identities that, even without national identities, imply the enrichment of cultural life" (Subercaseaux, p. 59).

Recovery and reinstatement of national identity.	Knowledge and appreciation of the identities that make up various local communities, regions, nations, and geographic zones.
Cultural resistance.	Respect, knowledge, and intercultural dialogue.
Identity and cultural patrimony interpreted as a legacy from the past.	Identity and dynamic cultural patrimony in constant evolution: expression of the past interacting with the present and projected towards the future.
Tangible cultural patrimony as it relates to buildings, churches, monuments, paintings, and objects, recognized as such by public or private arts institutions.	Tangible cultural patrimony (buildings, churches, monuments, objects, etc.) and intangible cultural patrimony (theater, dance, myth, legends, superstitions, etc.) recognized as such by a variety of institutions, local communities, cultural centers, and others.

Teaching Cultural Heritage in Elementary Education

In the first cycle of elementary education, arts education incorporates cultural patrimony in a generic way, attempting to acquaint students with the development of a range of appropriate arts skills and knowledge. From the 5th to the 8th grades at elementary level, once a foundation has been established, knowledge and exploration of specific aspects of cultural heritage and their historical and geographical contexts are added. As students begin to identify and understand the content included in the guidelines, they gain a fuller appreciation of the environment at a national level, and consider patrimony from a continental perspective. The following table outlines the most important content:

Curriculum Content for Cultural Heritage in Elementary Education

Grade	Visual Arts	Music
First and Second	Folklore as a site of expression. Appreciation of everyday life through creation of art works.	Folklore as a site of expression.
Third and Fourth	Crafts: diversity, functionalism, and cultural value.	Expression through dance. Musical expression taking advantage of national, regional, and local patrimony.
Fifth	Native art in Chile and regional folklore.	Basic structures of popular and folkloric music.
Sixth	Colonial art in Chile: painting, sculpture and architecture.	Traditional musical expression in Chile and Latin America.

Seventh	Design and cultural identity: manifestations of design in Chile. Crafts, furnishings, costumes, and graphics of the past and present.	Ethnic and folkloric, popular and concert music.
Eighth	Chilean sculpture and architecture in the twentieth century.	Singing ethnic, folkloric, popular, and concert repertoires in diverse forms.

As can be seen from this table, content related to patrimony covers a wide range of historical periods, means of artistic expression, content and socio-cultural contexts. Folklore occupies a significant place from first to fifth grade at elementary level together with crafts, traditional arts, design, and works of art. For example, the guidelines include local, regional, national and continental geographical/contextual categories. They refer to past and present patrimony (including daily life), tangible and intangible, and ethnic and popular patrimony. And they incorporate the more conventional cultural categories of artworks located in museums, galleries, and cultural centers.

With respect to arts history, a chronological orientation has been maintained, as is evident in the directive to study indigenous, colonial, and twentieth-century art sequentially within distinct time periods. This is the case, for example, in the sixth grade program for colonial art and the eighth grade program for twentieth-century Chilean architecture and sculpture. Knowledge of cultural patrimony over time proceeds through grade levels sequentially. This poses the question: Is a chronological approach justifiable, given the current tendency towards eclectic, less linear conceptual curricula frameworks?

The likely reasons influencing this decision were:

- Chronology has been the favored approach to organizing curriculum content in social sciences and art for some time. It is difficult to modify a tendency that is so well established.
- The integrated approach to arts education as defined in the curriculum guidelines.
- Paradoxically, human resources for teaching about the past are more readily available than those for the present. For example, there are more publications on colonial than conceptual art.

Teaching Cultural Heritage in Secondary Education

At the secondary level, there is a review of previous learning about knowledge of patrimony; then the content is explored in more depth. The emphasis at this level is on exploring daily life, as it relates to youth culture, and on searching for common ground between students' interests and patrimony. The following table summarizes the content for each grade:

Curriculum Content for Cultural Heritage in Secondary Schools

Grade	Visual Arts	Music
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First	Appreciation of significant works pertaining to regional, national, and continental artistic heritage. Recognizing movements and styles.	Auditory discrimination, basic exercises in musical construction. Appreciation of concerts, urban popular works from oral and ethnic traditions.
Second	The human body, face, self-portraits, masks in significant works of national, continental, and global cultural heritage	Music and identity. Music as memory and cultural heritage. Traditional musical instruments of Chile and America.
Third	The natural environment and regional, national, and continental art heritage. Architectural heritage.	Selected movements in twentieth-century Latin American music.
Fourth	Contemporary visual arts in Chile. Latin American artistic heritage and the main international artistic tendencies of the 20th century.	Music and multiculturalism: auditory identification of current expressions of Chilean music.

One of the main differences between cultural heritage education at elementary and secondary levels is that in the latter, content is specified for each course. Hence, at the secondary level, appreciation of significant regional, continental, and international artworks is promoted more systematically. The goal is for students to express themselves through art while at the same time encountering art works of different places and times, talking about them, and increasing their awareness of, and respect for, the environment as a source of national wealth. There is also a shift towards visual arts, music, and design at the secondary level, and folklore-related content decreases. The latter has traditionally been afforded greater emphasis in elementary education, due partly to the emphasis on dances, songs, and stories associated with early childhood.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, teaching cultural heritage is one of the main priorities of the Chilean Educational Reforms. Principle aims for teaching arts heritage in schools are:

- To widen and enrich notions of patrimony and cultural identity, keeping in mind the variety of art forms in daily life, tangible and intangible, as well as diverse cultural, generational, social, historical, ethnological, and geographical contexts.
- To develop knowledge of artistic patrimony in the following order of priority: local, regional, national, continental, and international.
- To develop the skills students need to investigate artworks, folklore, and traditional arts, and implement individual and group projects that take into account their own interests and needs.
- To promote exchanges of information and experience. For example, to establish links with other towns and regions in the country in order to share knowledge about artistic heritage.
- To provide support for artists, craftsmen, designers, researchers, or other professionals who can contribute to patrimony education through visits to educational institutions, seminars, museums, archeological sites, festivities, craft centers, festivals, concert halls, etc.

- To teach arts heritage in a way that integrates production, appreciation, and criticism, and includes, for example, the skills of recording, recreating, interpreting, and imagining through different forms of expression (Visual Arts, Music, etc.)

It is too early to know if this government initiative will receive a warm welcome from Chilean children and youth. More and more, they are embracing a multi-cultural vision of patrimony that challenges national and international frontiers.

Notes

1. The area of Scenic Arts was also mentioned in courses for first and second grade elementary school. However, a program capable of being implemented systematically, as is the case for the Visual and Musical Arts programs, has not yet been developed.
2. This curricular framework, as indicated by its name, is mandatory for the whole country (Supreme Court Decree of Education, No. 220). As previously indicated, educational establishments can elaborate on their own programs, provided they are approved by the Minister of Education. Very few schools have created alternative programs.
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