

# ANALYSIS OF THE DIDACTIC APPLICATION OF THE CONCEPT OF LONG DURATION IN HISTORY EDUCATION

# ANALYSIS OF THE DIDACTIC APPLICATION OF THE CONCEPT OF LONG DURATION IN THE TEACHING OF HISTORY

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**Abstract--** This research paper, “Analysis of the Didactic Application of the Concept of the Long Duration,” is aimed at history teachers with the goal of redefining the teaching of the subject through new methods and applications in the classroom. The research aims to analyze Braudel’s concept of “long duration” as a new way of conceiving the teaching of history in Mexico by comparing it with the traditional method used to teach history during the 20th century and in recent years.

In his book *\*History and the Social Sciences\** (1970), Fernand Braudel proposes a new approach to analyzing and reflecting on history, thereby offering a fresh perspective on teaching the subject. Braudel’s approach argues that history should be conceived as a long-term process, in which various meanings influence the development of historical processes and, consequently, the events that define them, in contrast to traditional short-term methods or “history of events,” originating in the 18th and 19th centuries, where students must memorize and catalog dates and figures that tend toward individualism, thereby hindering the development of the historical and critical thinking envisioned by the New Mexican School.

It is important that the teaching of history take a different course from that proposed by traditionalism, since it is of great importance that students be able to connect their immediate reality with various historical processes, thereby situating themselves in time and space in a way that allows them to generate a reflective and historical analysis of their daily lives, understanding that the past directly impacts their present and defines their future— that is, what may happen to them, their community, or their country stems from a historical process that often transcends their conception of the immediate present.

**Keywords—**Braudel, History education, The Long Term, Traditional teaching methods in history, teaching method.

**Abstract:** This research project, "Analysis of the Didactic Application of the Concept of the Longue durée," focuses on history teachers with the aim of redefining the teaching of the subject through new methods and applications in the classroom. The research aims to analyze Braudel’s concept of the “longue durée” as a new approach to teaching history in Mexico by comparing it with the traditional method used to teach history during the 20th century and in recent years.

Fernand Braudel, in his book "History and the Social Sciences," addresses a new way of understanding how analyzing and reflecting on history leads to a new perspective when teaching the subject.

Braudel's proposal states that history should be conceived as a long-term process, in which different meanings intervene in the development of historical processes and, consequently, in the events that define them. This contrasts with traditional short-term methods or "history of events," originating in the 18th and 19th centuries, where students are expected to memorize and catalog dates and figures, fostering individualism that hinders the development of historical and critical thinking, as envisioned in the New Mexican School.

It is important that the teaching of history take a different approach from that proposed by traditional methods, since it is crucial for students to connect their immediate reality with various historical processes. This enables them to situate themselves in time and space, allowing them to develop a reflective and historical analysis of their daily lives, understanding that the past directly impacts their present and shapes their future—that is, what may happen to them, their community, or their country stems from a historical process that often extends beyond their conception of immediate time. **Keywords:** Braudel, Teaching of history, Longue durée, Traditional method in history, teaching method.

## INTRODUCTION

In the current educational context of secondary education in Mexico, the history course faces significant challenges that affect its pedagogical effectiveness. Students often perceive it as a collection of dates and facts to be memorized, which leads to disinterest and high failure rates. It is viewed as a traditional, short-term, and fragmented teaching-learning method that does not foster deep understanding or, above all, long-term retention of events. For this reason, it is necessary to address traditional epistemological barriers by applying the concept of the long duration in education.

The long duration proposed by Braudel is presented as a concept applied to the understanding and analysis of history, which this research seeks to rethink as an applicable teaching method that is internalized in the reflective processes of the teacher and student to foster historical and critical thinking about their realities, whether within their community or their state—

nation. In line with the above, the “long-term” approach is understood within the teaching of history as a method that focuses on analyzing the meanings of historical events rather than on the sequence of events; that is, its aim is to identify how historical phenomena unfold through long-term processes, with an impact on social, cultural, political, and economic spheres.

Following this same line of analysis, it is important to mention that history teachers must initiate a process of epistemic decolonization<sup>1</sup> regarding the subject’s traditional methods, as these limit student learning due to rote memorization and the excess of information, dates, and data provided by the teacher. Therefore, the aim is to raise history teachers’ awareness of the use of different teaching methods that favor formative assessment and critical learning, thereby promoting historical thinking.

This will be achieved by comparing the traditional method with the “long-term” approach in history teaching, identifying their strengths and benefits in the classroom, as well as providing examples of their application across various topics.

The decontextualization of historical topics prevents students from identifying the issues that give rise to a historical event; consequently, they fail to perceive the issues occurring in their own environment, despite their critical thinking skills—which stem from knowledge acquired in the classroom and are linked to their prior experiences— Therefore, given this context, this research is justified by the need to reconceptualize the history curriculum, its content, and the methods used to teach it, as it is necessary to visualize these issues within the classroom. The long-term perspective serves as a tool for understanding social problems within their nation-state, as well as political and cultural structures, thereby enabling reflection on their realities and socio-cultural contexts.

This research includes descriptions of Braudel’s long-term approach and the traditional method of teaching history to provide an overview of what both approaches entail, with the aim of facilitating a more informed reflection on the proposed comparison.

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of epistemological decolonization refers to how certain forms of knowledge, primarily Western ones, are privileged over the existing knowledge of colonized non-Western societies (Mendoza, 2025)

## **DEVELOPMENT**

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach with an inductive method due to the characteristics of the literature reviewed and the scope of the analysis of said literature. In this regard, the aim is to compile the data and perceptions that underpin the concept of the long duration to highlight its applicability in the teaching of history, a subject currently undergoing a reevaluation within basic education. Within this context, the research objective can be verified and pursued

### **A NEW VISION OF HISTORY TEACHING**

In recent years, there has been a renewed emphasis on social studies in elementary education. The educational initiative promoted by the federal government (La Nueva Escuela Mexicana) has enabled teachers to adopt new teaching methods that allow them to approach various subjects in different ways. In history specifically, we see a search for a new vision of teaching methods that allow for a reevaluation of the knowledge, customs, traditions, and perceptions of non-Western cultures; a prime example of this is the initiative to teach Nahuatl in elementary education.

Based on the above, it can be argued that this represents an improvement over traditional approaches which, although revisited later, view history as a collection of momentary and short-lived historical events and facts limited solely to the memorization of dates and actions; these approaches do not reflect a genuine or satisfactory analysis of historical processes. Consequently, to understand and visualize a comparison between historical traditionalism and a possible new method of teaching and understanding historical processes, it is necessary to analyze Fernand Braudel's postulates, particularly his studies on the long term, as the proposed method for achieving a new approach to history in the classroom.

### **BRAUDEL'S LONG TERM; ANOTHER HISTORICAL APPROACH**

Fernand Braudel is considered the greatest historian and revolutionary in 20th-century historiography; a prominent member of the Annales School, he proposes a new way of conceptualizing history. Braudel argues for the need to view history as a set of long-term processes. We know that history (traditionally the history of major events) is categorized as a series of facts and events, which, according to Braudel, are of short duration, as they are

“explosive” and thunderous events, whose flame barely lasts or is even noticed (Braudel, 1970, pp. 62). Likewise, if we consider them within this long-term perspective, such events are fraught with historical meanings and relationships.

As mentioned, Braudel proposes a historical analysis of events, viewing them as explosive occurrences that are nonetheless shaped by cultural, political, social, and economic factors. These factors influence his analysis, allowing for a detailed understanding of how the historical event unfolded, rather than focusing solely on the date, the figures involved, and the event’s explosive nature. A quick example of this would be the outbreak of World War I. The explosive event, the major event, would be the assassination in 1914 of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire; but what led to this assassination was a series of historical events that can be traced back to the German unification in 1873 or the various wars in the Balkans.

In accordance with Braudel’s approach, it is important for history teachers to conceptualize the long duration, as using this concept allows them to contextualize students in time and space; in addition to explaining major events in a multicausal manner—that is, as the result of the interaction of historical, cultural, social, economic, and political processes spanning the international sphere—for, in Braudel’s own words, “the present moment stems simultaneously from yesterday, the day before yesterday, and the distant past.”

The role of the short-term approach as a teaching method is certainly not denied, as it has long served to conceptualize history and situate students temporally through periodization and the use of dates; however, it is limited to categorizing data by time rather than space, thereby preventing a reflective and critical examination of the motivations behind major events.

### **TRADITIONALISM IN THE TEACHING OF HISTORY**

One of the main problems with history in basic education is the way it is perceived and, above all, how it is taught in the classroom. History has been viewed as a subject that is reduced solely to a myriad of dates, periodization, and memorization, which do little to

to generate a reflective analysis of the historiographical patterns that may underlie a historical process or event.<sup>2</sup>

The traditional teaching of history that remains prevalent in classrooms today can be described as a set of methods dating back to the 18th century, with the Enlightenment and encyclopedism (Lobo, 2020)—from which the narrative and periodization of history stem—or to 19th-century positivism, where the history of “events” emerged, that is, dates and the memorization of them, where individualism is exalted and the heroic prevails (Lombardi, 2000)—characteristics of a conventional framework resulting from the Middle Ages, eminently political and anecdotal, closely linked to religious faith and the goals of the nation-state—which is anchored to a chronology of events with a Eurocentric focus and leaves no room for the heterogeneous study of different historiographical actors, for example, dividing history into stages such as “prehistory, the Middle Ages, the modern age, and the contemporary age.”

Likewise, the teaching of history is defined, just like other subjects, by the political and economic order that the ruling state seeks to instill in its students; that is to say, since the 19th century, Mexico has sought national progress and development through the industrialization of the country, meaning that the purpose of educational institutions within the state was solely to train the workforce; thus, the transmission of specific knowledge, values, and social norms, in addition to technical content, was reduced to mere transmission and memorization (Mancillas, 2023), paving the way for the central problem that currently affects elementary schools.

It is true that basic education must educate students and prepare them to be active members of society. The traditional model emphasizes that students follow the state’s rules step by step through the repetitive accumulation of information and decontextualized content, viewing students as passive elements within the classroom and neglecting key aspects such as student creativity. Furthermore, within this model, the teacher is the only one who plays an active role in the classroom, relying on a lecture-style format (Mancillas, 2023). In itself, the traditional method of teaching history mentioned above can be helpful in organizing historical events along with their dates, allowing students to become familiar with abstract concepts and situate themselves in time; however, it has its limitations

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<sup>2</sup> “Historiography” refers to the scientific and critical study of how history is written, based on the analysis of sources and historians’ interpretations over time (UNIR, 2021).

the teacher to focus solely on major events, thereby limiting students' ability to engage in historiographical or critical reflection on their everyday contexts and, in turn, to develop historical thinking, as proposed by Pierre Vilar.

## **DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

Once both approaches—the concept of the long duration and the traditional method—have been analyzed, it is important to engage in a discussion or comparison of both approaches to the teaching of history.

It is commonly believed that the critical study of history is intended for young people or adults (Lombardi, 2000), due to the abstract complexities that arise from analyzing historical processes, as well as the demands and challenges faced by history teachers in helping their students situate themselves in time and space, that is, to understand the temporal relevance of what happened 200 years ago and, at the same time, to grasp the social and material conditions that allowed that historical event to occur. In this sense, it is understood that the traditional method focuses on specifying the chronology of dates so that students can learn, remember, and situate themselves in time, but in most cases, students do not internalize these contexts, leaving the learning confined to the classroom. In this context, the concept of the long duration takes on meaning and importance, for as students grow older, history can be oriented toward the interpretation of social or cultural events, which better facilitate the explanation of these historical processes. The long duration focuses on the meanings of historical events, social relations, and all the actions that allow an event to develop and occur, providing teachers with greater tools so that students can relate their context to the outcomes of these processes and understand that these processes can unfold in a non-linear manner over decades, culminating in the most striking explosive event.

## **THE LONG TERM VERSUS TRADITIONALISM**

Braudel (1970), in his work on the long duration, mentions the potential benefits of conceiving history as an extensive, non-linear process with diverse meanings that shape historical outcomes. This approach helps us better understand the evolution of these processes in contrast to the short-term perspective and historical traditionalism, which focus on major events that hinder reflective and critical analysis, leaving us with anecdotal knowledge confined to the specific date on which they occurred.

But what specific differences exist between the two when applied as teaching methods? First, we must consider the objectives of the history curriculum within the framework of the new Mexican school system: it seeks to vindicate the country’s indigenous peoples and, above all, non-Western cultures, in order to prioritize ancestral knowledge—specifically their customs and traditions. To achieve this, a new vision of historical concepts is needed, rooted in the decolonization of education and, above all, in an even deeper analysis of social and cultural relations and their political and economic impact. Therefore, using the long-term approach allows for a study of the aforementioned concepts, traditions, and customs, but above all, it allows students to visualize the entire process over time; it also enables them to grasp its implications in the current context and within the student’s own cultural framework, positioning them as historical subjects and helping them connect history to their daily lives.

In contrast to traditionalism, which focuses on discipline, memorization, repetition, and cumulative knowledge devoid of contextual analysis, maintaining a passive role as a recipient of knowledge aimed at achieving results in punitive and cumulative assessments—an approach that does little to foster a critical and historical analysis of historical events within their social context—and leading to the perception that the past has no impact on the present or the future. To facilitate a better analysis of these differences, the following is presented:

**Table 1.** *Comparison of the two methods.*

<b>The long duration</b>	<b>Traditional method</b>
Meaning in historical processes	Memorization of historical processes
Historical analysis of social events that impact their everyday context	Content taken out of context
Historical thinking	Cumulative knowledge
Long-term processes	Chronology of events
Social and cultural development	Individualism and heroism prevail
Allows for formative assessment	Punitive and cumulative assessments
Encourages teacher-student interaction and the exchange of experiences and knowledge	Encourages the lecture format and the teacher as the sole active agent in the classroom

**Source:** *Author’s own work based on Mancillas (2023)*

The table above presents a comparison, offering a broader view of the potential differences between the two methods and highlighting the advantages of applying Braudel's approach to the reflection on and conception of history. This approach allows for an examination of the meanings of social and cultural developments as opposed to individualism and historical heroism in historical events, fostering formative assessment based on students' analyses and reflections.

It is essential to fully grasp the table above, as teachers must understand that the student must become the active center of the classroom, setting aside traditional teaching parameters, where the extended duration applied as a teaching method takes on importance due to the opportunities it provides for the learner to reflect on and analyze their immediate reality, their daily life, and above all, their actions as a historical subject, through the exploration of the social and cultural environments that surround them, as well as the political and economic actions of their nation-state, encouraging formative assessments (according to the NEM), highlighting their capabilities, creative skills, and everyday experiences where they create their own knowledge based on historical thinking achieved through reflections stemming from the long-term approach, as opposed to the mere memorization and categorization of their daily lives within a historical framework of events.

That said, one of the fundamental requirements for successfully applying the long-term approach to history teaching in elementary and secondary education is that history teachers internalize the concept in their discourse; that is, they must understand the differences between short-term perspectives and the significance of historical events by relating them to immediate reality, thereby linking time to historical processes and their repercussions in the present. In this way, the teacher will enable students to relate their reality as a consequence and result of these historical processes, thereby fostering historical and critical thinking about their daily lives and identifying the possible historical variables present in their current reality.

Another objective is for the teacher to break down the traditional epistemological structures in education—originating from 19th-century positivism—centered on memorization and the teacher's lecture-style discourse, which turns students into passive participants in the classroom. Instead, knowledge and classroom focus should shift toward the student, their analysis, and their participation, recognizing that what happened yesterday will have an impact on tomorrow.

To ensure that teachers fully understand the differences between short-term and long-term perspectives as applied to topics within the history curriculum, two examples are proposed: one focusing on

and the other in Mexican history, which can be used to illustrate the characteristics of each topic. We begin by revisiting the example mentioned earlier: World War I as one of the fundamental topics in history education. If analyzed in the traditional manner, the primary cause in the short-term perspective would be the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in June 1914, marking the start of the conflict between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Kingdom of Serbia. From there, the stages of the war would be outlined: the war of movement, the trench war, and its conclusion. Under this traditional framework, the characteristics of each stage, their dates, chronology, and notable figures—from both the Allied and Central Powers—are explained. This is best illustrated in the following table:

**Table 2.** *Example of the application of the traditional method.*

<b>Short time frame</b>	Dates of the conflict: 1914–1918
<b>Chronology of events</b>	Assassination of the Archduke Stages of the conflict Major battles
<b>Individualism and Heroism</b>	Mention of the main figures in the conflict, categorized as leaders, presidents, and emperors
<b>Classification</b>	Overview of alliances and the division of power in nation-states

**Source:** *Prepared by the author based on Lozano (2011).*

Now, if this same topic is analyzed from the perspective of the long-term method, one must draw on the meanings inherent in each historical event, just as in the short-term approach; that is, to conduct an initial analysis, it is necessary to periodize the conflict, identify the dates, and catalog its causes and stages of development, as in the previous method, but the difference lies in the fact that the assassination of the Archduke would not only be studied as a cause, but would be shown as an explosive event resulting from the meanings within the historical event, with the existing nationalisms in the Balkan countries—such as the Kingdom of Serbia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire itself, the Kingdom of Montenegro, the Kingdom of Bulgaria, etc.—as well as the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913, which exacerbated this nationalist sentiment.

Similarly, from a long-term perspective, we would analyze the unification of Germany in 1873, which reshaped the geopolitical landscape in Europe and sparked an imperialist struggle in Africa that led to conflicts between France and the German Empire. One could even consider the Congress of Vienna in 1814 following Napoleon’s defeat, which took place 100 years before World War I and would be classified among the long-term processes mentioned by Braudel. This is illustrated in the following table:

**Table 3.** *Illustration of the application of the long-term method.*

<b>Catalyzing Event</b>	Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand
<b>Long-term event</b>	Congress of Vienna of 1814
<b>Significance in the historical process</b>	German unification of 1873 Nationalisms existing in 1914 The imperialist struggle between France, the German Empire, and the United Kingdom Territorial struggles in both Europe and Africa

**Source:** *Author’s own work based on Lozano (2011).*

By analyzing both examples using the tables, it becomes clear that the traditional method omits various causes that could provide teachers with more tools for historical analysis, as it focuses solely on major events and dates, making a critical analysis of the events and the historical process itself impossible, compared to the insights derived from a historical analysis of the meanings and causalities that trigger the conflict or, over a long period, shape the political, economic, social, and cultural landscape that culminates in the assassination of the Archduke and, with it, the onset of the conflict.

Now, if we apply these same themes to the history of Mexico—specifically the Mexican Revolution, which is a central topic in the history curriculum—and examine it from a traditional perspective, we would identify the explosive event and primary cause as the armed uprising led by Francisco I. Madero under the Plan of San Luis, on November 28, 1910, marking the beginning of the Mexican Revolution. From this moment, the conflict would be periodized into the stages of the movement—Maderismo, Huertismo, the constitutionalist struggle, and the factional struggle—focusing solely on the dates, characteristics, and descriptions of each stage, as well as

the individualism of each figure and their heroic tendencies, as is the case with Francisco I. Madero, Emiliano Zapata, Francisco Villa, Venustiano Carranza, among others. The following is observed:

**Table 4.** *Example of the application of the traditional method.*

Short period	Dates of the conflict: 1910–1920
<b>Chronology of events</b>	Madero’s armed uprising with the Plan of San Luis Stages of the revolution Major battles
<b>Individualism and sense of heroism</b>	Mention of the main figures in the conflict, focusing on leaders and presidents
<b>Classification</b>	Overview of the heroic qualities of each figure and the alliances formed during the revolution

**Source:** *Author’s own work based on Ávila (2021).*

Following the same line of reasoning, if we examine the Mexican Revolution through the lens of the “longue durée,” we would conclude that the pivotal event is indeed the Plan of San Luis, which provides a framework for situating the conflict in time and space and allows for a periodization of the short-term, but within the significance of these events, it would be necessary to analyze the Porfirian government, the strikes in Río Blanco and Cananea, the difficulties and power divisions within the federal government stemming from the absence of a single party, along with the 1906 platform of the Mexican Liberal Party, the economic, political, and social inequalities throughout the territory, the conflicts of interest and power between the Porfirian government and the United States, and also Madero’s presidential campaign, along with his subsequent defeat and his arrest by the Porfirian government, culminating in his flight to the United States, where he proclaimed the Plan of San Luis in San Antonio, Texas.

Furthermore, it would be necessary to understand the relationship between Madero and Zapata that led to the Plan of Iguala in 1911, the significance of the coup d’état carried out by Victoriano Huerta, and the motivations stemming from this event that led Carranza to proclaim the Plan of Guadalupe and take up arms; subsequently, the power struggle with Villa and the Convention of Aguascalientes in 1914, among many other significant events

that provide history teachers with the necessary tools to conduct a reflective analysis of the revolution, its events, and processes, thereby enabling students to internalize these concepts in their daily lives and shape their perceptions of social and cultural struggles within the country. This is illustrated by the following:

**Table 5.** *Example of the application of the long-term method.*

<b>Explosive event</b>	San Luis Plan by Madero
<b>Long-duration event</b>	Porfirio Díaz's dictatorship
<b>Significance in the historical process</b>	The Cananea and Río Blanco Strikes The Absence of a Single Party Conflicts between the Porfirista government and the United States 1910 elections, in which Díaz wins again Madero's arrest and escape Social considerations behind the Iguala Plan

**Source:** *Author's own work based on Ávila (2021).*

Once the tables presented have been analyzed, taking both methods into account, it becomes clear how important it is to reflect on the social and cultural causes within the movement so that students can perceive the conflict as a series of events marked by social and political struggle, thus the long-term method allows for observations of the meanings behind each explosive event, fostering historical and critical thinking that students can internalize and compare with their immediate realities, within their daily lives and fostering reflection based on their experiences, in contrast to the traditional method, which merely confines the process to dates, forcing students to simply memorize events and generating passive, repetitive knowledge that has little impact on students' reflective analysis.

It is possible that the use of the long-term approach allows the teacher to encourage students to reflect on the topics and, in turn, demonstrates that historical events can repeat themselves or follow a similar causal pattern, enabling students to compare their immediate reality with past events.

Furthermore, it provides teachers with new tools to encourage historical thinking and interest in the subject, moving away from punitive assessments and rote memorization for knowledge-based exams, and instead focusing on formative assessment centered on students' reflections.

## CONCLUSIONS

Adopting the long-term method offers a pedagogical alternative that allows for the articulation of events, structures, and gradual changes, making it easier for students to identify continuities and ruptures in historical processes. In this way, history ceases to be perceived as a "list of events" and becomes a tool for interpreting contemporary issues, valuing cultural diversity, and developing a critical perspective on Mexico's past and present.

It is of great importance to consider Braudel's concept of the "long duration" within new teaching methods, as it provides the necessary tools for history teachers to reinterpret the events that underpin historical processes, enabling students to perceive the subject not as a linear sequence of facts and dates, but as long-term, gradual processes that shape the immediate realities of society through the analysis of social and cultural changes. This enables teachers to break down all the epistemological barriers instilled by traditional methods rooted in positivism, paving the way for the development of new skills, historical and critical thinking, the decolonization of education, and the vindication of the indigenous, non-Western cultures of the country and the continent, as proposed by the New Mexican School.

## FUTURE WORK

It is hoped that this research will contribute to the ongoing decolonization processes in education, which are becoming increasingly prevalent in teaching methodologies. It is also hoped that it will facilitate the continued experimental application of the long-term method in a classroom setting with a specific secondary school population, and evaluate students' learning progress in comparison with the traditional methods currently used in elementary education.

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