Recontextualising principles for the selection, sequencing and progression of history knowledge in four school curricula

Carol Bertram

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to analyse and compare four high school history curriculum documents with regard to how they select, sequence and make clear the progression of history knowledge. Thereafter the aim is to establish if there are any recontextualising principles that can be drawn from the comparison. The paper analyses secondary school curriculum documents from South Africa, Canada (British Columbia), Singapore and Kenya. A review of the history education literature indicates that the following concepts are productive when analysing history curriculum documents: the purpose of school history, the knowledge structure of the discipline and the distinction between substantive and procedural knowledge (or first and second order concepts) in history. These concepts thus informed a content analysis of the curriculum documents. The findings show that a memory history approach informs the Kenyan curriculum, while South Africa, Singapore and British Columbia take a disciplinary history approach. This informs the depth and breadth of the substantive knowledge that is selected, and highlights the first recontextualising principle, which is space. Curriculum designers make selections about the extent to which the history content is local, regional, national or international. The second principle is chronology, which is the key organising principle for the sequencing of content in all four curricula. The third principle relates to the conceptual progression of the substantive concepts, which is the extent to which there is progression from generic concepts, to unique, contextualised historical concepts to universal decontextualised historical concepts. The fourth principle is the extent to which the curricula choose to develop procedural knowledge in the discipline. It is not clear how disciplinary procedural knowledge finds progression in these four curricula. Research has been done on progression in historical thinking in classrooms, but this is not reflected in these curriculum documents, which do not map progression in procedural knowledge clearly.

Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to analyse and compare how a range of school history curriculum documents select and sequence history knowledge, and to discuss the implications of the sequencing choices for the progression of substantive and procedural knowledge. A second purpose is to identify the recontextualising principles that can be drawn from this comparison. It engages with the question of how school history, as exemplified in a selection of curriculum documents, finds its 'epistemic ascent' (Winch, 2013). The research question is: What are the recontextualising principles that inform the selection, sequencing and progression of both substantive and procedural history knowledge in a selection of school curriculum documents? The question is a challenging one as sequencing and progression seem to be easier to track in school subjects such as physics, life sciences, accounting, mathematics and economics than in subjects like history and languages. To do so, I draw on theoretical concepts from Bernstein and other theories within the field of sociology of knowledge, as well as research within the field of history education.

Recontextualisation in the pedagogic device

The broad theoretical framework which informs this study is Bernstein's (2000) notion of the pedagogic device. The pedagogic device is an attempt to describe the general principles which underlie the transformation of knowledge into pedagogic communication (Bernstein, 1996; Hugo and Bertram, 2009). Bernstein describes three fields of activity that make up the pedagogic device. These are a field of production, where knowledge is developed and produced (usually in research institutions and universities); a field of recontextualisation where knowledge is selected from the field of production and is pedagogised and relocated into curriculum documents, textbooks and teacher guides and finally a field of reproduction which is where teachers further adapt and/or adopt the requirements of policy in their classrooms. The pedagogic device suggests that there is a set of rules or criteria (called recontextualising rules) which govern the ways in which knowledge is converted into curricula (Maton and Muller, 2007; Singh, 2002), and becomes educational knowledge, or school knowledge (Shay, 2012).

There are differing perspectives on the relationship between academic disciplines and their school curriculum. Knowledge structures are not curriculum structures (Maton and Muller, 2007) and it is not taken for granted that there should be a strong link between the field of production and field of recontextualisation. The selection of content in school history cannot simply be logically derived from the discipline (Yates, 2014), but is also influenced by how a country understands the purpose of school history, by context and by social issues at the time of curriculum design. Guyver's (2007) comparison of the English, New Zealand and South African history curriculum engages with the ways in which history content was balanced regarding broad periods of time and place, the issue of national identity and of teacher autonomy in implementing the curriculum. The recontextualising processes are influenced both by logics internal to the discipline of history as well as external logics, such as the role that school history plays in regarding national identity and citizenship (Lilliedahl, 2015).

Literature review

In this section, I review the literature and research in the field of history education and curriculum (selection and sequencing of knowledge), in order to develop a set of concepts to structure the analysis of the curriculum documents. The section discusses the following concepts: the purpose of school history, the knowledge structure of the discipline and the distinction between substantive and procedural knowledge (often also called first and second order concepts) in history.

The way that a country understands the purpose of school history has a major influence on the selection of content. One approach to school history promotes knowledge of national history and national values in the interests of preserving collective memory and fostering national identity, while another approach is based on a disciplinary focus supported by historical thinking, where the content is not dominated by the nation but has become diversified and globalised (Guyver, 2013). Similarly, Lévesque (2008) makes a helpful distinction between 'Memory-history' and 'Disciplinary-history', where he describes Memory-history as a 'factual' tradition which focuses on commemoration, memory and heritage, where history can be known by remembering it. Tosh (2006) uses the term social memory to allude to the same idea, where history is about belief and not enquiry. Memory-history is

often used to support a particular version of a national history. Wertsch's (2002) term for this category is collective history, which is the usable past created by those in positions of power to serve particular political and identity needs. In contrast to this, Disciplinary-history is about learning to think historically using specific disciplinary processes, such as "a lengthy immersion in the primary sources, a deliberate shedding of present-day assumptions and a rare degree of empathy and imagination" (Tosh, 2006, p.12). It acknowledges a range of different perspectives, recognises ambiguity and separates the past from the present (Wertsch, 2002).

Thus a history curriculum informed by the memory or collective history approach would focus predominantly on a national history, while a disciplinary history approach would select more globalised content. Although the two approaches are generally seen as polar opposites, it may be more useful to imagine them on a continuum, as many curriculum documents work with the tension between the two approaches.

The selection and sequencing of content is also influenced by the knowledge structure of history as a discipline. Bernstein (1999) distinguished between two forms of discourse: vertical and horizontal. He argues that horizontal discourse is akin to everyday knowledge which is context-specific and dependent on context. In contrast to this, vertical discourse "takes the form of a coherent, explicit and systematically principled structure" (Bernstein, 1999, p.160), and it is the discourse that is taught officially at school and university. In order to describe the different forms taken by vertical discourses, Bernstein provides a distinction between hierarchical knowledge structures and horizontal knowledge structures. He suggests that horizontal knowledge structures consist of a "series of specialised languages with specialised modes of interrogation and criteria for the construction and circulation of texts" (1999, p.162), while hierarchical knowledge structures have a "coherent, explicit and systematically principled structure" (p.161). Subjects in the humanities and social sciences like literature, sociology, history and cultural studies are generally seen as horizontal knowledge structures.

Disciplines differ according to both the way in which they find conceptual advancement and by their form of objectivity (Young and Muller, 2010). While the vertical knowledge structures (such as the natural sciences) have long sequences of hierarchically-related concepts, a discipline like history has a macro-organising principle which is time or chronology. The object of study in history is social rather than natural, and the more social the object of study,

"the greater is the limit on the object being subsumed by the concepts of the discipline" (p.21).

The distinction between substantive and procedural knowledge in the discipline of history (Lee, 2004; Lee and Ashby, 2000; Lévesque, 2008; Schwab, 1978) is a useful analytic tool for curriculum analysis. Since there are not hierarchical sets of concepts that must be mastered in the discipline, it has been argued that History finds progression and verticality more in the procedural knowledge and less so in substantive knowledge, which tends to be organised in chronological eras or themes (Martin, 2007, Muller, 2012). Substantive history knowledge or first order concepts encompass an understanding of space, place and time. This means knowing what happened, why and when; knowing the propositions of history which are constructed by historians using their procedural investigations. It includes knowledge of the key concepts and periods which make up the content of history – periods such as the Ming Dynasty, Industrial Revolution, the Cold War and concepts such as communism, capitalism, colonialism, feudalism and monarchy.

Procedural knowledge, or second order concepts (Lee and Ashby, 2000), are the organising ideas which give meaning and structure to events in history. These are the concepts that give shape to historical practice and thinking about the past. They are the ideas about the nature and status of historical accounts, about how historians read evidence and construct explanations and arguments using that evidence. The field of history education in Britain, the USA, Canada and Australia now has established a fairly well-accepted set of second order concepts that describe what it means for a student to think historically (Lévesque, 2008; Roberts, 2013; Seixas, 2006). For example, the Canadian Centre for the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness describe historical thinking as the ability to establish historical significance, use primary source evidence, identify continuity and change, analyse cause and consequence, take historical perspectives and understand the moral dimension of historical interpretations (Seixas, 2006). There is a substantial amount of research now on the principles which inform historical thinking and how these are applicable for school history (Lévesque, 2008; Seixas, 2006; Wineburg, 2001). The underpinning assumption is that school learners need to master both procedural modes of interrogation and substantive knowledge of history, which can only be done by them 'doing history' and not simply by learning history (Bertram, 2012).

Both forms of knowledge are recontextualised as curriculum designers make selection choices regarding what substantive and procedural knowledge will be covered in the curriculum, how it will be sequenced and paced across the grades. Thus the distinction between substantive and procedural knowledge is used in the curriculum analysis presented here, informed by the assumption that there are different principles of sequencing and progression which inform these two knowledge domains.

The next section engages with studies that illuminate the principles that may inform the sequencing and progression of substantive and procedural knowledge.

With regard to substantive knowledge, Adey (1997) argues that there are three key dimensions of progression in a curriculum. These are breadth of content (which is how many topics are covered), the depth of knowledge in each topic and thirdly, the conceptual complexity, which is the most important dimension as it encompasses the relationships and connections between facts. He argues that conceptual complexity is seen when a series of facts are grouped together into a concept, which are then further grouped to higher order concepts. For example, all the facts about Vasco de Gama's voyages could be grouped into the topic of 'voyages of discovery', which could also be further generalised into an understanding of the concept of colonisation. Adey argues that these principles are useful for understanding both science and history curricula (and thus both hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures). However, he focuses only on progression of the substantive knowledge of a curriculum, and not on its modes of enquiry. He also offers no real in depth engagement with progression beyond these very broad principles and does not engage with the principles of what makes something a higher order concept.

Referring particularly to concepts in history, Haenen and Schrijnemakers (1998) identify three types of historical concepts. These are 1) everyday concepts which are not specifically historical but are used in other subjects and in commonsense ways (e.g. century, government, law); 2) unique historical concepts which is a construct that applies to only one thing, person, event or period (e.g. the Battle of the Somme, Nelson Mandela, the French Revolution; Da Gama's 'voyages of discovery'); and 3) inclusive historical concepts which are universal and inclusive of the unique concepts (e.g. world war, statesman, revolution, colonisation). Regarding complexity, it is implicit that universal and more abstract concepts are more challenging to grasp that

concrete and unique concepts, but there is still no explicit engagement with what might make some inclusive concepts more complex than others.

With regard to progression in the procedural or second order history concepts, Research on Project Chata (Concepts of History and Teaching Approaches) in Britain has done much work on the procedural knowledge of history, such as how learners develop empathy over time and on how learners understand historical accounts. For example, Lee and Shemilt (2004) show a taxonomy of progression of how learners might shift from understanding the nature of history as true stories about the past, to understanding the reasons for differences in accounts. At level 1, learners understand history simply as stories that exist, and are unable to engage meaningfully with why two stories about the same thing may be different. Their understanding is that an historical account has a one-on-one relationship with the past. At the most sophisticated level 6, learners understand that differences in accounts show that the past is (re) constructed in order to answer questions in accordance with particular criteria. This serves as a clear example of mapping progression in one aspect of procedural knowledge.

Taking a historical perspective and understanding historical time are key second order concepts. Amongst the studies which engage with the concept of time in history, Coffin's (2006a, 2006b) work focuses on students' writing using the theoretical resources of systemic functional linguistics. She found that as students progressed through the curriculum, they moved away from personal construals of time toward more institutionalised and universal construals of time. This is seen in the way that they start to use concepts like 'the Great Depression' to refer to a particular era in the USA from the late 1920s to the 1930s. Essentially this is progression, moving from more concrete descriptions of time, to more abstract, universal and 'historically labelled' stretches of time (Coffin, 2006b, p.228). Also working within systemic functional linguistics, Martin (2007) provides a typology of history genres that learners need to be able to write. He provides a cline which describes how genres move from 'commonsense' to 'uncommon sense', where commonsense genres are personal and autobiographical accounts, and uncommon sense genres are multi-sided discussions which involve judgements (pp.58, 59). Coffin's work points to how using unique and universal historical concepts can signal progression within both substantive and procedural knowledge.

All of these studies are located within the field of reproduction, focusing on pedagogy or on learners' written productions. They do not focus particularly on how progression may be described in curriculum documents. The Canadian Historical Thinking Project (Seixas, 2006) does describe the historical thinking concepts in terms of what learners should be able to do 'at the most sophisticated level', but this progression is not clearly articulated. A more recent attempt to map the progression of historical thinking is shown by Ford and Hibbert (2013) as a response to curriculum policy change in Britain where the Key Stage attainment levels have been removed from the National Curriculum. They draw on Morton and Seixas (2012) and describe how learners may map their own progression to mastery within each concept, but this work is in the discussion phase.

In summary, regarding substantive knowledge, research suggests there is progression from everyday concepts to unique events and people, to universal concepts (Haenen and Schrijnemakers, 1998) but there is little engagement about why some universal concepts may be more conceptually demanding than others, or why (and if) some should be learned before others. Research on history learners' written work suggests that progression is found in the move from commonsense, contextualised, and individual narratives to uncommonsense, decontextualised and universal accounts (Coffin, 2006a; Martin, 2007). This echoes Maton's concept of semantic gravity, which describes the shift from contextualised to decontextualised knowledge, which he argues is essential to cumulative learning (see Matruglio, Maton, and Martin, 2013). The concepts of contextualised and decontextualised knowledge are useful principles for describing sequencing and progression in history. In curriculum documents, this is often seen by starting in the lower grades with narratives that are concrete and embedded in local contexts rather than concepts that are abstract and often ideological.

Progression of second order concepts have been well researched in classrooms, for example, there is classroom-based research on how learners develop empathy and learn to understand the nature of historical accounts (Lee and Shemilt, 2004). But there do not seem to be any clear principles of how these may be sequenced in a curriculum document.

This literature review points to a set of concepts which can be used to frame the analysis of the curriculum documents. These are: the purpose of school history; the distinction between substantive and procedural knowledge;

breadth and depth of substantive knowledge; the conceptual focus of substantive knowledge and progression of procedural knowledge.

Methodology

The method used for the study is content analysis of secondary school history curriculum documents from the following four countries: South Africa, Singapore, Canada (British Columbia) and Kenya. The literature review has shown how the set of analytic concepts which informed the analysis were derived from previous studies in history education. No ethical clearance is required as these documents are in the public domain, and the study does not involve any human subjects. The documents were retrieved from the internet and in the case of Kenya, from the Ministry of Education. The currency of the documents was confirmed via the High Commissions and the Curriculum and Resource learning division in British Columbia.

These countries were selected as they each show a high performance in the international benchmarking tests.[1] The two African countries are similar in population size, but South Africa has a much higher Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita than Kenya. Canada (British Columbia) and Singapore are very closely matched in terms of population size and GDP per capita with very high scores on the Human Development Index.

The four countries have education systems which differ in terms of resourcing, structure and purpose but all the countries share a colonial past. The study focuses on the official curriculum for the final two years of the Canadian (British Columbian) school system (Grade 11 and 12), the final four years of schooling in Kenya (Form I– IV), the final three years in South Africa (Grades 10, 11 and 12), and the Upper Secondary syllabus in Singapore. This is the Normal (Academic) level at Secondary Year 4 and the Ordinary level at Secondary Year 5, while the pre-university curricula are Higher 1, 2 and 3 (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2012).

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[1] The curricula selected were chosen for a broader study initiated by Umalusi, the body which maintains and sets standards for education in South Africa. The purpose was for an International Benchmarking Comparative Study.

Table 1: Comparison of the four countries regarding population, income and schooling[2]

	Canada (British Columbia)	Kenya	Singapore	South Africa
Population and economic data				
Size of population	4.4 m	44 m	5.4 m	51.7 m
GDP per capita	$48 000	$1 800	$50 000	$11 900
Human Development Index	0.991 (v. high) (Canada)	0.519 (Low)	0.895 (v. high)	0.629 (med)
School and curriculum				
Student enrolment (all schools)	620 280 (2012)	7.8 million (2012)	487 342 (2012)	12.2 million (2011)
No. of years of schooling	K – 12	8 (primary) 4 (secondary)	6 (primary) 4–5 (secondary)	7 (primary) 5 (secondary)
Student: educator ratio	16.6	29.1 (secondary school)	14.9 (secondary school)	29
School leaving certificate	British Columbia Certificate of Graduation or "Dogwood Diploma"	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education at the end of Form VI	GCE 'N' level at the end of Secondary 4. GCE 'O' level at the end of secondary 5. GCE (Advanced level) – pre-university course	National Senior Certificate at the end of Grade 12
Number of curriculum documents analysed	Gr. 11 Social Studies (one doc). Gr. 12 History (one doc) (239 pp. for 2 docs)	One document for Form 1 – 4 (21 pp.)	One GCE O level document. One H1 level doc. One H2 level doc. (58 pp. for 3 docs)	One document for Grades 10 – 12 (52 pp.)

[2] South African Department of Basic Education (2013) Education Statistics in South Africa 2011. Pretoria.
Ministry of Education (2013) Education Statistics Digest 2013. Singapore.
British Columbia Teachers' Federation (2012) 2012 British Columbia Education Facts. Vancouver
http://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/stats/Education/Pupil--teacher-ratio%2C-secondary Accessed 21 April 2014
Mathews Ndanyi, *The Star*. Kenya: Schools enrolment rises from 7.6 million in 2012. 11 June 2012.
http://allafrica.com/stories/201206130125.html accessed 1 May 2014.

Broad descriptive overview of the curriculum documents

The four sets of curriculum texts vary in length and organisation.[3] The Canadian (British Columbia) curriculum comprises two very lengthy documents, one for Grade 11 Social Studies, and one for Grade 12 History. Grade 11 Social Studies is structured according to themes, for example *Society and Identity*, *Government and Politics, Autonomy and International Involvement* and *Human Geography*. The Year 12 History curriculum focuses on world history and not on the history of Canada. Content is described in terms of prescribed learning outcomes and suggested achievement indicators and the curriculum provides great detail on possible classroom activities and assessment tasks.

All Singapore documents have an introduction which describes the broad desired outcomes of education and history education in particular. Then the aims, the learning outcomes, the assessment objectives and the assessment format are described. The Syllabus Outline clearly describes the content according to an overall theme (e.g. for H1, International History 1945 – 2000), then topics within this theme (e.g. The Cold War and how it shaped the world), the content that relates to the topic (e.g. the rise of the USA and USSR as superpowers), the learning outcomes (e.g. evaluate the different historical interpretations of the origins of the Cold War), concepts (e.g. ideology – Iron Curtain) and values and attitudes (e.g. preserving peace).

Kenya has only one brief (21 pages) document for Forms One to Four. The document provides specific objectives and content for every topic. The objectives are content-based and not skills-based. The main focus of the content is on Kenya and Africa, with minimal focus on world history.

The South African curriculum is the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Department of Basic Education, 2011) which was implemented in 2012 in Grade 10 classrooms. The CAPS is a revision and clarification of the National Curriculum Statements (2003). The CAPS is 52 pages long, and includes the aims and skills of history, the content topics for Grades 10- 12, framed as key questions, and a section on assessment, which includes the examination guidelines for the Grade 12 examination.

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[3] The titles of the documents are listed in the Appendix at the end of the article.

Findings

The analysis is presented under the following sections: the purpose of school history in the four curricula, the breadth and depth of substantive knowledge, the sequencing and conceptual progression of substantive knowledge and progression of procedural knowledge.

The purpose of school history

The Singapore, South African and British Columbian curricula all have a similar understanding of school history primarily as a process of enquiry, or Disciplinary-history, to use Lévesque's term.

The South African curriculum states that "History is about learning how to think about the past, which affects the present, in a disciplined way. History is a process of enquiry. Therefore, it is about asking questions of the past and using evidence critically about the stories people tell us about the past." (Department of Basic Education, 2011, p.8). Singapore takes the same perspective, with both the Normal (Academic) Level syllabus and the Ordinary Level emphasising the importance of engaging learners actively in historical enquiry, acquiring knowledge and understanding of various eras and understanding different representations of the past (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2013). The Canadian (British Columbia) curriculum states that the study of history is about analysing primary and secondary sources, assessing the significance of events and demonstrating historical empathy (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2006). These three curricula have similar objectives, which are closely aligned to the concepts which underpin historical thinking, namely that learners need to: develop the ability to undertake a process of historical enquiry based on skills; develop an understanding of historical concepts, including historical sources and evidence; explain the interplay of cause and effect; change and continuity of historical events and think independently and make informed judgement of issues. These curricula also understand that school history does have a role to play in developing citizenship (at both local and global level), encouraging civic responsibility, promoting human rights and challenging prejudice.

The Kenyan curriculum understands the purpose of history to be primarily about developing learners' understanding about the organisation of African

societies, so that they can understand the present and plan for the future (Republic of Kenya Ministry of Education, 2002). I would describe this as a memory history approach, with a strong focus on developing a sense of national pride patriotic citizens committed to the development of the country. The content knowledge focuses on knowing history and government structures and not on developing learners' historical thinking or understanding history as a process of enquiry. The objectives of the Kenya curriculum are that learners should: Recognise and appreciate the importance of studying History and Government; acquire knowledge, ability and show appreciation for critical historical analysis of socio-economic and political organisation of African societies; understand and show appreciation of the rights, privileges and obligations of oneself and others for promotion of a just and peaceful society; promote a sense of nationalism, patriotism and national unity; identify, assess and appreciate the rich and varied culture of the Kenyan people; promote a sense of awareness and need for a functional democracy of the Kenyan people and other nations; and derive through the study of History and Government an interest in further learning (2002, p.4).

So the key difference is that the Kenyan curriculum understands school history as memory-history, which takes a local, nationalistic stance on citizenship, while the other three curricula take a disciplinary approach and aim to develop both local and global citizens. The next section shows how the understanding of the purpose of school history influences the selection of content.

Breadth and depth of substantive knowledge

There is a great difference between the four curricula in terms of the nature and the breadth of content that is covered. This is due mostly to the nature of the national history in each country, and the different emphasis that each curriculum places on world history. There are not many topics that could be described as 'core' across all four curricula. The common content from twentieth century world history is the two world wars and the Cold War. Colonisation is covered in some depth in South Africa, Kenya and Singapore and touched on in the Grade 12 British Columbian curriculum. In history curricula, breadth is determined by the extent of the time period that is covered, as well as the extent to which the curriculum covers regional, national or international history.

The South African curriculum covers a broad range of content, which is arranged chronologically across the three school years. It starts with the state of the world in 1600 and continues to the present, dealing with issues of globalisation. There is a virtually equal balance between world and South African history. A topic such as 'nationalisms' includes both international examples (the Middle East, Ghana) and South African examples (African and Afrikaner nationalism). The content coverage is broad and comprehensive.

In Canada (British Columbia), the Social Studies 11 curriculum relates only to Canadian history. Although the themes of *Politics and Government, Autonomy and International Involvement* and *Society and Identity*, do cover history, the word 'history' is never used. The history part of the curriculum is related to how Canada arrived at its present situation – for instance how different groups came to Canada as a result of immigration. Content is presented in an integrated way, and deals with the social identity of being Canadian, on social issues in Canada (such as the role of women, the First Nation people, globalisation and the environment) and understanding how government works.

British Columbian History 12 covers world history from 1919–1991. Neither Grade 11 nor 12 covers history topics prior to 1919, certainly none on world history. The core Grade 12 curriculum covers four topics, which are four large chronological chunks from 1919 to 1991 involving the study of most major developments in Europe, Asia and the USA in each of the chosen time periods. This means that the coverage is wide and the suggested teaching methodology shows a highly constructivist approach is expected with a lot of debates, quizzes, student research and presentations.

The Singapore Normal and Ordinary levels cover the same set of topics, which is the world order from 1870 to 1991, dealing with European dominance and challenges. It further focuses on how the World Wars impacted on the Asia-Pacific in the first half of the 20th century and with the impact of the Cold War in and outside Europe. The curriculum explores how the decline of Europe and Cold War politics influenced the attainment of independence in Asian colonies. The pre-university curriculum Higher 1 and 2 covers International history from 1945–2000. It investigates the growth and problems of the global economy with specific reference to Asia and the reasons for the dominance of the USA. Another theme focus is on conflict and co-operation. It deals with topics such as the rise of religious fundamentalism, instability in the Middle East and South Asia and the political effectiveness of

the United Nations. It is highly regionalised by looking at global events and how they have impacted on Asia.

In Kenya, the curriculum aims to develop Kenyan citizens who have a good understanding of the development of Kenya. The Kenyan History syllabus is primarily centred on Kenya and Africa. Form 1 focuses on the pre-colonial era, the early inhabitants, contact with the European counties and Kenyan citizenship. Form 2 deals with the impact of the Industrial Revolution on Kenya and on Democracy and Human Rights. Form 3 covers Kenya under colonial rule, the consequent rise of African nationalism and the struggle for independence. Form 4 is the only section that deals with international events (both World Wars and the Cold War, but in minimal detail). Colonialism is dealt with only in Africa and not in other regions of the world such as South America, Asia and Australia. It emphasises African regional co-operation and identifies the social, political and economic challenges facing Kenya and other African states up to 1991. The section is concluded with the functions of government.

Sequencing of substantive knowledge

The selection of content has to be ordered in the curriculum in a particular sequence and the most common principle which informs this sequencing in these curricula is chronology of events. The South African curriculum covers the period of 1600 until the present in three school years (and includes both South African and international history); British Columbia grade 12 covers the period of 1919–1991 for international history only in one year; Singapore covers 1870–2000 in two years and Kenya covers mostly national history from the Stone Age early man [sic] until 1991 in four years.

Another sequencing principle which is present in the Singapore and South Africa curriculum is the use of universal concepts to organise the content. For example, in South Africa Grade 11, the topic on ‘nationalisms’ in South Africa, the Middle East and Africa is the organising concept, which trumps chronology in this section. Similarly, the Singapore curriculum organises the era of the late 19th century around the concept of European dominance and colonial rule, rather than strictly chronologically.

Table 2 below tabulates the differences between the four curricula in terms of the time period that is covered in each (approximate) year of study, and

whether the curriculum focuses on national history, international history, or engages with international history only from the perspective of the particular country. For example, both the Kenyan and Singapore curriculum deal with colonisation particularly from the perspective of how this impacted on Kenya, or South East Asia, respectively.

Table 2: Comparison of breadth of content in the curricula, by time period covered and national/international focus

	South Africa	Canada (British Columbia)	Singapore	Kenya
Year 9	–	–	–	'Early man' – 19th C Kenya in Africa
Year 10	1600 – 1913 National and International	–	–	17th to 19th C National and Kenya in the world
Year 11	1900 – 1960s National and International	20th C Canada in the world	1870s – 1991 South East Asia in the world	19th C – 1939 National and Kenya in the world
Year 12	1960s – PRESENT National and International	1919 – 1991 International	1945 – 2000 International	1914 – 1991 National and International

Conceptual progression of substantive knowledge

This section draws on the identification of three types of substantive history concepts, namely generic concepts; unique history concepts which refer to one person, event or period and universal history concepts which are inclusive of unique concepts (Haenen and Schrijnemakers, 1998) as the tool of analysis. These ideas are put together with the distinction between contextualised and decontextualised knowledge to create a tool that analysed:

(i) to what extent the curricula focused on generic concepts, such as government, which are not specifically specialised to history or on concepts that were particularly specialised to history (unique concepts), and

(ii) to what extent the specialised concepts related to unique and particular events and people in a specific context, or to universal, decontextualised concepts.

The figures below show the different ways in which the curricula work with substantive history concepts. For example in the Kenyan curriculum, the generic concept of government is linked to the unique context of colonial rule in Kenya. In the Singapore curriculum, government is linked to the unique context of colonial rule in Malaya, but then this is taken up a further level to a more decontextualised concept which is European imperialism.

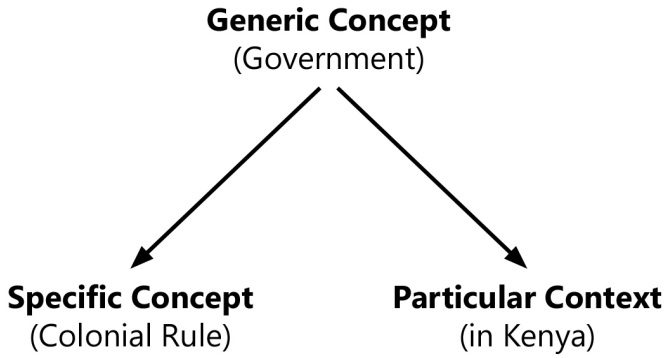

Figure 1: Example from the Kenyan curriculum showing concepts moving from a generic concept to a specific concept in a particular context.

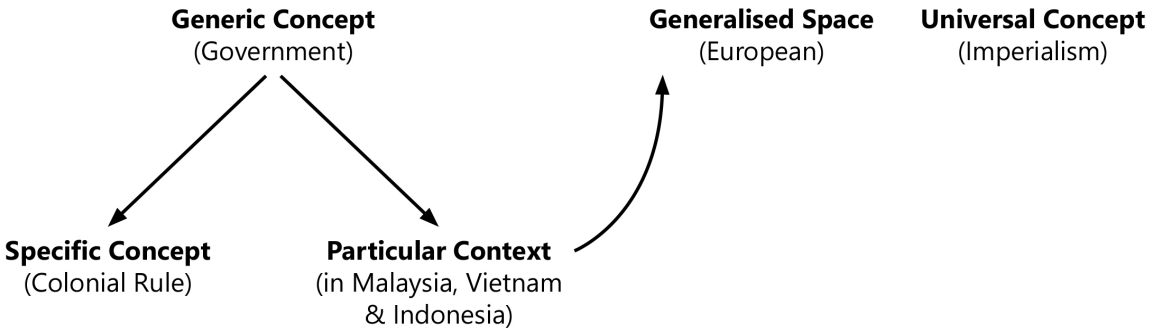

Figure 2: Example from the Singapore curriculum showing concepts moving from a generic concept to a specific concept in a particular context, and then to a universal concept in a generalised space.

Taken as a whole, the Kenyan curriculum has a stronger focus on the level of unique concepts, which focus on the particular context such as the *Lives and contributions Kenyan leaders* or *The establishment of colonial rule in Kenya*.

These are topics particular to a specific time and place, but are specialised to history and are not generic.

The Singapore and South African curricula deal with unique concepts but also move up to the level of universal, decontextualised concepts. For example, the South African curriculum covers the universal concept of eugenics, which is explored in the context of Australia and Nazi Germany (unique concepts) (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Singapore 'O' levels deal with colonisation in Asia in the specific contexts of Malaya, Vietnam or Indonesia (Singapore Ministry of Education, 2013). Thus here 'colonisation' is the universal specialised concepts, and Malaya, Vietnam and Indonesia are the particular or unique instances of colonisation (see Figure 2). The second section of the Singapore H2 curriculum takes a more 'thematic-comparative and issues-based approach'. The content is also used to develop students' understanding of key 'conceptual tools' such as balance of power, hegemony, colonial rule, independence and nationalism within the case studies of Southeast Asian countries which gained independence in the twentieth century (Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board, 2014). Thus in Singapore there is a conceptual demand increase from 'O' levels to H levels (which are pre-university levels) which focus more heavily on universal concepts.

The British Columbia curriculum for Grade 11 and 12 includes both unique and universal concepts, but the emphasis tends to be on unique events and less on universal concepts.

Progression of procedural knowledge

The Singapore, South Africa and British Columbia curricula all focus on the organising or second order concepts which underpin the discipline of history. These are cause and effect, change and continuity, chronology, multi-perspectivity and understanding that history is not the past itself (Department of Basic Education, 2011). However, the curriculum documents do not make clear how these procedural knowledge concepts progress, or develop across the grades. In South Africa, the skills described for the end of the General Education and Training (GET Phase, that is Grades 7–9) are exactly the same as those described in the Further Education and Training (FET Phase, that is Grades 10–12). It appears that curriculum designers assume that all these skills should be developed at the same time.

Similarly the Singapore Upper Secondary History syllabus (Normal and Ordinary levels) describe aims and learning outcomes, but gives no indication of the sequence in which these could be developed. In terms of the assessment objectives, at Singapore N and O levels, students must be able to work with the key concepts of causation, consequence, continuity, change and significance whereas at H2 levels, they need to also be able to demonstrate understandings of the complexity of issues, and assess different interpretations of the past. Thus the attainment demands at H2 are more complex which indicates that there is some attempt to describe progression in the development of procedural knowledge across the years.

The British Columbia Grade 12 curriculum's Prescribed Learning Outcomes lists three outcomes pertinent for the study of history – analyse sources, assess significant historical events and demonstrate historical empathy – but assume that these will all be developed at the same time. The Kenyan curriculum does not focus on the procedural disciplinary knowledge of history.

These curriculum documents do not explicitly describe progression or sequencing of procedural knowledge, thus it is not possible to engage with the principles that may inform this progression.

Discussion

Using a set of concepts gleaned from studies both from the sociology of knowledge and history education to inform the content analysis of the curriculum documents, this paper set out to describe the recontextualising rules that inform the selection, sequencing and progression of history knowledge.

The selection of content is informed by the regulative order within each country, which is to say that the purpose of school history influences how much focus will be on national and/or international history, as well as the nature of topics selected. Regarding the purpose of school history, the Kenyan curriculum understands school history as memory history and has minimal engagement with disciplinary procedural knowledge. Thus Kenya chooses to select content that focuses primarily on national rather than world history, as a key aim is to "promote a sense of nationalism, patriotism and national unity" (Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Education, 2002, p.4). The other three curricula understand the purpose of school history as disciplinary history and

thus show a stronger relation to the procedural knowledge within the academic field of production than the Kenyan curriculum. There is no universal canon of history knowledge that **must** be learned in order to be inducted into the discipline, which is the case for school mathematics and the natural sciences.

There are three principles which inform the sequencing and progression of substantive knowledge. The first aspect is space, which refers to the move from local to regional to national to international history, which is essentially the expansion of context. A school history curriculum may choose to focus on national history only (such as British Columbia Grade 11 Social Studies) or relate national history to international events (Singapore and Kenya) or focus on both national and international events in similar proportions (South Africa). The second principle is chronology, and all the curricula studied here sequence the history content in this way, covering different time periods in different degrees of breadth and depth. The third principle is the progression of concepts from generic to specialised unique concepts within a particular context and then on to specialised universal concepts that are not linked to a specific context. The Singapore and South Africa curricula seem to engage the most with universal concepts, with British Columbia doing so less, and Kenya very little.

An analysis of procedural knowledge showed that the South Africa, Singapore and British Columbia curricula all embrace historical enquiry and notions of history as interpreted and represented, while Kenya did not do so. However, the curricula which embrace procedural knowledge do not make clear how these historical thinking skills should be sequenced across grades. Only Singapore shows any evidence of progression of procedural knowledge and this is only seen in the learning outcomes of the Upper Secondary curriculum and pre-university curriculum.

Thus although it has been argued that horizontal knowledge structures find hierarchy in procedural knowledge (Martin, 2007), this hierarchy is not clearly evident with these curriculum documents. Perhaps the procedural knowledge and second order concepts of history are just too complex to map hierarchically or progressively. When professional historians engage with historical texts, they used specific heuristics when reading texts, which are sourcing, contextualisation and corroboration all at the same time (Wineburg, 2001). From these curricula, it appears that it is simply not possible to require that the one historical thinking skill be developed before another one, for example that learning to work with primary evidence should be done before being able to take a historical perspective. It also appears to be very difficult

to describe how a 12-year-old might work with primary evidence and how an 18-year-old might do the same thing. Perhaps the work of sequencing procedural knowledge can only be done by textbook writers in the pedagogic recontexualising field and by teachers in the field of reproduction, and cannot be done at the level of curriculum documents.

The following table summarises the recontextualising principles that inform the selection, sequencing and progression of knowledge.

Table 3: Summary of key findings regarding sequencing and progression of substantive and procedural knowledge

	British Columbia	**Kenya**	**Singapore**	**South Africa**
Selection of knowledge				
Approach to school history	Disciplinary	Memory history	Disciplinary	Disciplinary
Progression in substantive knowledge				
Progression in chronology	Yes. Within 20th century	Yes. Covers Early man to 20th century	Yes. Covers 1870s to present	Yes. Covers 1600 to present
Progression from local to national to international contexts (space)	Gr. 11 – national Gr. 12 – international	Strong focus on national history, international history only in relation to Kenya	Strong focus on regional history, in relation to international history	Focus on national, African and international history
Conceptual progression from unique (context-specific) to universal (decontextualised) concepts	Gr. 11 – unique concepts Gr. 12 – both unique and universal concepts	Mostly focus on unique concepts	Some progress-ion seen in the engagement with both unique and universal concepts	Some progress-ion seen in the engagement with both unique and inclusive concepts
Progression in procedural knowledge				
Progression in history procedural knowledge	Progression not explicit	Procedural knowledge not present	Some progress-ion evident across N and O levels and H1	Progression not explicit

In conclusion, this study shows that the regulative discourse is influential in the selection of substantive knowledge, which leads to selections regarding the national or international nature of the content. Chronology is the principle that influences sequencing, and there is evidence of progression in the substantive concepts. While procedural knowledge is described in three of the curricula, there are no clear principles which describe its progression. In these three curricula, the selection of the procedural knowledge is strongly influenced by the field of production. It would be productive to analyse a wider range of curriculum documents to explore to what extent these recontextualising principles are common among other history curricula.

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Appendix 1

Titles of the curriculum policies analysed

1 South Africa
Department of Basic Education. 2011. National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Further Education and Training Phase Grades 10–12 *History*
Department of Basic Education. History Examination Guidelines 2014.
2 Canada (British Columbia)
Social studies 11. Integrated Resource Package 2005
History 12. Integrated Resource Package 2006
British Columbia First Nations Studies 12. Integrated Resource Package 2006
3 Singapore
History GCE Normal (Academic) Level (Syllabus 2195)
History GCE Ordinary level (Syllabus 2174)
History Higher 1 (Syllabus 8814)
History Higher 2 (Syllabus 9731)
4 Kenya
Republic of Kenya Ministry of Education (2002) Secondary Syllabus Volume III: History and government (pp.1–20)

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Carol Bertram
Faculty of Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal

bertramc@ukzn.ac.za