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# The Latin American Perspective in Dade County Schools: An Initial Curricular and Teacher Survey (Dialogue #65)

Robert V. Farrell

*Florida International University, School of Education*

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THE LATIN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE IN DADE  
COUNTY SCHOOLS: AN INITIAL CURRICULAR  
AND TEACHER SURVEY

Dr. R.V. Farrell

Dialogue #65

March 1986

## PREFACE

Robert V. Farrell recently completed this research paper on teaching about Latin America in the Dade County Public School System. An associate professor of education in FIU's School of Education, Dr. Farrell combines his background in Latin American studies with intimate knowledge about the teaching of Latin American issues at the secondary education level. Comments should be directed to Dr. Farrell in the School of Education.

## Abstract

"The Latin American Perspective in Dade County Schools: An Initial Curricular and Teacher Survey"

by R.V. Farrell

Associate Professor of Education  
School of Education, FIU

This paper analyzes the knowledge about Latin America that is present in the newly required 9th grade World History Course in Dade County Public Schools. Nine recommended World History textbooks are examined in terms of their Latin American content. Also, the results of a survey questionnaire dealing with knowledge and perceptions of Latin America, which was distributed to various World History and general teachers, are discussed. The findings of this research effort while tentative, seem to indicate that there is a definite need to upgrade the Latin American knowledge base both in textbook content and among teachers. Few of the texts are considered adequate in their treatment of Latin America. Some, especially those for below average readers, present a slanted, even distorted picture of Latin American reality. While World History teachers appear to be more knowledgeable about Latin America than teachers in general, lack of knowledge and stereotyping are clearly manifested in certain persisting beliefs about the region.

While this is a narrow research effort, it explores the intriguing notion that what is often considered legitimate knowledge in our classrooms can in fact be quite inadequate. The concluding section of the paper focuses on whether academic excellence is possible when there are distortions and lacunae in our classroom knowledge base.

Introduction...

This paper is about Latin American image and reality, and their importance for the South Florida area. More and more, this part of the United States is falling under the direct influence of things and people Latin American. Trade, migration, tourism, drugs-- all call for a clear understanding and appreciation of the Latin American context in our daily lives. What better place to enhance this understanding and appreciation than in our schools!

In this study the Latin American knowledge base in the newly required Dade County 9th grade World History course (84/85 academic year) is examined. Nine recommended texts are examined in terms of their Latin American content. They range from below average in readability, to far above average. Also, 33 world history teachers filled out a Latin American Perception Inventory along with a personal background sheet. The knowledge included in this survey instrument is both objective and subjective, that is dealing with indisputable facts as well as opinion. Twenty four general teachers (K-12) also filled out the inventory, and served as a control group for this study.

Below, the results of this study will be presented in the following sequence:

- A. A Brief History of Curricular Analysis Related to Latin America
- B. Methodolgy and Results of Analysis of Nine Required Texts.
- C. Methodolgy and Results of Teacher Knowledge/Perception Surveys.
- D. Overall Conclusion.

A. A Brief History of Curricular Analysis Related to Latin America.

The examination of curricular content, and its fundamental knowledge base, the textbook, is not a recent development in the United States. For example, Bessie Louise Pierce of the University of Chicago noted in the 1920's the obvious omission or distortion of discussions of controversial subjects like race, labor and capital in U.S. history textbooks.<sup>1</sup> A more recent analysis of American history textbooks by Francis Fitzgerald confirms the problems of omission and distortion. Among many other assertions, Fitzgerald is quite critical of the lack of depth and understanding in high school history textbooks. She notes that most authors employ a watered-down, consensus seeking approach that is simple minded and avoids controversy.<sup>2</sup> Criticisms of school textbooks continue, and in 1985, Jack Frymier is quoted as saying: "You could spend your whole life in an elementary textbook and never find an idea."<sup>3</sup> However, the textbook remains the most important source of knowledge in the American classroom.

Concern about textbook treatment of other peoples and lands has surfaced in recent years. In the past decade a number of studies have appeared that are critical of the treatment of Middle Eastern groups, Africans, and various American minorities in school curriculums and textbooks.<sup>4</sup> Most often, these studies note the reinforcement of negative stereotypes and distortions of these particular population groups. Growing concern about the treatment of Latin America and Latin Americans has also appeared in recent years. Such concern has a deep-rooted history and tradition.

As early as 1930 Bessie Louise Pierce noted the neglect of Latin America in American school textbooks. Inaccuracies, distortions and an evident "dislike" of things Mexican or Latin was found by Pierce to color the discussion of Latin American content in American textbooks.<sup>5</sup> An extensive

study carried out by the American Council on Education in the 1940's seemed to confirm this curricular problem.<sup>6</sup> This study analyzed secondary school and college level teaching materials dealing with Latin America. Things that were found included: factual inaccuracies, perpetuation of negative cultural and racial stereotypes, and an emphasis on the picturesque and traditional. The question is have these tendencies continued down to the present.

A study published in 1965 entitled Image of Latin America: A Study of American School Textbooks and School Children Two Through Twelve noted both positives and negatives related to Latin American content.<sup>7</sup> Quantitatively, coverage of Latin America seemed adequate. But the author, Vito Perrone, noted a condescending tone related to Latin American institutions, and the perpetuation of distorted images, like the excessive cruelty of the Spanish colonial era. The students interviewed seemed to have adequate geographic understanding of Latin America, but evidenced little or no understanding of Latin American culture, racial composition, or Latin American-U.S. relations.

Two other studies in the 1960's underscore the problems with Latin American content in U.S. textbooks. The University of Texas' Latin American Curriculum Project, 1966-1969, noted that the treatment of Latin America in intermediate textbooks emphasized physical as opposed to cultural geography, and in general, such Latin American content tended to be superficial.<sup>8</sup> Large chunks of Latin American content were left out of history textbooks for secondary schools. Among the neglected eras were: the late colonial period, the 19th century, and the post W.W. II period. An emphasis on facts, as opposed to analysis and understanding, is noted in the University of Texas study. This emphasis is also confirmed in the 1968 work entitled A Handbook on Latin America for Teachers.<sup>9</sup> The author, H. Ned Seelye, notes that scholars

do not seem to be in agreement on what is important about Latin America, resulting in an over emphasis on isolated facts.

In the 1980's a number of studies have appeared that discuss and analyze Latin American content in U.S. textbooks. A 1982 study by Don B. Fleming of 10 secondary level U.S. history texts notes a lack of indepth analysis of Latin American culture and regional diversity.<sup>10</sup> The books analyzed are substantially different in terms of quality, but most tend to neglect the Latin American perspective in Latin American/U.S. relations. The author notes a focus on Cuba and Communism in the 60's and the 70's to the detriment of other Latin American themes. An interesting point made by Fleming regarding the knowledge of teachers is especially pertinent to this present study. He asserts: "Regardless of the textbook used classroom teachers have much work to do on their own if students are to acquire a clear understanding of U.S. relations with Latin America. Teachers should be prepared to update and supplement textbooks with current information and contemporary issues."<sup>11</sup>

The current situation in Central America has prompted textbook analysis related to this specific region. A 1982 Council on Interracial Books for Children study of 71 geography, history and social studies texts found knowledge omissions and stereotyping that would prevent students from clearly understanding current events in Central America.<sup>12</sup> A 1983 study by Beck and Anderson which examined thirty books and texts dealing with Central America concluded that the majority of materials analyzed perpetuated ignorance and distortions about this region.<sup>13</sup> Through omission books communicate to students that this region is unimportant; underdevelopment is blamed on climate and the inferiority of Central Americans; the exotic, primitive, and rural are presented as the dominant reality; and the U.S. is pictured as a perennial "helper" as opposed to a world power with specific interests.



Also, a 1983 study by Andereck and Dixon of secondary world geography texts notes similar minimal attention given to Central America and its contemporary political/social situation.<sup>14</sup> However, this study did observe that geography texts, in comparison to past studies, allocated a similar amount of space to Latin America as to Europe and Africa, and recent texts had a substantial increased emphasis on contemporary trends in this region.

Finally, a 1985 study by O'Connor and Nystrom entitled Siestas and Fiestas: Images of Latin America in United States History Textbooks notes the continuing avoidance of controversy in U.S. texts.<sup>15</sup> While texts are praised for inclusion of information about Latin America, the authors conclude that the incomplete nature of this information often perpetuates stereotypes. A number of contemporary events in Latin America were not covered in the ten texts analyzed, and there was an over-emphasis on Mexico and the Caribbean, with the possible result of a distorted understanding of other countries and regions in Latin America. The authors note that gross stereotypes of the past-- lazy, rural, backward-- have been replaced by others that are no less damaging. The U.S. is often portrayed as sincere, strong and helping in contrast to Latin American corruption, emotional volatility, and lack of sophistication. The authors conclude that current history texts, in general, are less than adequate for clearly understanding the complex nature of Latin America and its contemporary struggles.

B. Methodology and Results of Analysis of Nine Recommended Texts.

The list of analyzed world history textbooks is found in Appendix One. These include two texts for the Introduction to World History course (below average reader),<sup>\*</sup> three texts for the regular World History course (average reader), and four texts for the Advanced World History course (above average reader). A Text Analysis Checklist was used to help scrutinize the chosen resource materials (Appendix Two). This instrument lists thirteen content areas dealing with Latin America which were to be rated in four ways: None, meaning that there was no reference to the content area whatsoever; Superficial, meaning that content information was presented but with little explanation or analysis; Adequate, meaning that content is covered with at least a partial attempt at explanation and analysis; and In Depth, meaning that there was much more than a partial attempt at explanation and analysis.

The author is first to admit that this analytical approach is far from a precise, quantitative technique, if such a technique exists. Sentence counting, line counting, reference counting, word counting, all just begin to bridge the question of quality and tone. The Text Analysis Checklist, while far from perfect, in the hands of a Latin Americanist, can contribute to an effective qualitative examination of a textbook. Such an examination, while admittedly subjective, can be useful in judging the overall quality of the textbooks under study.

\* Note: recent Florida law now prohibits the use of texts written below grade level except in remediation courses.

The results of this analytical effort are mixed. Quality of the texts examined vary to the extreme. Some of the texts, especially those for advanced placement students, are often challenging and provocative, helping students go beyond rote fact to higher levels of interpretation and analysis. On the other hand, the "high school" texts for below average readers are often superficial and blatantly simplistic. Such disparity in content treatment, of course, underlines the incredible content and student stratification in the American school system. For example, the text, Exploring World History, which is written on the 5+ reading level, has none of the 13 Latin American content areas rated above superficial. The colonial era, some three hundred years of Latin American history, a period which has given Latin America many of its most powerful contemporary institutions and values, is virtually ignored. At times, content treatment is so superficial, that it perhaps deserves a rating of None! The index of this text indicates 11 pages of a total of 686 are devoted to Latin America. The other text for below average readers, Understanding the World, fares no better. One content area, Pre-Columbian Civilizations, is rated adequate, while the rest are rated either Superficial or None. Once again, this book does not even begin to approach the lowest levels of sophistication or analysis in terms of Latin American content. Thirteen pages are devoted to this region of the world.

The three texts for average readers in the so-called regular courses are rated much higher. History and Life: the World and Its People, covers at least two content areas, Pre-Columbian Civilizations and the Hispanic/Luzo Colonies, In Depth. Only four content areas are rated Superficial or None. The 19th century calls for more adequate treatment, while the coverage of Latin America in the 20th Century leaves many questions unanswered and unbridged. This text appears to be adequate, overall, in its treatment of Latin America, although analysis of underlying reasons for Latin Americas problems is often

skimmed over.

The other two texts in this group are rated below History and Life. People and Our World: A Study of World History, has three content areas adequately covered, but the rest are rated either Superficial or None. The late colonial period, the 19th century, and 20th century cultural developments are almost virtually ignored. There are some surprises in this book, like reference to CIA involvement in Chile in 1973, but there is little effort to discuss underlying reasons or the Latin American perspective. This text tends towards adequate. The other text in this group, The Human Heritage. A World History, only has two content areas rated Adequate, the rest being either Superficial or None. The discussion of 20th century developments in Latin America is so superficial that it deserves a rating of None! Underlying reasons and analysis are again, in general, lacking. There are some surprises, however, like the favorable treatment of Cuba under Castro, and the discussion of the importance of foreign influence in Latin America.

The textbooks discussed thus far present a very mixed picture. This is also true for the texts used in advanced placement classes. While these texts tend to be superior in their treatment of Latin America, they are used by only approximately 2/10's of Dade County's 9th grade students. On the other hand, approximately 4/10's of public school students are in below average classes, and 4/10's are in regular classes.\* The first textbook in this group, The Pageant of World History, has nine content areas rated as Adequate, and only four rated below this mark. This text covers a wide

\* These figures are based on teachers perceptions of the ratio of introductory, regular and A.P. classes.

variety of Latin American content and tends towards a balanced approach. The American perspective is dominant, however, and one gets the feeling that the authors avoid hard questions in restrained statements like the following: "The relationship of Latin America and the U.S. is fragile. However, with good will on both sides, it can be carefully cultivated." (P. 642) There are some surprises, like a balanced and restrained treatment of the Sandinistas. However, whether this balance and restraint make it to the next edition remains to be seen given the current policy orientation in U.S./Nicaraguan relations. The index indicates thirty-one pages devoted to Latin America.

Unfinished Journey: A World History has four content areas rated In Depth, and six Adequate. The 19th century is even reasonably covered in this book. The author of this text employs a much more conceptual approach by examining broad historical movements and then analyzing the specific actors in these movements. There is good coverage of contemporary Cuba and Chile, but the book tends towards the superficial in its treatment of U.S./Latin American relations. This book appears to be very adequate in its treatment of Latin America, but teachers do not seem to like it due to the open-ended nature of its discussions and end of chapter questions.

The third advanced placement text examined is World History. Patterns of Civilization. Nine Latin American content areas are rated as Adequate. Still, the colonial era and the 19th century merit little discussion. Also, tactfulness, in this as well as the other texts, seems to be a principal characteristic of writing style. The index indicates 30+ pages dealing with Latin America.

Finally, the last text examined is A Global History. This text presents the best overall analysis of contemporary political, economic, cultural, as well as social reality in Latin America. Also, there is a very adequate discussion of the importance and implications of U.S. influence in this region of the world. Four content areas are rated in Depth, and seven are rated Adequate or tending toward adequate. As usual, as in most of the other texts, the importance of the Enlightenment in this area of the world is ignored. The Latin American perspective however is included, especially in relation to U.S./Latin American relations. This is a challenging text which endeavors to get students to higher levels of thinking. End of chapter questions stress this effort by equally dividing student exercises between "Reviewing the Essentials" and "Going Beyond the Facts."

The above textbook analysis is hardly conclusive or definitive. It shows that many of the complaints of past Latin American content analysts are still apparent, especially in texts for average and below average readers. This would seem to call for teachers with more than adequate knowledge of Latin America for students to be able to fully understand world history segments dealing with this region of the world. We will now discuss this study's attempt to gage teacher knowledge and perceptions about Latin America.

C. Methodology and Results of Teacher Knowledge/Perception Surveys.

To evaluate teachers as a source of accurate knowledge about Latin America a Latin American Perception Inventory was developed. (Appendix Three) This instrument, which has undergone six revisions, is composed of two basic parts. Part I is a group of thirty items which can be responded to in seven different ways, from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. These thirty items are composed of both factual and perspective-type knowledge. The 12 factual items should receive responses of either Strongly Disagree or Strongly Agree. They are based on objective knowledge that is not disputable. For example, item # 17, "The United States just about equals the land mass of Latin America," is a knowledge item that demands a Strongly Disagree response. On the other hand, perspective-type items demand varied responses. They deal with subjective knowledge which depend on an individual's interpretation and perception. For example, item # 10, "Democracy should be encouraged in Latin America as a way of assuring political stability," can draw varied responses, depending on your belief and faith in democracy. A person with a world view favoring democracy as supportive of stability would probably agree with this item. A person believing that other forms of government guarantee higher levels of stability would not. There are 18 perspective-type items on the survey.

Part II of the survey instrument is a personal Background Inventory. Teachers are requested to reveal such information as age, sex, years in teaching, race, ethnicity, levels of formal education and formal and informal education about Latin America. As examples of informal information about Latin America, teachers are requested to rank order various media and personal sources, from newspapers to long term residence in this region of the world.

Revision of this instrument followed initial trial testing among students at FIU. Also, input from colleagues, both in Latin American Studies, and in psychology, were incorporated in these revision efforts. One hundred copies of the latest survey instrument were finally distributed through DCPS area offices to 9th grade world history teachers. Thirty-three (33) useable surveys were returned and are included in this study. Also, the revised instrument was administered to a control group of 24 K-12 teachers in curriculum and methods classes at FIU. None of these respondents teach world history.

In terms of Background Inventory Statistics, the thirty-three world history teachers are almost evenly divided among male and female, 90% are over 30 years of age, and 80% have more than six years of teaching experience. 88% of this group is white, 12% is black, while 1/4 or 25% consider themselves Hispanic in origin. 97% of this group have a B.A. or higher university degree, but few have had more than one to three university courses on Latin America. Newspapers and T.V. are overwhelmingly their primary sources of informal information about Latin America. As for the control group, 75% are female, 67% are over 30 years of age, while only 33% have had more than six years of teaching experience. Ninety-two percent are white, 8% black, while 30% consider themselves Hispanic. Seventy-three percent have a B.A. or higher university degree, but very few have had university level Latin American content courses. Once again, newspapers and T.V. are their primary sources of information about Latin America.

In looking at the results of this survey effort, some curious things are seen. In terms of the 12 factual items on the instrument, the world history group show themselves to be better versed in Latin America than the 24 general teachers. On five of these knowledge items, world history teachers clearly show themselves to be superior in knowledge and understanding of Latin American reality.



For example, on item # 21, "High levels of illiteracy are common to all Latin American countries," 55% of the world history teachers disagreed, 24% strongly. Only 17% of the general teachers disagreed, 5% strongly. There are extremely low levels of illiteracy in certain countries in Latin America, e.g., Argentina, which would call for a Strongly Disagree response to this item. However, the superiority of the world history response seems a hollow superiority, given the large percentage of respondents in the "Do Not Know" or "Agree" categories. This pattern is common to all but one of the factual knowledge items. Only the response to item, # 29, indicates that by far the majority of both world history teachers and general teachers (100% and 92%) agree that the Catholic Church is influential in contemporary Latin America. All other responses to factual knowledge items indicate that some clarification through education is needed for at least part of the world history and general teacher groups.

Four other factual items underline the superior knowledge of world history teachers about Latin America. Item #28, "Racial groups are evenly distributed throughout Latin America," has 76% of the world history group disagreeing, 36% strongly, as opposed to 42% and 8% respectively for the general teachers. The response to item #26 indicates that 76% of the world history teachers (28% strongly) know that Latin America is an extremely socially and culturally diverse region, as opposed to 46% (17% strongly) of the general teachers. Item #2 indicates that 70% of the world history teachers know (27% strongly) that the middle class is significant in certain countries in Latin America, as opposed to 45% (8% strongly) of the control group. Finally, item #17 indicates that 70% of the world history teachers know (40% strongly) that geographically the United States is not the same size as Latin America, as opposed to 58% (25% strongly) of the general teachers.

Of the remaining 7 factual items, there is rough parity between the two groups either in their knowledge or ignorance. Two of these items seem to be especially problematical. Item #8 which tries to get at the fact that there is a tremendous social stability in Latin America despite many political changes, was inaccurately responded to by over 85% of both groups. This would seem to call for either education or item revision. Also, item # 14 indicates that 63% of the general teacher group know that Latin America is a predominantly urban region, as opposed to 27% of the world history teachers. Again, this item calls for education and/or revision. The responses to items 9, 12, and 18 seem to indicate that well over 30% of both groups need serious instruction on the information measured in these three items. Finally, responses to Item #29 call for no education, and to Item #1, only partial education.

Turning now to the 18 perspective-type items, here too there are some interesting statistical results. Both groups of teachers tend to favor private investment (item #4), foreign capital (item #22), and U.S. economic ties (item #25) as answers to Latin American development needs. Item #4, "Private investment from varied sources holds the key to Latin America's future," has 73% of the world history teachers agreeing, and 56% of the general teachers. Item #25, "Close ties with U.S. economic interests offers hope for future Latin American development," has 80% of the general teachers agreeing and 73% of the world history teachers. As for item # 22,

\*The following percentages are percentage totals/summaries of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree or Agree, Somewhat Agree or Strongly Agree.

" Latin America Should encourage more foreign capital investment in order to promote development," 75% of the general teachers agree, as opposed to 70% of the world history group.

The above seems to indicate there is a continuing strong belief in the power and potential of U.S. private investment and capitalism. However, this belief seems tempered among world history teachers by a concern about U.S. cultural influence in Latin America. The responses to item #6, "U.S. cultural influence in Latin America is highly beneficial for the development of the region," indicate that 55% of the world history teachers do not look with favor on U.S. cultural influence, as opposed to 41% of the general teachers. While the statistical difference here is minimal, perhaps this response can be taken as an indication of a more sophisticated understanding among world history teachers of the impact of business interests on traditional cultures.

The group of items on the survey instrument that deal with East/West conflict in Latin America indicate that there is less anxiety among world history teachers over this situation. Item #7, "Soviet/Cuban intervention is a growing area of concern throughout Latin America," drew 70% agree responses from the world history teachers as opposed to 96% from the control group. Item #19, which tries to measure fear of Communism related to Latin America, indicates that over half the world history teachers disagree that Communism is the issue to be most feared in Latin America, as opposed to 38% of the general teachers. In this regard, perhaps a reinforcement of this sentiment appears in item #23. Over 75% of the world history teachers believe that Latin America is not best understood as part of the global East/West struggle. This group, perhaps, would therefore be much less likely to look at Communism as a cause of Latin American problems or as the primary determinant of U.S. policy.

The two items dealing with the global North/South dichotomy seem to confirm the above responses of the world history group. Item #16, "Underdevelopment and poverty are the principal problems facing Latin American countries" has 85% of the world history teachers agreeing, as opposed to 71% of the control group. The response to item #24 seems to reinforce this sentiment. 85% of the world history teachers believe that Latin America is best understood as part of the world dichotomy between industrialized and developing (North/South) countries. Only 32% of the general teachers agreed with this position, while 50% of them did not know one way or the other.

Democracy is heavily favored by both groups as the political process that can assure political stability (item #10). However, over half of both groups, (58% respectively) indicate that they favor strong, centralized governments in Latin America. Whether this is a contradiction or not is pure speculation. Many U.S. citizens favor a strong, centralized federal government in the United States, so these adjectives cannot automatically be related to dictatorship, caudillismo, etc. The two items dealing with change perhaps present a clearer response. Eighty-five percent of both groups see the need for fundamental socio-economic change in Latin America (Item #11). However, 67% of the world history teachers would favor U.S. support of this change, as opposed to 33% of the general teachers.

Finally, the three remaining item responses on this survey indicate nearly 50% of both groups consider population growth the most obvious obstacle for development (Item #27), approximately 70% of both groups believe that climate has much to do with economic development in Latin America (Item #5), and the vast majority of both groups agree that there is a special need in South Florida to become more knowledgeable about Latin America (Item #30). While items 27 and 5

are debatable depending on your perspective, the need for  
more accurate knowledge about Latin America in South Florida is obvious... or is it?

#### D. Overall Conclusion

The importance of Latin America for North Americans has been repeatedly emphasized by scholars in the past two generations.<sup>16</sup> The proximity of this region, its vital natural resources, its strategic position in East/West as well as North/South global politics, all call for accurate understanding on the part of the American public. However, the above study indicates that valid and accurate knowledge about Latin America suffers from both sins of commission and sins of omission. Superficial and distorted knowledge about this region of the world is perpetuated in world history textbook content, especially in texts for below average and average readers. While in quantitative terms Latin American coverage seems to have improved, there is a continued neglect of the Latin American perspective, and a continued under-emphasis of contemporary realities and essential historical periods in Latin American history.

Don B. Fleming has noted that the above situation calls for very knowledgeable teachers to supplement and complement textbook knowledge. However, this study has found that teachers, in general, are quite ill prepared to help students clearly understand Latin America. While world history teachers seem better prepared than general teachers, the only factual

knowledge that seems to require no further preparation or education is knowledge about the importance of the Catholic Church in this region of the world. Other factual knowledge, dealing with such distinct topics as geography, urbanization, and the middle class, call for at least some further preparation and education.

As for the perspective of world history teachers related to Latin America, it seems like there is less a tendency in this group to blame East/West politics for Latin America's current situation as opposed to such issues as poverty and unequal economic development. However, still a large portion of both world history and general teachers view this region of the world from an East/West rather than a North/South perspective. Whether this view will be effectively challenged during the current era of American politics remains to be seen.

In ending, Gallup Polls continue to indicate that U.S. citizens are poorly informed about Latin America.<sup>17</sup> It would seem, from the above, that schools are continuing to do their part in perpetuating ignorance and misinformation about this region of the world. It would also seem that the current emphasis on educational excellence in the United States does not include accurate and valid knowledge about Latin America. The reasons for this situation are many, and far beyond the scope of this paper...

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Bessie Louise Pierce, Public Opinion and the Teaching of History in the United States (New York: Kroft, 1926), p.199.

<sup>2</sup> Frances Fitzgerald, America Revised. History Schoolbooks in the Twentieth Century (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1979), 240 pp.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Pamela Dranka, "Will a Third Round of Reform Take the Textbook to Task?" ASCD UPDATE 27(September 1985), p.7.

<sup>4</sup> For example see: Jonathan Friedlander, The Middle East. The Image and the Reality (The Regents of the University of California, 1981), 150 pp.; Astair Zekiros, with Marylee Wiley, Africa in Social Studies Textbooks (African Studies Center, Michigan State Univ., 1978), 30 pp.; Stereotypes, Distortions, and Omissions in U.S. History Textbooks, (Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1977), 143 pp.

<sup>5</sup> Bessie Louise Pierce, Civic Attitudes in American School Textbooks (University of Chicago Press, 1930), pp.4 & 69.

<sup>6</sup> See: Clark C. Gill, "Latin America in the School Curriculum: A review and Some Suggestions," in Edward Glab, Jr., ed., Latin American Culture Studies. Information and Materials for Teaching about Latin America (Austin: Univ. of Texas, The Institute of Latin American Studies, 1977), p.59.

<sup>7</sup> Vito Perrone, Image of Latin America: A Study of American School Textbooks and School Children Two Through Twelve (Marquette: Northern Michigan Univ., 1965), 192 pp.

<sup>8</sup> Clark C. Gill and William B. Conroy, The Treatment of Latin America in Social Studies Instructional Materials (Austin: Univ. of Texas, The Institute of Latin American Studies, Bulletin #5, 1968), 46pp.

<sup>9</sup> H. Ned Seelye, A Handbook on Latin America for Teachers. Methodology and Annotated Bibliography (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Illinois, 1968), p.6.

<sup>10</sup> Don B. Fleming, "Latin America and the United States. What Do United States History Books Tell Us?" Social Studies 73(July-August 1982), pp.168-171.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 171.

<sup>12</sup> "School Books Get Poor Marks: An Analysis of Children's Materials about Central America," Council on Interracial Books for Children Bulletin 13(1982)#'s2-3, pp.3-12.



<sup>13</sup> Nancy Anderson and Rochelle Beck, "Central America by the Book: What Children Are Learning," Social Education 47(February 1983), pp.102-109.

<sup>14</sup> Mary E Andereck and Clifton V. Dixon, Jr., "Latin America in World Geography Textbooks for the Secondary School," Paper Presented at National Council for Geography Education Conference, Jamaica, October, 1983, 22pp. ERIC #ED 240 013.

<sup>15</sup> Patricia O'Connor and Nancy J. Nystom, Siestas and Fiestas: Images of Latin in the United States History Textbooks, (Roger Thayer Stone Center for Latin American Studies, Tulane Univ., 1985), 30pp.

<sup>16</sup> Edward Glab, Jr., "Five Reasons Why We Should Be Studying about Latin America," in Glab, ed., Latin American Culture Studies, op.cit., pp.1-5.

<sup>17</sup> "Latin American Studies," ERIC Digest #19, (September 1985).

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- Perry Marcvin, Unfinished Journey. A World History, Houghlin Mifflin Co., 1980. 768 pp.
- Stavrianos, Leften, et.al., A Global History, Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1979. 658pp.
- Wallbank, T. Walter, et.al. History and Life. The World and Its People, Scott Foresman and Co., 1980. 720 pp.

APPENDIX ONE

MATERIALS/RESOURCES

Introduction to World History Recommended Textbooks:

Exploring World History, 1983 Globe Book Company.  
Not on current state-adopted list.

Understanding the World, 1979. Laidlaw.  
State-adopted #69-490-0

World History Recommended Textbooks:

History and Life: The World and Its People, 1980.  
Scott, Foresman. State-adopted #89-854-0

People and Our World, 1984. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.  
Not on current state-adopted list.

The Human Heritage: A World History, 1981. Merrill.  
Not on current state-adopted list.

Advanced (Honors) World History Recommended Textbooks:

A Global History, 1979. Allyn and Bacon, State-adopted #89-407-0

The Pageant of World History, 1983. Allyn and Bacon.  
Not on current state-adopted list.  
(also recommended for higher-level regular classes)

Unfinished Journey: A World History, 1980. Houghton Mifflin.  
State-adopted #89-769-0. (also recommended for higher-level  
regular classes)

World History: Patterns of Civilization, 1983. Prentice Hall.  
Not on current state-adopted list.

APPENDIX TWO

Text Analysis Checklist

This checklist is to serve as a guideline for the evaluation of Latin American content in various types of texts. The content covered will be evaluated according to four categories. They are: None; Superficial; Adequate; In Depth. A "None" mark means that the content is not covered at all. A "Superficial" rating means that the content is mentioned, but without any attempt at explanation, or analysis. A rating of "adequate" means that the content is covered and that there is at least a partial attempt at explanation and analysis. A rating of "in depth" means that much more than a partial attempt at explanation and analysis is included.

None (1)	Superficial (2)	Adequate (3)	In Depth (4)
Latin American Content Areas (General Evaluation)			1 2 3 4
Pre-Columbian Civilizations			1 2 3 4
Discovery			1 2 3 4
Exploration			1 2 3 4
Colonization			1 2 3 4
Hispanic/Luzo Colonies			1 2 3 4
Enlightenment			1 2 3 4
Independence Movements			1 2 3 4
19th Century Nationalism			1 2 3 4
20 th Century			
a. Political stasis/change			1 2 3 4
b. Social stasis/change			1 2 3 4
c. Economic stasis/change			1 2 3 4
d. Cultural stasis/change			1 2 3 4
International Influences on Latin America			1 2 3 4

Latin American Perception Inventory

Accurate and balanced knowledge about Latin America is an on-going concern of the Latin American and Caribbean Center of Florida International University. Input from this survey instrument is needed to help guide us in designing specific curricular materials and workshop activities for Dade County Public School Teachers.

The instrument is designed to measure your perception of, and level of information about, Latin America. It is divided into two parts. The first involves a series of statements about Latin America. Your reaction to these statements will require the circling of numbers corresponding to whether you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Somewhat Agree (3), Do Not Know (4), Somewhat Disagree (5), Disagree (6), or Strongly Disagree (7) with the statements.

The second part of the instrument is a general background and education inventory.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Part I. Please circle the response that best describes your reaction to the statements below.

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Do Not Know (4)	Somewhat Disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly Disagree (7)
1. Nationality is relatively unimportant in Latin American countries.					1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
2. The middle class is insignificant in both number and influence throughout Latin America.					1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
3. Racial mixture is a positive factor in the evolution of Latin American countries.					1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
4. Private investment from varied sources holds the key to Latin America's future.					1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
5. Climate has much to do with slow economic development in Latin America.					1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
6. U.S. cultural influence in Latin America is highly beneficial for the development of the region.					1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
7. Soviet/Cuban intervention is a growing area of concern throughout Latin America.					1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
8. Latin America's social structure has been unaffected by political change in the region.					1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
9. Latin America's economic dependence on the U.S. has been equally beneficial for both regions.					1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
10. Democracy should be encouraged in Latin America as a way of assuring political stability.					1 2 3 4 5 6 7	

Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat Agree (3)	Do Not Know (4)	Somewhat Disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly Disagree (7)	
11.	Fundamental socio-economic change is needed in Latin America.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	Modernization and development in Latin America has resulted in a widening gap between rich and poor.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	Strong, centralized governments should be encouraged in Latin America.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	Major urban growth has transformed Latin American countries from predominantly rural to predominantly urban.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	The U.S. should support fundamental social change in Latin America.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	Underdevelopment and poverty are the principal problems facing Latin American countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	The United States just about equals the land mass of Latin America.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	Distribution of income in Latin America continues to be more concentrated than in most other parts of the world.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19.	Communism is the issue to be most feared in Latin America.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20.	It is to the United States' interest to support the status-quo in Latin America.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21.	High levels of illiteracy are common to all Latin American countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22.	Latin America should encourage more foreign capital investment in order to promote development.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23.	Latin America is best understood as part of the East(Communist)/West(Free) world struggle.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24.	Latin America is best understood as part of the global contrast between industrialized and developing countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25.	Close ties with U.S. economic interests offers hope for future Latin American development.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26.	Latin America is very homogeneous in terms of social and cultural characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27.	Latin America's population growth is the most obvious obstacle for development.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28.	Racial groups are evenly distributed throughout Latin America.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29.	Roman Catholicism has little influence in contemporary Latin American society.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30.	There is a special need in South Florida to become more knowledgeable about Latin America.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Part II. Background Inventory

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Years in Teaching 1-5 ( )  
6-10 ( )  
10+ ( )

Race \_\_\_\_\_

Do you consider yourself a member of an ethnic group? If so, which?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Highest University Degree \_\_\_\_\_

Undergraduate University Major \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Major(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Sources of Information on Latin America:

A. Formal Education:

- a. Specific Undergraduate courses on Latin America? How many? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Specific Graduate courses on Latin America? How many? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Teacher Education In-service Workshop on Latin America?  
How many? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Other \_\_\_\_\_

B. Informal Education:

(Please rank the following sources of information about Latin America from the most important to least important, with the most important having a rank of one (1). Only rank those that apply to you.)

- 43 a. Newspapers ( )
- 44 b. Around the Americas' Page in the Herald ( )
- 45 c. T.V. Network News ( )
- 46 d. T.V. Network Specials ( )
- 47 e. Radio News and Commentary ( )
- 48 f. Magazines (like Time) ( )
- 49 g. Books ( )
- 50 h. Movies ( )
- 51 i. Word of Mouth ( )
- 52 j. Vacation Travel ( )
- 53 k. Short Term Residence (1-2 years) ( )
- 54 l. Long Term Residence (over 2 years) ( )
- 55 m. Other \_\_\_\_\_ ( )