CCSU General Education Assessment Retreat

January 2023

Historical Understanding Learning Outcome Results

Artifacts from Fall 2021, Spring 2022 & Fall 2022

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

Central Connecticut State University

Introduction

As part of our Davis Educational Foundation (DEF) grant, Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) faculty participated in assignment alignment workshops for the Historical Understanding general education learning outcome (General Education Objective 2). This rubric was created in Spring 2021 by a team of six CCSU faculty from our College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. (Rubric attached.)

The rubric features four dimensions on a rating scale of 1 to 4, where 1 represents the lowest assessable performance and 4 represents the highest performance. A score of zero is awarded in cases where a student failed to address the dimension. The rubric is grounded in the following definition:

> *Historical Understanding is a competency that connects events of the past to the present and to some degree, the future in the human endeavor. It requires students to identify and evaluate sources, causes, consequences, and the implications of continuity and change within the context of a timeline and eras. Students are expected to acquire an ability to contrast, compare and make connections between multiple concomitant events. It requires students to develop the ability to compare and contrast similar and different events and phenomena across different eras and demonstrate an ability to evaluate, critique and assess the quality, underlying assumptions, biases, and intentions of sources of information. Finally, the competency in Historical Understanding expects students to be able to apply ethical considerations and understanding of the values associated with the inclusion or exclusion of different historical perspectives.*

The four dimensions of the rubric include:

- Evaluate Sources
- Contextualize Sources
- Assessing Continuity and Change
- Formulate an Argument

In Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, nine faculty participated in DEF workshops to align existing assignments to this rubric. Working in teams, faculty helped each other align their respective assignments to ensure that each dimension of the rubric was evident in the assignment. Those assignments were then given to students; upon completion, the assignments were submitted to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment for scoring by faculty at the annual winter assessment retreat.

In January 2023, a team of four CCSU faculty scored 66 student artifacts using the new Historical Understanding (HU) rubric. The artifacts were contributed from the faculty participating in the DEF workshops and represented student work throughout the Fall 2021, Spring 2022, and Fall 2022 semesters. For scoring purposes, only first-year and seniors student artifacts were assessed. This model provides important information, allowing for the comparison on where first-year students start and where seniors are prior to graduation.

The HU artifacts scored at this retreat represented 26 first-year students and 40 senior-level students from six courses representing our College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. Each artifact was scored by two different faculty and the scores were averaged.

It is important to note that our general education learning outcome assessment model measures student learning on skills and knowledge that are gained across their courses and academic career. As such, this assessment is not reflective of a single instructor nor a single course, but rather a reflection of where students are in their academic journey.

The results presented on the following pages are from our January 2023 assessment retreat, with comparisons between academic groups and demographic data.

Overall Results

As seen in Figure 1, the overall score for first-year students evaluated on their Historical Understanding artifacts was 2.7 and represents solid mid-level performance. The score for each individual dimension ranged between 2.5 and 2.8, with the dimensions *Evaluate Sources* and *Contextualize Sources* having the highest score. *Assessing Continuity and Change* had the lowest score at 2.5.

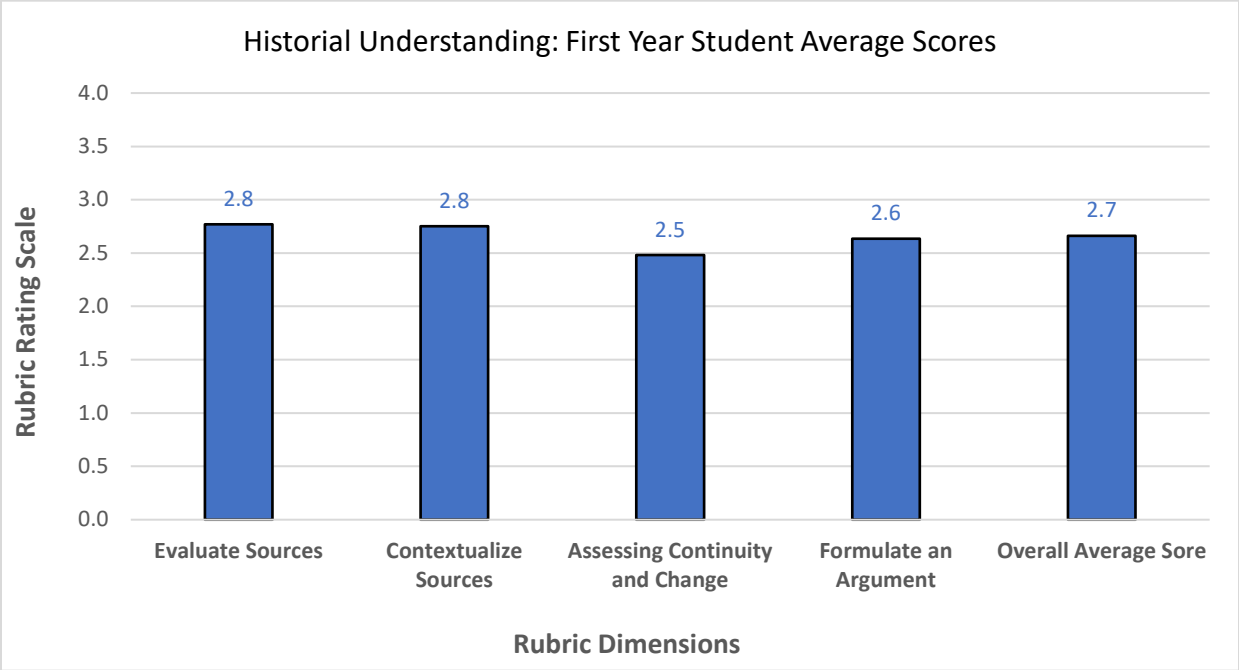

Figure 1. Overall scores of first-year students for Historical Understanding Rubric, n=26

Results of senior-level students are shown in Figure 2. The pattern of scores exactly matches first-year students, however, seniors scored lower on all dimensions, with an overall score of 2.5, 0.2 point lower than first-year students. The greatest differential shows seniors scoring of 0.3 points lower on *Assessing Continuing and Change*.

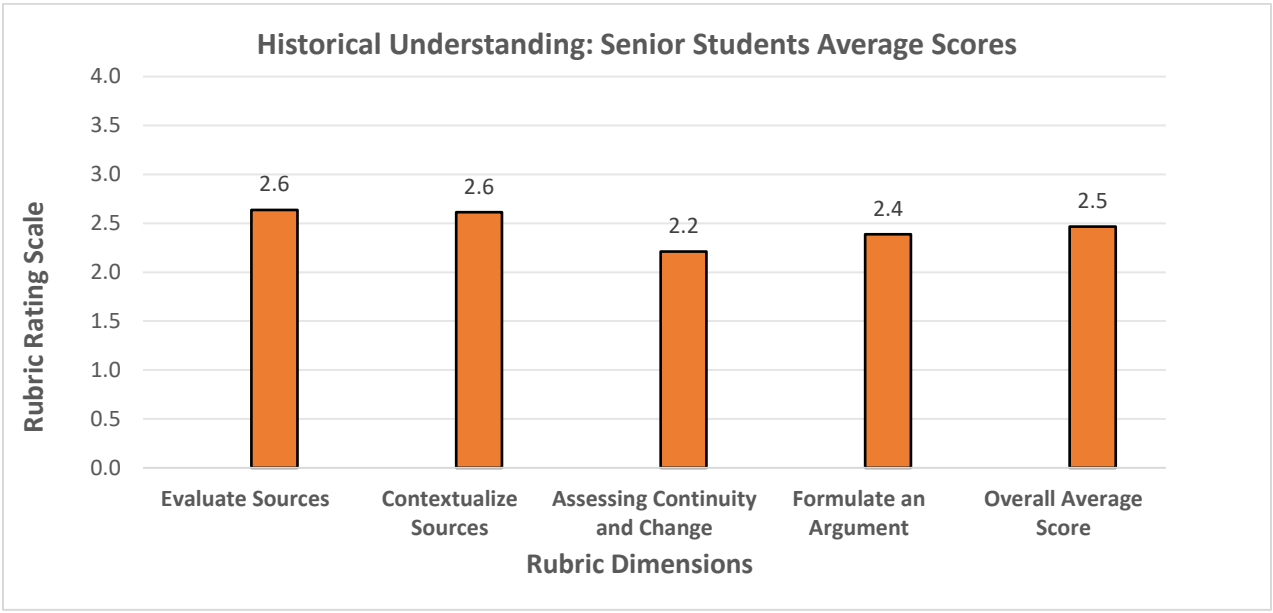

Figure 2. Overall scores of senior students for Historical Understanding Rubric, n=40

Data Disaggregated by Gender

When looking at the results of first-year students by gender, male students had slightly higher scores for each dimension aside from *Evaluate Sources,* which had the same score of 2.8 (Figure 3). *Formulate an Argument* had the largest differential in scores, with male students scoring 0.2 units higher than female students.

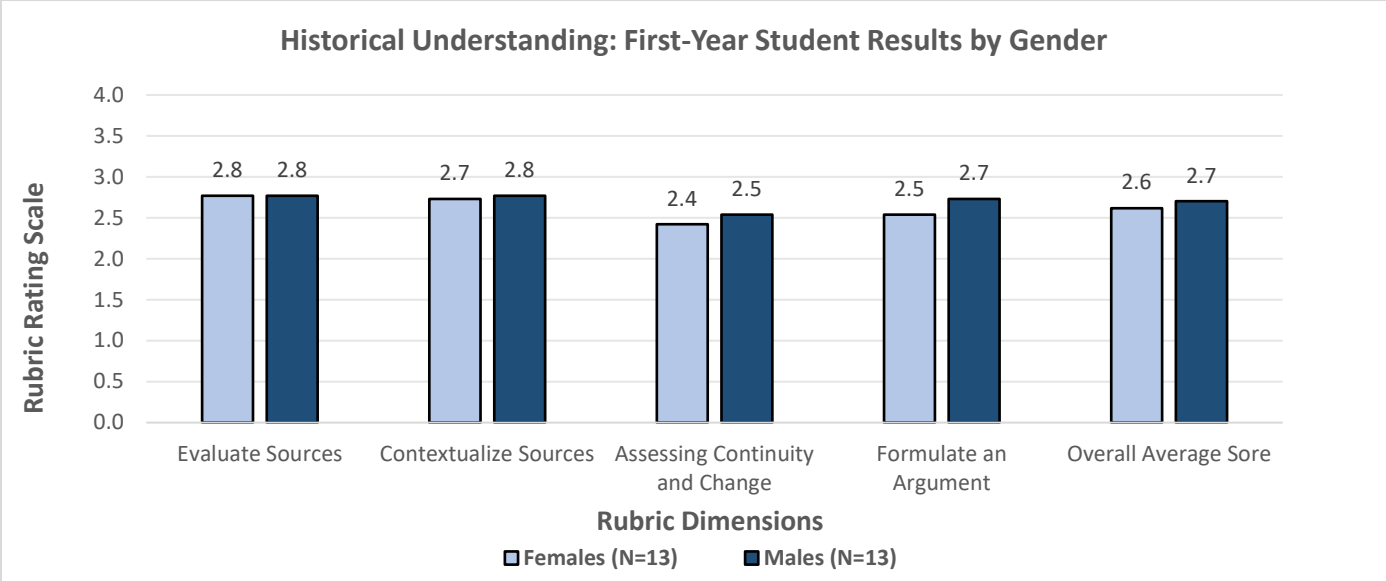

Figure 3. Scores of first-year students by gender

For senior-level students, female scored had slightly higher scores than males for each dimension, except for *Formulate an Argument*, which had the same score of 2.4. *Contextualize Sources* and *Assessing Continuity and Change* had the largest differential in scores with females scoring 0.2 points higher than male seniors. When comparing groups by level, first-year and senior females had very similar scores with differential of only 0.1 point. First-year males, on the other hand, scored higher than senior males on all dimensions, with the largest differential of 0.4 points on *Assessing Continuity and Change*.

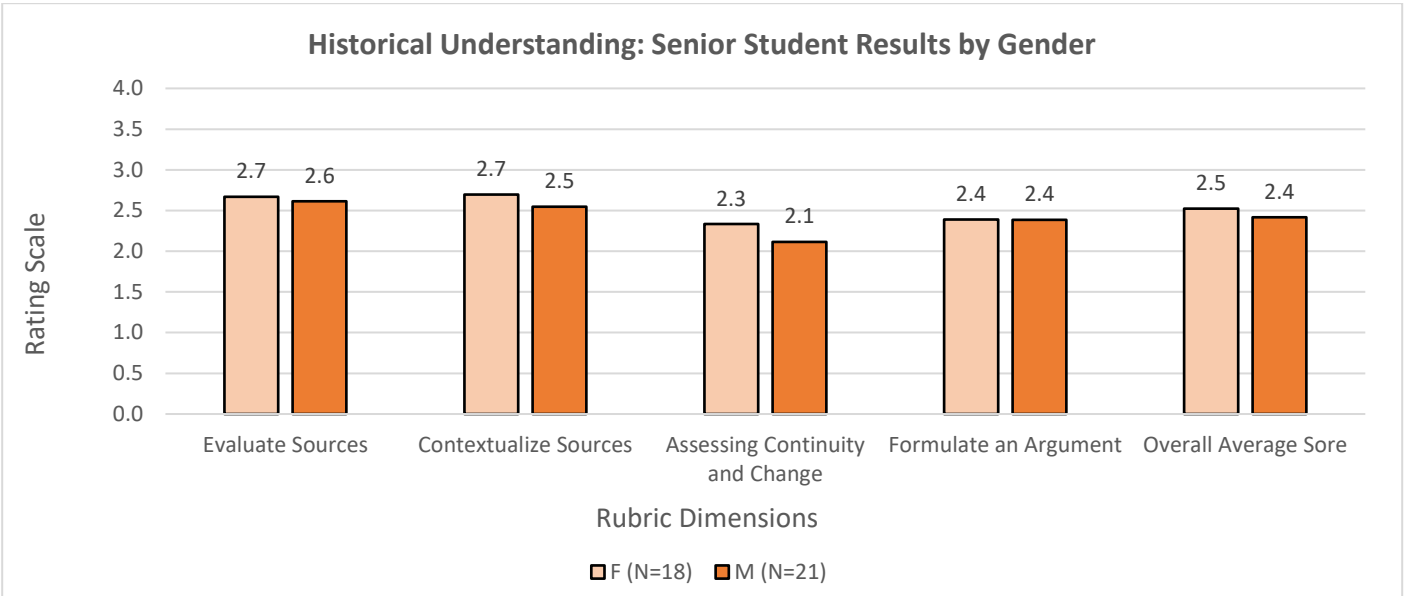

Figure 4. Scores of senior students by gender

Data Disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity

Results based on race/ethnicity for first-year students showed Hispanic students having higher scores than White students on all dimension, with the largest differential of 0.5 points on *Formulate an Argument* (see Table 1).

Table 1. *First-Year Student Results by Race/Ethnicity**

	Hispanic (n=7)	White (n=15)
Evaluate Sources	2.8	2.8
Contextualize Sources	2.8	2.7
Assessing Continuity and Change	2.7	2.4
Formulate an Argument	2.9	2.4
Overall Average Score	2.8	2.6

*The sample sizes for American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Non-Resident Alien, Two or More Races, and Unknown were too small, and their data were not included in the table for privacy concerns.

When looking at the data for seniors based on race/ethnicity, the overall average scores are similar between the three groups. Asian students had slightly higher scores on two of the four dimensions when compared to Hispanic and White students. The largest differential of 0.4 points is evidenced between Asian and Hispanic students for *Assessing Continuing and Change* (Table 2).

Table 2. *Senior Student Results by Race/Ethnicity**

	Asian (n=7)	Hispanic (n=7)	White (n=15)
Evaluate Sources	2.8	2.5	2.7
Contextualize Sources	2.5	2.6	2.7
Assessing Continuity and Change	2.4	2.0	2.2
Formulate an Argument	2.4	2.4	2.4
Overall Average Score	2.5	2.4	2.5

*The sample sizes for American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Non-Resident Alien, Two or More Races, and Unknown were too small, and their data were not included in the table for privacy concerns.

Data by Distribution of Scores

Looking at the data by percentage of students in each rubric rating category, the largest percentage of first-year students had a score between 2.00 and 2.99 for *Assessing Continuity and Change,* at 62%, as shown in Figure 5. This dimension offers the greatest opportunity for advancing student learning for this group. In contrast, 54% of first-year students scored between 3.00 and 3.00 for two of the dimensions, *Evaluate Sources* and *Contextualize Sources*. It is important to note that only a few first-year students scored between 1.00 and 1.99 on two of the six dimensions and no first-year students scored less than 2.00 on two of the six dimensions.

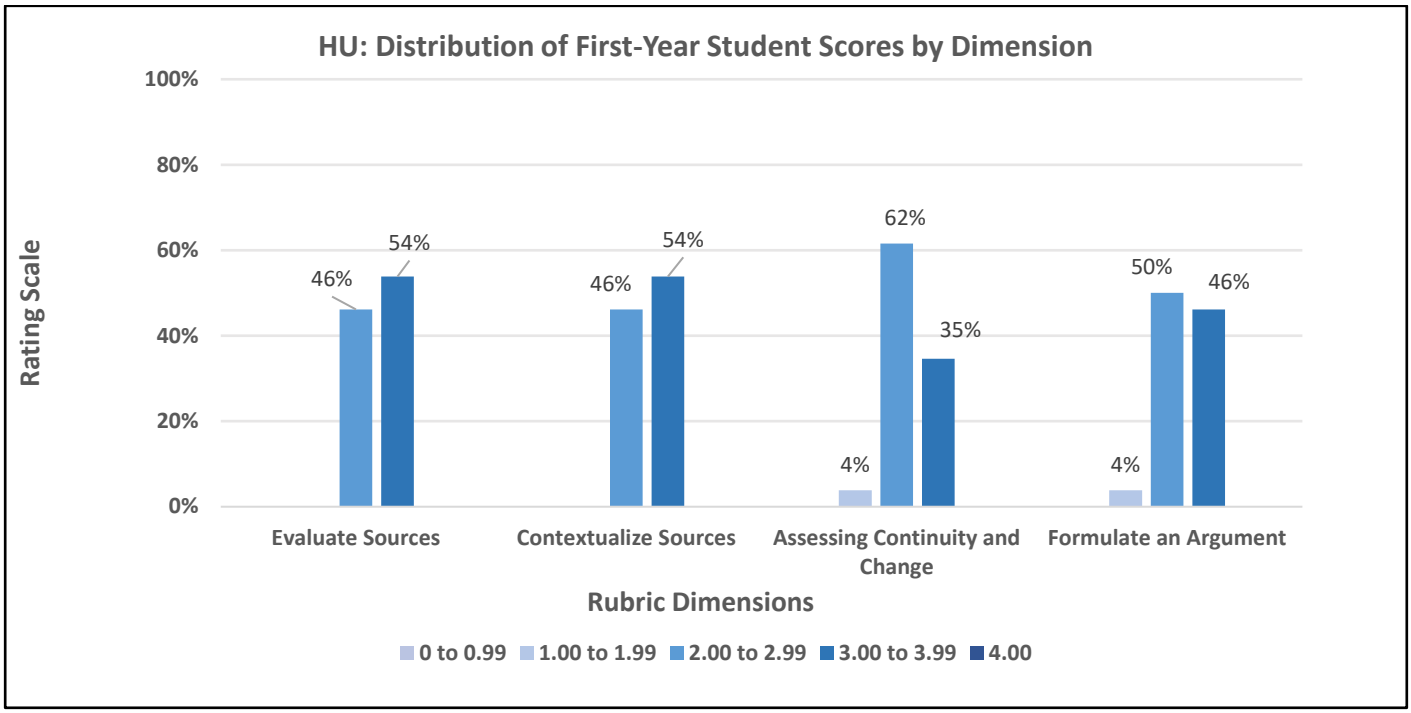

Figure 5. Distribution of first-year student scores

Similar to first-year students, Figure 6 shows that seniors also had the highest percentage of scores in the range 2.00 and 2.99 for *Assessing Continuity and Change* at 75%, followed by 60% in the same range for *Formulate an Argument*. Unlike first-year students, seniors had scores between 1.00 and 1.99 for all four dimenions; as well, the percentage of seniors scoring in the range of 3.00 to 3.99 was lower than first-year students for all dimensions and no seniors students scored a 4.0.

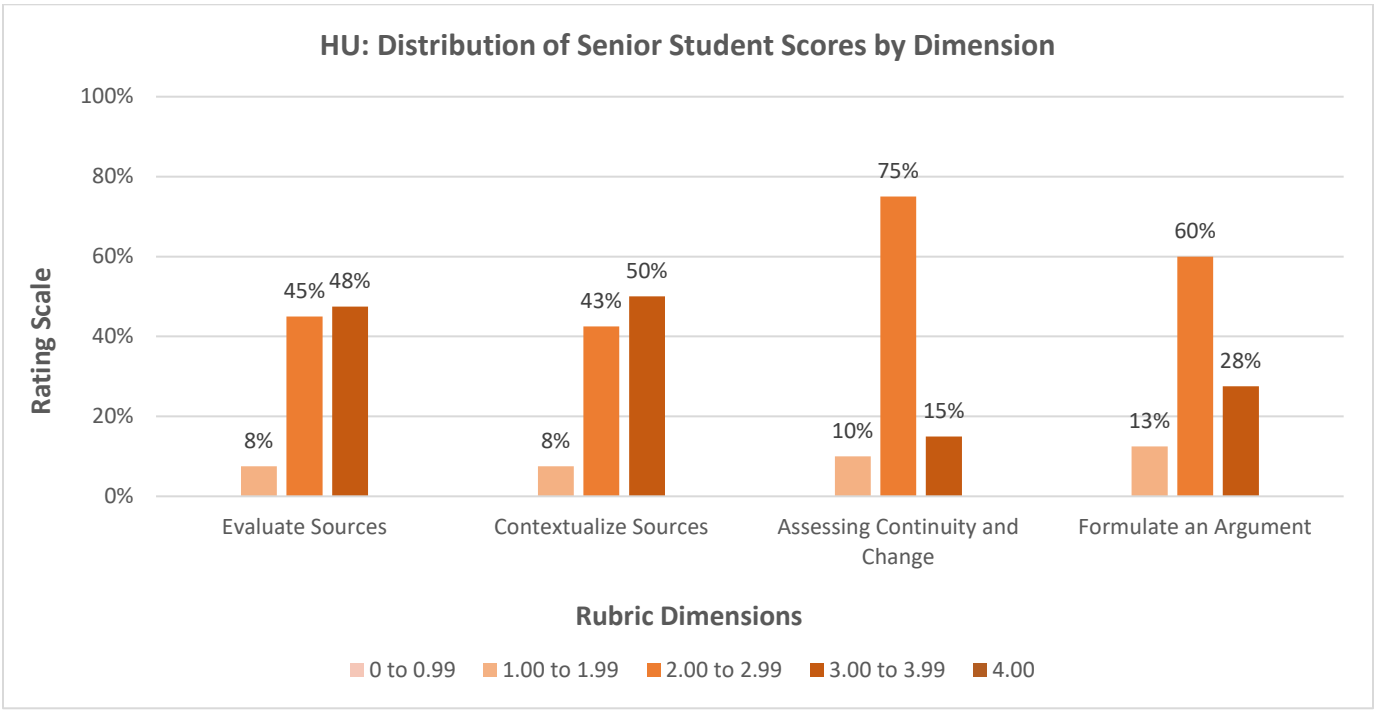

Figure 6. Distribution of senior-level student scores

Conclusion

It is our hope that you find these results both informative and valuable. As with any assessment, the results can be used to validate current practices, applaud successful outcomes, and/or identify areas for further attention.

Some faculty have found the following questions helpful as they review these data:

- Where did our students demonstrate success in Historical Understanding?
- Which Historical Understanding dimensions are clear areas for continued growth?
- How might these data be used to inform teaching and further students' Historical Understanding learning?

To conclude, it is important to note that these scores reflect multiple factors at work and should be viewed within that context. As we continue to seek improvements on the various factors that go into scoring, our ultimate goal is to have CCSU undergraduate students demonstrate enhanced performance for our Historical Understanding Learning Outcome, providing them with a solid foundation for future intellectual and personal pursuits.

Please contact Martie Kaczmarek, Assessment Coordinator, OIRA, if you would like additional information. Email: mkaczmarek@ccsu.edu or call 860-832-2304.

CCSU Office of Institutional Research and Assessment January 2023

HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING RUBRIC

Central Connecticut State University

Definition

Historical Understanding is a competency that connects events of the past to the present and to some degree, the future in the human endeavor. It requires students to identify and evaluate sources, causes, consequences, and the implications of continuity and change within the context of a timeline and eras. Students are expected to acquire an ability to contrast, compare and make connections between multiple concomitant events. It requires students to develop the ability to compare and contrast similar and different events and phenomena across different eras and demonstrate an ability to evaluate, critique and assess the quality, underlying assumptions, biases, and intentions of sources of information. Finally, the competency in Historical Understanding expects students to be able to apply ethical considerations and understanding of the values associated with the inclusion or exclusion of different historical perspectives.

Framing Language

The Historical Understanding rubric is designed to assist faculty in their evaluation of student work on historical dimensions. The rubric requires students to evaluate and contextualize sources, assess continuity and change in those sources, and formulate an argument. This general rubric is meant for many disciplines and assignment types. While one assignment may require the student to evaluate sources (e.g., identify an author's background and biases) others may require analysis of the source content (e.g., a research paper) or comparing different sources. Historical understanding may involve the identification of schools of thought and theories (e.g., Marxism, feminism, etc.), frameworks (ethical stances and biases), perspectives, and/or concepts (e.g., equity, gender, etc.) that are important for evaluating the sources.

The rubric focuses on four elements: Evaluating Sources, Contextualizing Sources, Assessing Continuity and Change, and Formulating an Argument.

Glossary

Source: Primary or secondary material, in either physical or virtual form, providing historical insight or information. Examples include, but are not limited to, archaeological artifacts, data, documents, images, literature, manuscripts, oral accounts, recordings, records, scientific findings, or works of art.

Author: Person or group responsible for production of a source.

Context: The cultural, demographic, economic, environmental, ethical, ideological, political, social, spatial, or temporal settings of a source or event.

Historical Setting: An author's historical situation, including consideration of when the author wrote, where the author wrote, and the concurrent events and ideologies of the time.

Continuity: Enduring pattern(s) across a historical period(s), occurs when historical events and/or forces perpetuate conditions, relationships, or structures.

Change: Disruption and/or transformation of historical patterns, occurs when historical events and/or forces alter conditions, relationships, or structures.

CCSU HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING RUBRIC

	Capstone - 4	3 Milestones	2	Benchmark - 1
Evaluate Sources	**<u>Does</u>**: - Identify author of source(s) - Describe author's background - Relate author's background to source(s) - Evaluate author's major assumptions, biases, motivations, or ethical implications	**<u>Does</u>**: - Identify author of source(s) - Describe author's background - Relate author's background to source(s) **<u>Does not</u>**: - Evaluate author's assumptions, biases, motivations, or ethical implications	**<u>Does</u>**: - Identify author of source(s) - Describe author's background **<u>Does not</u>**: - Relate author's background to source(s).	**<u>Does</u>**: - Identify author of source(s) **<u>Does not</u>**: - Describe author's background.
Contextualize Sources	**<u>Does all of the following</u>**: - Discuss when the author wrote - Discuss where the author wrote - Discuss concurrent events and ideologies - Fully applies knowledge of historical setting to analysis of source(s)	**<u>Does all of the following:</u>** - Discuss when the author wrote - Discuss where the author wrote - Discuss concurrent events and ideologies - Partially applies knowledge of historical setting to analysis of source(s)	**<u>Does two of the following:</u>** - Mention when the author wrote - Mention where the author wrote - Mention concurrent events and ideologies **<u>Does not:</u>** - Apply knowledge of historical setting to analysis of source(s)	**<u>Does one of the following:</u>** - Mention when the author wrote - Mention where the author wrote - Mention concurrent events and ideologies **<u>Does not:</u>** - Apply knowledge of historical setting to analysis of source(s)

Assessing Continuity and Change	**Does all of the following**: - Recognizes continuity or change - Identify enduring pattern or transformation/disruption across historical time period - Fully explains causes of continuity and/or change	**Does all of the following:** - Recognizes continuity and change - Identify enduring pattern or transformation/disruption across historical time period - Partially explains causes of continuity and/or change	**Does all of the following:** - Recognizes continuity or change - Identify enduring pattern or transformation/disruption across historical time period **Does not:** - Explain causes of continuity and/or change	**Does all of the following:** - Recognizes continuity or change **Does not:** - Identify enduring pattern or transformation/disruption across historical time period - Explain causes of continuity and/or change
Formulate an Argument	**Does all of the following**: - Develop and maintain an argument - Provide evidence found in source - Provide evidence from broader time period - Clearly Identifies significance of paper's conclusions	**Does all of the following**: - Develop and partially maintain argument - Provide evidence found in source - Provide evidence from broader time period - Partially identifies significance of paper's conclusions	**Does**: - State an argument. **Does one of the following**: - Provide evidence found in source - Provide evidence from broader time period **Does not**: - Identifies significance of paper's conclusions	**Does**: - State an argument. **Does not**: - Provide evidence found in source - Provide evidence from broader time period - Identifies significance of paper's conclusions