Exploring the role of rubrics in the assessment process in History: a scoping review

Patrik Vaz da Rosa[*], **Leandro Blass and Valesca Brasil Irala**

Universidade Federal do Pampa, Av. Maria da Anunciação Gomes de Godoy, 1650, 96413-172, Bagé, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. *Author for correspondence.
E-mail: patrikvazr@gmail.com

ABSTRACT. This article presents a scoping review on the use of assessment rubrics in the field of History education, mapping how international literature has addressed this practice. The study aims to investigate the available evidence on the application of rubrics across different educational levels, guided by the following research question: How does international literature approach the application and impact of rubrics in various levels of History teaching? Formative assessment, understood as a strategy for the continuous monitoring of learning, emerges as a counterpoint to traditional evaluation practices focused on memorization. In this context, rubrics are identified as tools capable of enhancing objectivity, transparency, and coherence in assessment practices. The review analyzed 17 articles published between 2014 and 2024, retrieved from the Web of Science, Scopus, and Oasisbr databases. Inclusion criteria prioritized empirical and theoretical studies that explicitly address the field of History education. The findings indicate that rubrics are most frequently employed in the evaluation of active learning methodologies, written production, and the development of historical thinking and competencies. However, few studies consider rubrics as the primary object of investigation, with most referring to them only as components of broader methodological approaches. The study concludes that rubrics hold significant potential as pedagogical tools for promoting more equitable and formative assessment in History education. Nevertheless, their effective implementation requires targeted teacher training. The article recommends investing in continuing professional development programs that prepare educators to design and apply rubrics aligned with the goals of historical education. Furthermore, it emphasizes the need for research that investigates the long-term effects of rubric use on students' critical, reflective, and narrative skills throughout their academic trajectories.

Keywords: history teaching; assessment; rubrics.

Explorando o papel das rubricas no processo de avaliação em História: uma revisão de escopo

RESUMO. Este artigo apresenta uma revisão de escopo sobre o uso de rubricas de avaliação no campo do ensino de História, mapeando como a literatura internacional aborda essa prática. O estudo tem como objetivo investigar as evidências disponíveis sobre a aplicação de rubricas em diferentes níveis educacionais, respondendo à seguinte pergunta de pesquisa: Como a literatura internacional aborda a aplicação e o impacto das rubricas nos diversos níveis de ensino de História? A avaliação formativa, compreendida como uma estratégia de acompanhamento contínuo da aprendizagem, surge como contraponto às práticas avaliativas tradicionais centradas na memorização. Nesse contexto, as rubricas são identificadas como ferramentas capazes de ampliar a objetividade, a transparência e a coerência entre as práticas avaliativas. A revisão analisou 17 artigos publicados entre 2014 e 2024, extraídos das bases de dados Web of Science, Scopus e Oasisbr. Os critérios de inclusão priorizaram estudos empíricos e teóricos que abordassem explicitamente o campo do ensino de História. Os resultados indicam que as rubricas são mais frequentemente empregadas na avaliação de metodologias ativas de aprendizagem, produções escritas e no desenvolvimento do pensamento histórico e de competências históricas. No entanto, poucos estudos consideram as rubricas como objeto principal de investigação, sendo elas geralmente referenciadas apenas como parte de abordagens metodológicas mais amplas. O estudo conclui que as rubricas possuem considerável potencial como instrumentos pedagógicos para promover uma avaliação mais equitativa e formativa no ensino de História. No entanto, sua implementação eficaz requer formação docente específica. O artigo recomenda o investimento em programas de formação continuada que preparem os educadores para a construção e aplicação de rubricas alinhadas aos objetivos da educação histórica. Além disso, destaca a necessidade de pesquisas que investiguem os efeitos de longo prazo do uso de rubricas sobre as habilidades críticas, reflexivas e narrativas dos estudantes ao longo de suas trajetórias acadêmicas.

Palavras-chave: ensino de história; avaliação; rubricas.

Explorando el papel de las rúbricas en el proceso de evaluación de Historia: una revisión del alcance

RESUMEN. Este artículo presenta una revisión de alcance sobre el uso de rúbricas de evaluación en el campo de la enseñanza de la Historia, mapeando cómo la literatura internacional ha abordado esta práctica. El estudio tiene como objetivo investigar las evidencias disponibles sobre la aplicación de rúbricas en distintos niveles educativos, respondiendo a la siguiente pregunta de investigación: ¿Cómo aborda la literatura internacional la aplicación y el impacto de las rúbricas en los diversos niveles de enseñanza de la Historia? La evaluación formativa, entendida como una estrategia de acompañamiento continuo del aprendizaje, se presenta como un contrapunto a las prácticas evaluativas tradicionales centradas en la memorización. En este contexto, las rúbricas se identifican como herramientas capaces de ampliar la objetividad, la transparencia y la coherencia en los procesos evaluativos. La revisión analizó 17 artículos publicados entre 2014 y 2024, extraídos de las bases de datos Web of Science, Scopus y Oasisbr. Los criterios de inclusión priorizaron estudios empíricos y teóricos que abordaran explícitamente el campo de la enseñanza de la Historia. Los resultados indican que las rúbricas se utilizan con mayor frecuencia para evaluar metodologías activas de aprendizaje, producciones escritas y el desarrollo del pensamiento histórico y de competencias históricas. Sin embargo, pocos estudios las consideran como objeto principal de investigación, siendo común que se las mencione solo como parte de enfoques metodológicos más amplios. El estudio concluye que las rúbricas poseen un potencial significativo como instrumentos pedagógicos para promover una evaluación más equitativa y formativa en la enseñanza de la Historia. No obstante, su implementación eficaz requiere formación docente específica. El artículo recomienda invertir en programas de formación continua que preparen a los educadores para diseñar y aplicar rúbricas alineadas con los objetivos de la educación histórica. Además, se destaca la necesidad de investigaciones que analicen los efectos a largo plazo del uso de rúbricas sobre las habilidades críticas, reflexivas y narrativas de los estudiantes a lo largo de sus trayectorias académicas.

Palabras clave: enseñanza de la historia; evaluación; rúbricas.

Introduction

Formative assessment plays a central role in debates on improving educational assessment in the contemporary educational landscape, which is permeated by numerous questions regarding formal education and its mechanisms for verifying student learning. The definition of formative assessment is presented by Black and Wiliam (2009) as an assessment approach that accompanies the development of learning, in which decisions about subsequent instructional steps take into account student performance, abandoning the premise of assessments as a detached stage measured solely by a grade.

In the field of History, the primary focus of this study, debates on assessment encompass issues such as, on the one hand, the excessive subjectivity of assessment processes and/or, on the other, an excessive focus on the memorization of dates and isolated facts, without the proper development of connections to historical processes. Ribeiro (2022, p. 23) notes that this type of assessment "[...] is characterized as an authoritarian and disciplining form of assessment that acts in a standardizing manner on each student's individuality, as it trains creativity, suppresses the desire to learn, and undermines freedom of thought." History teachers who are critical of these assessment models seek alternatives to promote forms of assessment that take into account the complexity of the teaching–learning process, valuing students' production of historical knowledge. In such cases, however, they often face a lack of institutional support for changes related to standardized testing (Araújo, 2022).

In light of this context, we consider it necessary to seek alternatives through the development of research that demonstrates the validity of possibilities capable of enriching the assessment process in History education. One example of a formative assessment method that reduces subjectivity in a systematic manner is rubric-based assessment. This method is typically presented in a table format that displays previously established assessment criteria for one or a set of proposed activities, along with possible performance levels and descriptive indicators, and provides preventive feedback regarding each level of performance (Brookhart, 2018; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013).

Another strength of assessment rubrics lies in their plurality of applications, as they can be used to assess student performance in higher education (Blass & Irala, 2021), in basic education (Brookhart, 2024), in processes of self-assessment and self-regulation of learning (Ortiz et al., 2022), in peer assessment processes (Panadero et al., 2013), among others, making them a versatile tool that can be employed in multiple ways at any level of education.

This scoping review aims to investigate the evidence available in the international literature regarding the application of rubrics in the field of History across different educational levels, addressing the question: "How does the international literature approach the application and impact of the use of rubrics at different educational levels in the discipline of History?" The study is justified by the identification of gaps encountered when searching for references on rubric-based assessment in the History discipline. Based on the potential results, it is expected to present theoretical frameworks that may support the development of studies that design and present rubrics as a means of improving formative assessment methods in the field. The next section provides a detailed account of the methodology employed in the review.

Methodological Pathway

By way of contextualizing the analytical terrain upon which this article seeks to focus, we first present an example of a possible rubric applied to History teaching, in which students are required to investigate the social, economic, and political causes of the French Revolution and present their findings through a dialogical seminar. The final, hypothetical project in this example would aim to answer the question: "Why does the French Revolution continue to be a relevant event today?"

In the example shown in Table 1, criteria were selected that emphasize the development of historical thinking, work with sources, and the ability to express knowledge autonomously and critically, as well as the creative and organizational skills involved in delivering a presentation. The rubric in question was developed with four assessment criteria and, likewise, four performance levels (Excellent, Good, Fair, and Unsatisfactory). In this example, in addition to supporting formative assessment, the rubric also indicates a possibility for summative assessment (optional) by defining minimum and maximum scores for each level (ranging from 4 for the highest level to 1 for the lowest). The number of levels and criteria may vary according to instructional intent and the desired level of granularity, that is, the degree of detail of what is intended to be assessed. A rubric may therefore present greater or lesser granularity depending on students' educational or academic level, the complexity of the task, and the established learning objectives.

Table 1. Example of a rubric in the field of History.

Criteria	Excellent (4 points)	Good (3 points)	Fair (2 points)	Unsatsfactory (1 point)
Content understanding	Presents a clear, articulated, and in-depth analysis of the causes, developments, and consequences of the French Revolution.	Clearly identifies the main elements of the content, with good articulation, but with less depth.	Mentions central aspects of the topic, but with limited explanations and little connection between facts.	Presents imprecise, decontextualized, or incorrect information.
Structure and organization	The work presents an excellent logical structure, with clearly defined and well-articulated introduction, development, and conclusion.	The structure is present and understandable, although with minor flaws in organization or cohesion.	A basic structure is present, but with disorganization or significant gaps.	The work lacks structure, making it difficult to understand the content.
Use of sources and evidence	Uses several reliable and relevant sources, with appropriate contextualization and references.	Presents some relevant sources, but without variety or critical depth.	Uses limited or poorly contextualized sources.	Does not use sources or presents inappropriate or missing sources.
Creativity and presentation	The presentation is original, engaging, and demonstrates creative mastery of the content.	The presentation is clear and appropriate, with some level of creativity.	A basic presentation, with little aesthetic elaboration or engagement.	A disorganized, incomplete presentation, or one that lacks attention to form.

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

According to Schmidt and Urban (2016), historical education seeks to understand how students construct historical ideas and attribute meanings to the past in different contexts of socialization and learning. In this sense,

assessment rubrics can serve as a valuable ally in the assessment of historical thinking, as they make it possible to analyze the development of students' historical consciousness through theoretically grounded criteria.

Having contextualized the object that is the focus of this article, we now briefly address the review model adopted. The scoping review is a literature review methodology that aims to map research on a specific topic, providing a comprehensive overview of the breadth and depth of available studies. Its emphasis lies in identifying the quantity, types, and characteristics of published research without necessarily critically assessing the quality of the included studies. Unlike systematic reviews, scoping reviews do not focus on a rigorous analysis of the methodological quality of studies, and, in contrast to narrative reviews, they require an analytical reinterpretation of the literature, offering more than a descriptive summary by structuring a more detailed and organized overview of the investigated topic (Levac et al., 2010).

Based on the research question guiding this study, the keywords History and Rubric were used as the search string, combined with the Boolean operator AND, in order to retrieve studies that included both terms, with the aim of identifying articles that analyze the use of rubrics in History education. The terms were employed in English to locate results in the international literature; however, texts originally published in other languages were also found, provided that an English translation was available.

Initially, the database selected for this research was Web of Science, a platform that classifies information into specific subject areas, facilitating the search for documents relevant to a particular field of research. It also allows the export of document metadata and references, offering options to export full records and cited references in plain text, which simplifies the data processing required for analysis (Moraes & Kafure, 2020). The search was conducted on April 10, 2024, without the application of filters, using only the keywords combined with the Boolean operator. From an initial set of 472 results, 95 articles were obtained after screening within the database, excluding review articles and studies published prior to 2014, which were then analyzed according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria (Figure 1).
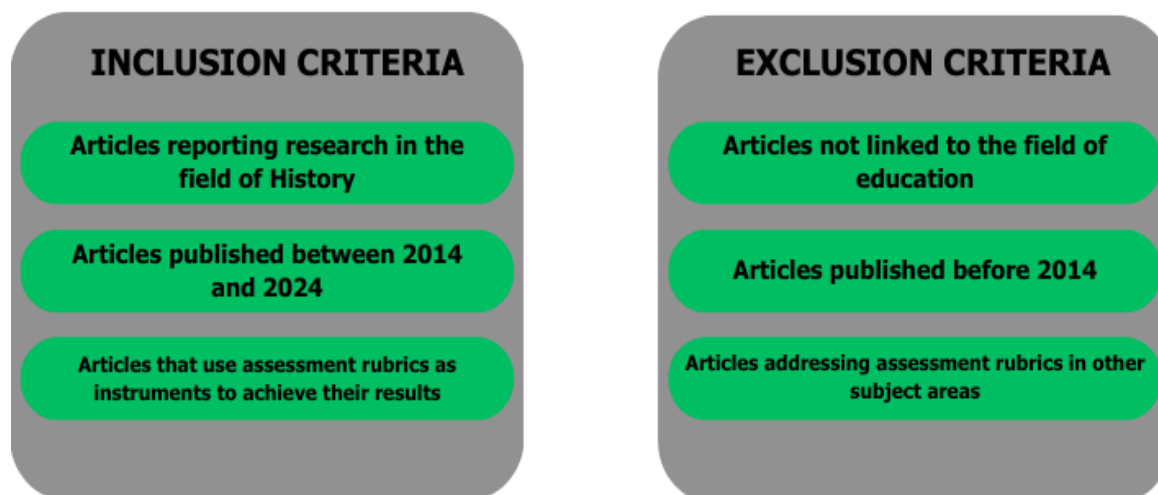

INCLUSION CRITERIA	**EXCLUSION CRITERIA**
Articles reporting research in the field of History	Articles not linked to the field of education
Articles published between 2014 and 2024	Articles published before 2014
Articles that use assessment rubrics as instruments to achieve their results	Articles addressing assessment rubrics in other subject areas

Figure 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria.
Source: Authors' own elaboration.

After screening based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, a total of 10 articles was obtained. Given that this number was considered low for analysis, two additional databases were selected for inclusion in this review. Accordingly, the second search was conducted on July 5, 2024, in Scopus, a database recognized for its broad content coverage, user-friendly interface that allows efficient navigation and interrelation of information, and comprehensive profiles and unique identifiers for authors, institutions, and sources, which facilitate the analysis of scientific production and collaboration (Pranckutė, 2021).

The final database consulted was the national platform Oasis Br, also on July 5, 2024. This platform is an initiative that promotes open access in Brazil by aggregating scientific publications and data from national institutions. With a focus on digital repositories, scientific journals, and thesis libraries, it adopts criteria such as the use of the OAI-PMH protocol, the Dublin Core standard, and free access to full texts, thereby broadly disseminating Brazilian scientific production (Sousa et al., 2024). Figure 2 details the search strings used in the aforementioned databases:
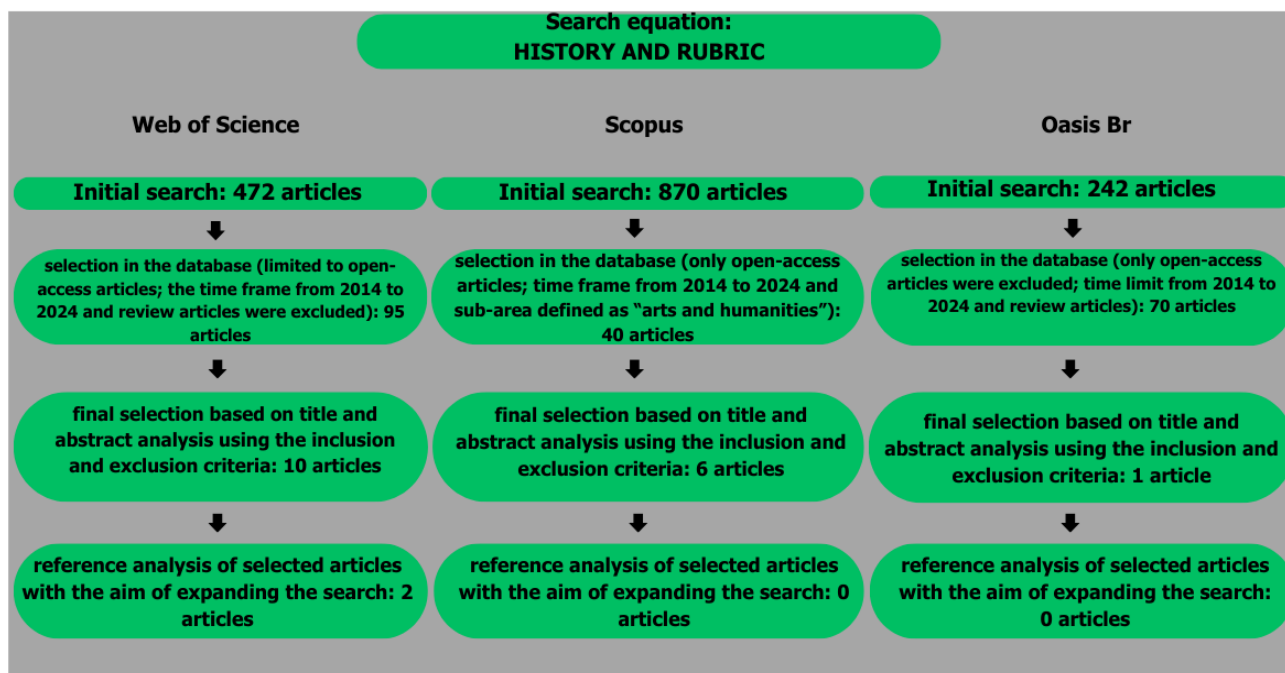
Figure 2. Summary table of searches in the three databases.
Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Through the searches and screening based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria across the three databases, a total of 17 articles was obtained, detailed in a spreadsheet that can be accessed via the QR code below (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Qr Code for access to the full spreadsheet.
Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The following sections present the results, with an emphasis on both descriptive aspects and a critical-analytical perspective on the research findings, followed by the final considerations, in which future perspectives and potential gaps are outlined.

Results

Figure 4 shows the distribution of articles by year within the time frame from 2014 to 2024. In 2019, no articles meeting the inclusion criteria were published. In the remaining years, at least one study was identified, with 2023 being the year with the highest number of publications (four).

The countries with the highest number of studies published within the scope of this research are Spain and the United States, with three articles since 2014. Chile and the Netherlands produced two articles each, while Mexico, Switzerland, Greece, Turkey, Russia, Indonesia, and Australia each contributed one article, as illustrated in the map (Figure 5). The analysis indicates that rubric-based assessment is a method used globally in scientific research. Despite the small sample of studies published in the field of History, articles

incorporating this method were identified across most continents. However, the limited number of publications in Latin America and the absence of studies from Africa are noteworthy. Additionally, Brazil does not appear among the countries with production in this area, revealing a broad field of research to be explored within the Brazilian national context.
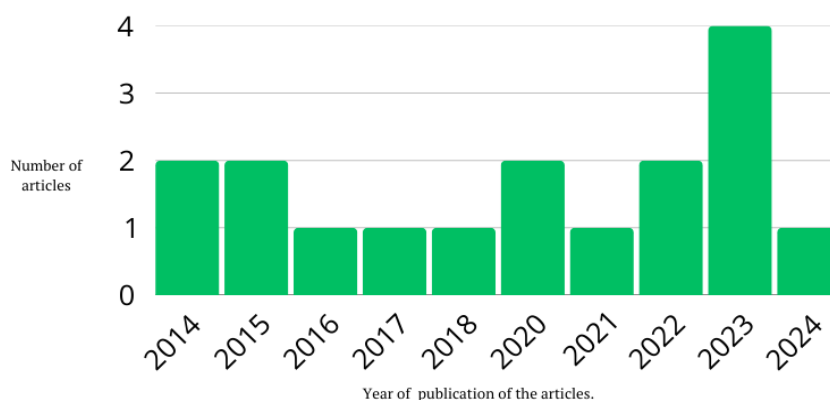

Figure 4. Distribution of articles per year.
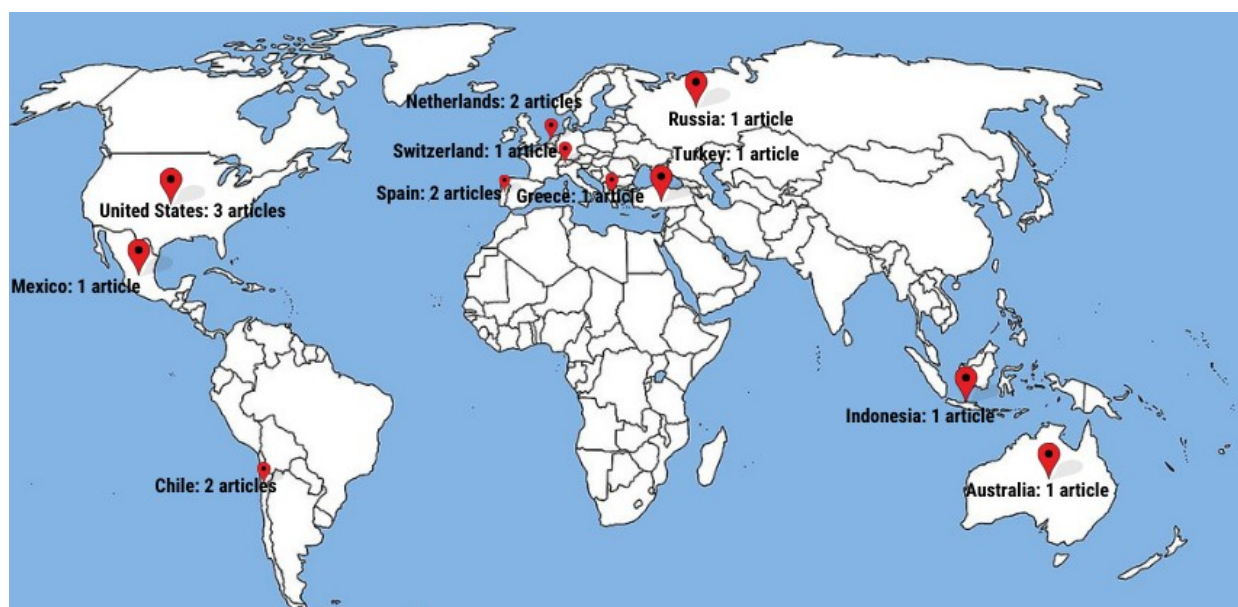Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Figure 5. Map of the articles published in the scope of the research.
Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Subsequently, the study examined how assessment rubrics were used in the selected research. The analysis revealed that assessment rubrics are not treated as central themes in History education, particularly as an approach that investigates the forms of application of this assessment method. This observation highlights a gap in the literature regarding investigations focused on the development and impact of rubrics as a specific pedagogical strategy for History teaching.

The studies identified that make use of rubrics do so only as part of their research methodology, primarily as a means of assessing the performance of specific groups in activities involving historical knowledge, which are, in turn, treated as the central focus of the studies. Table 2 summarizes the procedures for the use of rubrics in each of the analyzed articles.

An analysis of the keywords of the selected articles reveals a predominance of the terms *historical thinking*, *historical reasoning*, and *assessment*. *Rubric*, however, is a term rarely used among the keywords in the database, appearing only in the study by Vasileiadou and Karadimitriou (2021), which focuses on examining whether self-assessment using rubrics can positively impact students' academic performance in Language Arts, History, and Writing. The study suggests that rubrics may be a particularly useful tool for the development of writing skills. Although the study did not directly measure students' perceptions of self-

assessment, the authors report that teachers who use self-assessment as a pedagogical resource indicate a high level of student satisfaction. The researchers argue that rubrics help students reflect on their work, identify areas for improvement, and become more engaged in the learning process (Vasileiadou & Karadimitriou, 2021).

Table 2. Types of use of the rubrics according to the articles.

Article	Database	How rubrics are used
Art. 1 – (Del-Olmo-Ibáñez et al., 2023)	Web of Science	An assessment rubric is used to analyze didactic materials available on the History of Spain for non-native students.
Art. 2 - (Akbaba, 2020)	Web of Science	Rubrics are used to assess historical and chronological thinking skills among secondary school students.
Art. 3 - (Serrano, 2023)	Web of Science	This article uses rubrics to assess levels of secondary school teacher training in historical thinking and their discourses on the subject.
Art. 4 – (Vera et al., 2023)	Web of Science	The study uses rubrics to measure different levels of cognitive skills and historical competencies in secondary education.
Art. 5 - (Loon et al., 2024)	Web of Science	The study used rubrics to assess components of historical reasoning in secondary education.
Art. 6 - (Klijnstra et al., 2023)	Web of Science	The study assesses, through rubrics, students' levels of reasoning in secondary-level humanities subjects regarding social problems.
Art. 7 - (De La Paz et al., 2014)	Web of Science	Assessment rubrics serve as measurement instruments to analyze the quality of students' historical writing before and after the proposed curricular intervention.
Art. 8 - (De La Paz et al., 2016)	Web of Science	The study uses assessment rubrics to analyze students' historical essays.
Art. 9 – (Maddox & Saye, 2017)	Web of Science	Assessment rubrics are used to determine whether students can reason civically within the context of the history curriculum by asking them to apply their understanding of past events to make informed judgments about what is best for the public good.
Art. 10 – (Stoel et al., 2014)	Web of Science	Assessment rubrics are used in this study as a tool to analyze students' writing and to focus on specific elements of causal historical reasoning.
Art. 11 – (Martínez & Gallardo, 2018)	Scopus	The study uses assessment rubrics as an instrument for implementing authentic and performance-based assessment to guide the evaluation of an interdisciplinary project on Human Rights developed by students.
Art. 12 - (Ofianto et al., 2022)	Scopus	The study uses assessment rubrics as an instrument developed to assess students' ability to analyze the causality of historical events.
Art. 13 – (Vasileiadou & Karadimitriou, 2021)	Scopus	The study focuses on examining whether self-assessment using rubrics can positively impact students' academic performance in Language Arts, History, and Writing.
Art. 14 - (Brawley et al., 2015)	Scopus	Explored the implementation of a national standards regime for the History discipline in Australia, focusing on the development and testing of an audit process to assess students' attainment of Threshold Learning Outcomes (TLOs), using assessment rubrics to ensure quality and consistency in this process.
Art. 15 - (Sepúlveda, 2020)	Scopus	The study used an analytic rubric to assess a role-playing game (RPG) activity across six recorded aspects (laboratory, history, thematic focus, organization, costume and setting, tone of voice, and development).
Art. 16 - (Smirnova, 2015)	Scopus	The article uses assessment rubrics as a central instrument to measure the development of students' argumentation and metacognitive skills.
Art. 17 – (Sepúlveda & Arévalo, 2022)	Oasis Br	An analytic rubric is used as the main instrument to assess students' production of short films about the Mexican Revolution.

Source: Authors' own elaboration (2024).

It was found, therefore, that the use of rubrics to assess the development of students' historical thinking is the most recurrent context among the articles, with a total of eight studies. Historical thinking is defined by Vera et al. (2023, p. 93) as "[...] a metaconcept that encompasses skills related to understanding the past based on the interpretation of sources and the creation of historical narratives." The competency of historical consciousness is defined by Rüsen (1992) as the ability to reduce temporal distances between the past, present, and future through a conception of a meaningful temporal whole that encompasses all dimensions of time. This ability makes it possible to overcome the barriers between these temporalities, perceiving them not as separate or isolated, but as interconnected parts of a "temporal whole." This means that, in developing historical consciousness, an individual is able to interpret past events in a way that allows them to understand their impact on the present and their implications for the future. The articles that use rubrics to assess historical thinking are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Articles that assess the development of students' historical thinking.

Art. 2 (2020) - Investigation of Chronological Thinking Skills of Secondary School Students and Development of These Skills Based on Grade Level
Akbaba, B. (Gazi University, Turkey) – Discusses two main approaches in the literature regarding how children develop an understanding of historical time: the first is child-centered and focused on developmental aspects, while the second is subject-centered. The study employed graded scoring rubrics to assess students' performance across six subdimensions of chronological thinking, such as analyzing and interpreting the passage of time in historical texts.
Art. 3 (2023) - Training pre-service secondary teachers in historical thinking: analysis of levels and discourses
Serrano, J. S. (Universidad de Valencia) – This article examines the levels of knowledge and historical thinking among pre-service teachers. The study is based on a written task on knowledge and application of historical thinking skills completed by 156 undergraduate History students between 2019 and 2022. Participants analyzed a secondary school History exercise and subsequently designed an assessment rubric for it. The quality of the rubrics produced by participants was used to categorize their levels of training in historical thinking.
Art. 4 (2023) - Historical thinking skills in high school: analysis of cognitive levels in assessment criteria
Vera, J. R. M., Perez, R. A .R. & Fernandez, J. M. (Universidad de Murcia) - This article explores the development of historical thinking in Spanish education by examining its presence in curricula and its modes of assessment. The study presents RECH (Rúbrica para la Evaluación de Competencias Históricas) as an instrument for analyzing curricula, instructional plans, exams, and textbooks. The rubric organizes historical thinking competencies into six categories: historical perspective; causes and consequences; historical significance; change and continuity; historical evidence and sources; and the ethical dimension of history.
Art. 5 (2024) - Investigating adolescents' historical reasoning skills when analyzing and interpreting an image
Loon, K. van, Studer, D. & Waldis, M. (University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland) – This article investigates the historical reasoning skills of Swiss upper-secondary students as they analyze and interpret an image. A scoring rubric was developed to assess the quality of students' historical reasoning based on criteria such as asking and answering historical questions, reasoning about images, and reasoning with images.
Art. 6 (2023) - Toward a framework for assessing the quality of students' social scientific reasoning
Klijnstra, T., Stoel, G. L., Ruijs, G. J. F., Savenije, G. M. & Van Boxtel, C. A. M. (University of Amsterdam; Radboud University Nijmegen) – This article investigates upper-secondary Dutch students' social scientific reasoning by analyzing how they engage with historical-social problems in social studies education. The authors developed rubrics to assess the quality of this reasoning, detailing three main components—describing, explaining, and resolving social problems. Each component is subdivided into five reasoning activities, such as causal analysis and use of evidence, each rated across three proficiency levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced.
Art. 9 (2017) - Using Hybrid Assessments to Develop Civic Competency in History
Maddox, L. E. & Saye, J. W. (University of North Alabama) – This article discusses the development of civic competencies among high school history students through hybrid assessments. These assessments combine historical reasoning with ethical reasoning, requiring students to apply historical knowledge to contemporary issues. A rubric assessed students' ability to draw a valid connection between a historical event and the specified contemporary issue.
Art. 10 (2014) - Teaching towards historical Expertise. Developing a pedagogy for fostering causal reasoning in History
Stoel, G., van Drie, J. & van Boxtel, C. A. M. (University of Amsterdam) – This article presents a study that developed and tested a pedagogy aimed at enhancing causal reasoning in history among upper-secondary students. Using the Domain-Specific Learning Model as a framework, the study examined the effectiveness of five pedagogical principles, including explicit instruction in domain-specific strategies and concepts. Assessment rubrics were employed to analyze students' knowledge based on specific elements of historical causal reasoning.
Art. 12 (2021) - The Development of Historical Thinking Assessment to Examine Students' Skills in Analyzing the Causality of Historical Events
Ofianto, O., Aman, A., Ningsih, T. Z. & Abidin, N. F. (Universitas Negeri Padang; Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta; Universitas Sebelas Maret) – This article explores the development of students' historical thinking, focusing specifically on their ability to analyze the causality of historical events through a writing test composed of six indicators assessing cause-and-consequence analysis. The rubrics, presented in the article's appendix, detail the scoring criteria for each item in the writing assessment.

Source: Author's elaboration (2024).

Through the analysis, it becomes evident that there is a recurring concern with developing historical thinking in adolescents, as shown in Akbaba (2020), Loon et al. (2024), Klijnstra et al. (2023), Maddox and Saye (2017), and Ofianto et al. (2022). Akbaba (2020) argues that it is essential for students to understand the temporal structure of historical events and to interpret information about their processes, including the ability to explain change and continuity over time. This competence in history education contributes to the construction of students' identities and to their civic engagement in democratic contexts. Maddox and Saye (2017) likewise state that the development of skills such as analyzing primary and secondary sources, contextualizing events, and constructing evidence-based arguments is indispensable for fostering critical and autonomous learners.

The rubrics discussed in the articles on the development of historical thinking employ criteria that assess the competencies expected to be cultivated in the daily practice of History instruction at levels equivalent to

basic education in Brazil. Assessment, therefore, should accompany the development of these historical reasoning skills and serve as a diagnostic tool to determine students' progress and identify what still needs to be addressed to achieve the desired objectives.

Each rubric may be designed by teachers according to the needs and standards of their classes; however, a strong example of a validated rubric with well-defined criteria is found in the article by Vera et al. (2023), which analyzes the work of historical consciousness by comparing the 2014 and 2022 History curricula, equivalent to the Spanish upper-secondary level. The authors employed criteria such as historical perspective, causes and consequences, historical significance, change and continuity, historical evidence and sources, and the ethical dimensions of history. Based on this rubric model, the comparison between the two curricula revealed a paradigm shift in history education in Spain, focusing on the development of critical thinking and on the relationship between historical events and contemporary social issues (Vera et al., 2023).

Student writing assessment in History appears in two different articles by De La Paz et al. (2014, 2016). In the first article (2014), the authors use a rubric to evaluate the historical writing of U.S. middle school students, focusing on three specific aspects of historical reasoning: substantiation, analyzing how students provide evidence and explanations to support a claim; perspective recognition, focusing on students' ability to present texts indirectly; and contextualization, identifying and situating their arguments and primary sources within the historical context.

In the second study (2016), the authors expanded the previous research by addressing its identified limitations, incorporating instruction in general argumentative writing, increasing the sample size, and extending the duration of the study. These changes led to a more comprehensive understanding of the cognitive apprenticeship approach to teaching historical writing. In this study, two rubrics were used: an analytical rubric that, in addition to the criteria used in the 2014 study, included the criterion of refutation, or the students' ability to recognize and address opposing perspectives; and a holistic rubric that evaluated the clarity, persuasiveness, and overall structure of students' essays written in response to the historical prompt.

Four articles employed rubrics as an assessment instrument during the implementation of an active methodology in History classes. Martínez and Gallardo (2018) use assessment rubrics as a tool for implementing authentic and performance-based assessment. The authors define authentic assessment as the evaluation of how students transfer their knowledge into practice, resulting in observable products or actions that aim to reflect the practices and performances that occur in real learning situations (Martínez & Gallardo, 2018).

Sepúlveda (2020) uses the active learning methodology of game-based learning through an RPG game in History instruction for pedagogy students, exploring the potential of the game and highlighting its ability to foster collaborative work, student confidence, and the development of oral communication skills. Rubrics are used to assess all stages of the methodology, from its initial implementation to the final presentation.

Sepúlveda and Arévalo (2022) present an action-research study that examined the impact of producing short films about the Mexican Revolution on the development of historical competencies and socioemotional skills among History students at a Chilean university. The methodology involved interviews, focus groups, and an analytical rubric to assess the films produced by students.

Smirnova (2015) investigates the writing-to-learn (WTL) method in two languages (L1 and L2) to develop historical reasoning among Russian university students. The study assessed the impact of WTL on argumentative reasoning competence and metacognitive skills. Rubrics were employed to evaluate argumentation skills and critical thinking, with pre- and post-course data analyzed.

Finally, two articles use rubrics to assess other aspects of history education. Del-Olmo-Ibáñez et al. (2023) analyze the scarcity of History teaching materials for foreign students in Spanish basic education. The authors conducted a systematic literature review and analyzed textbooks from major Spanish publishers using a rubric to evaluate the treatment of historical content and written expression activities. The study concludes that there is a lack of materials specifically designed for non-native students and highlights the need for a European reference standard for history education, similar to the one that exists for languages.

Lastly, Brawley et al. (2015) investigate the challenges and opportunities related to implementing a national standards regime in the discipline of History in Australia. In the Australian context, with the introduction of Threshold Learning Outcomes (TLOs) for disciplines such as History, rubrics are widely used as a tool to assess whether students have achieved the desired learning outcomes.

Final considerations

We return here to the research question that guided this review: "How does the literature address the application of rubrics across different educational levels in the discipline of History?" We identified that most of the studies analyzed employ assessment rubrics to evaluate the development of students' historical thinking at various levels of schooling.

The formative role of rubrics proved promising and an appropriate tool for monitoring the development of historical thinking skills, as the pre-established criteria offer several advantages and reduce the subjectivity of assessment—an issue frequently observed in traditional approaches to history assessment.

The review also highlighted the plurality of approaches through which rubrics can be used in History education, such as in the evaluation of active methodologies implemented in the classroom. In these cases, rubrics enable continuous monitoring of all stages of the methodology, allowing for the inclusion of specific criteria for each phase. It was also possible to observe the role of rubrics in assessing written work and historical texts, incorporating criteria such as interpretation, textual coherence, and contextualization, thus anticipating writing skills that should be developed throughout the academic term.

Most of the studies reviewed are concentrated in European countries, with few examples from Asia or Latin America—particularly Brazil—and no studies from the African continent. This limits the generalizability of the findings to more diverse educational contexts, especially those facing greater structural challenges.

The analysis of the selected articles indicates that assessment rubrics can serve as an important tool for formative assessment in History education. Although the limited number of studies—17 articles over a ten-year period that met the inclusion criteria—represents a constraint of this review, the scarcity of research also suggests that the field of History Education presents a promising area for further investigation on assessment practices.

For future directions, we suggest investment in the professional development of History teachers regarding the use of rubrics as an evaluative tool. Although rubrics offer clear advantages, their effective use requires technical understanding to integrate the method into instructional practices. In this regard, continuing education programs that enable teachers to design and apply rubrics aligned with curricular demands and pedagogical objectives may enhance the benefits of this tool.

Finally, there is a need for longitudinal studies that examine the impact of rubrics on students' academic trajectories, considering not only immediate learning outcomes but also their contribution to the development of critical and reflective skills essential for a contextualized understanding of the past.

Data availability

The data are available via the QR Code in Figure 3 in the body of the article.

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Patrik Vaz da Rosa: Master's student and CAPES scholarship holder in the Graduate Program in Teaching at Universidade Federal do Pampa – Bagé Campus. Holds a Bachelor's degree in History from the Centro Universitário da Região da Campanha and a specialization in Brazilian History and Afro-Brazilian History and Culture from Faculdade Iguaçu.
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0004-0493-7420
E-mail: patrikvazr@gmail.com

Leandro Blass: PhD in Computational Modeling from the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. Associate Professor in the Mathematics Licentiate Program and in the Graduate Program in Teaching at the Universidade Federal do Pampa. Leader of the research group G.A.M.A – Research Group on Learning, Methodologies and Evaluation.
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2302-776X
E-mail: leandroblass@unipampa.edu.br

Valesca Brasil Irala: PhD in Letters – Applied Linguistics. Professor and coordinator of the Graduate Program in Teaching at Universidade Federal do Pampa and vice-leader of the research group G.A.M.A – Research Group on Learning, Methodologies and Evaluation. Full Professor at Unipampa.
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6190-8440
E-mail: valescairala@unipampa.edu.br

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Associate editor responsible:
Terezinha Oliveira (UEM)
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9841-7378
E-mail: teleoliv@gmail.com

Maria Terezinha Bellanda Galuch (UEM)
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5154-9819
E-mail: mtbgaluch@uem.br

Solange Franci Raimundo Yaegashi (UEM)
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7666-7253
E-mail: sfryaegashi@uem.br

Vania Fátima Matias De Souza (UEM)
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4631-1245
E-mail: vfmsouza@uem.br

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Normalization reviewer:
Adriana Curti Cantadori de Camargo