Civic Learning and Civic Knowledge

Faculty Forum

Office of General Education

Introductions

- Elaine Marchello, PhD, Director of Learning Assessment
- Yvonne Zhang, PhD, Assessment Specialist, Office of General Education

General Education

ABOR Policy 2-210, A.2.: The study of American Institutions will include at minimum:

I. how the history of the United States continues to shape the present,
II. the basic principles of American constitutional democracy and how they are applied under a republican form of government,
III. the United States Constitution and major American constitutional debates and developments,
IV. the essential founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of American Institutions of self-governance,
V. landmark Supreme Court cases that have shaped law and society,
VI. the civic actions necessary for effective citizenship and civic participation in a self-governing society – for example civil dialog and civil disagreement,
VII. basic economic knowledge to critically assess public policy options and to inform professional and personal decisions.

How Was the Rubric Created?

- Several working groups of faculty and the UWGEC worked on the civics requirement.
- This assessment is NOT associated with the requirement! However, various faculty did review the rubric as we worked through the different iterations.
- Ultimately, representatives from our faculty worked with the Tri-Uni group to build a common rubric for the 3 institutions to use in this assessment.

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Developing toward Expectations
Historical Analysis and Contemporary Application (I, VII)	Identifies a U.S. institution and describes its historical, economic, and/or ideological origins, with sophisticated discussion of the institution's effect on groups and individuals, historically and in contemporary society.	Identifies a U.S. institution and describes its historical, economic, and/or ideological origins, with basic attention given to the institution's effect on groups and individuals, historically and/or in contemporary society.	Identifies a U.S. institution and provides limited description of its historical, economic, and/or ideological origins with limited attention to its effect on groups or individuals.
Principles of U.S. Constitutional Democracy (II, IV, VI)	Effectively analyzes principles of U.S. constitutional democracy and relevant competing perspectives on those principles in historical or contemporary context.	Identifies basic principles of U.S. constitutional democracy and relevant competing perspectives on those principles in historical or contemporary context.	Minimally identifies basic principles of U.S. constitutional democracy but does not adequately recognize competing perspectives.
Foundational U.S. Documents and Laws: Constitution and Supreme Court Cases (III, IV, V)	Defines sophisticated connections between one or more elements of the U.S. Constitution and a historical or contemporary debate, including one or more Supreme Court cases when relevant.	Connects one or more elements of the U.S. Constitution effectively to a historical or contemporary debate, including one or more Supreme Court cases when relevant.	Provides limited or no description of elements of the U.S. Constitution and does not connect those elements to historical or contemporary debates or landmark Supreme Court cases.
Civic Communication and Action (VI)	Effectively constructs an argument or discussion regarding civic action that incorporates multiple perspectives and/or other evidence.	Adequately constructs an argument or discussion regarding civic action that at least minimally references multiple perspectives or other evidence.	Constructs an argument or discussion regarding civic action that is ineffective, neither offering reference to multiple perspectives or other evidence.

Methods

Who Participated?

- Over 40 faculty, staff, and doctoral students participated at different stages of the assessment which included focus groups and a year-long working group.
- 27 participants were trained as evaluators to score students' work. They represented many of the colleges and disciplinary areas across campus.

How was Student Work Assessed?

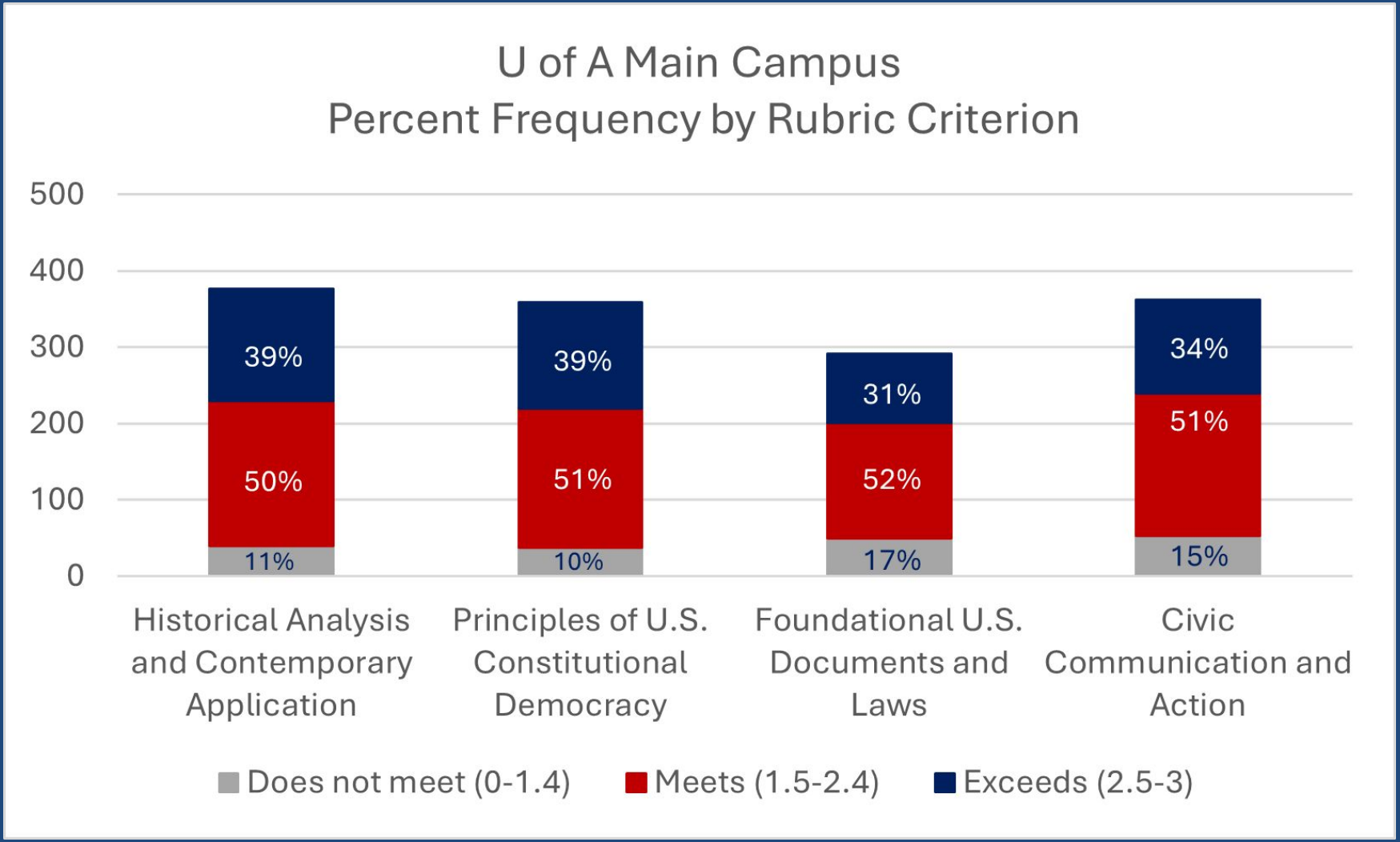
- To ensure reliability, all reviewers were calibrated on the rubric prior to the scoring process.
- Each artifact was evaluated twice, with a third reading taking place if the first two scores showed a difference greater than 1.
- When reviewing the artifacts, if evidence of a particular criterion was not present, the scorer could mark n/a.
    - In these cases, the artifact was not included in the average score for that criterion, explaining why the *n* for each criterion is different.

What artifacts were used?

- Call went out asking GE faculty if they had an assignment that would work.
- Artifacts from 7 courses were used.
- 383 artifacts collected

- UAGC
  - Also participated
  - 500 artifacts
  - Provided 3 raters from their campus
  - Not focusing on these data

What Did We Learn?



Substantial variations and nuances in civic learning curriculum and assessment across institutions

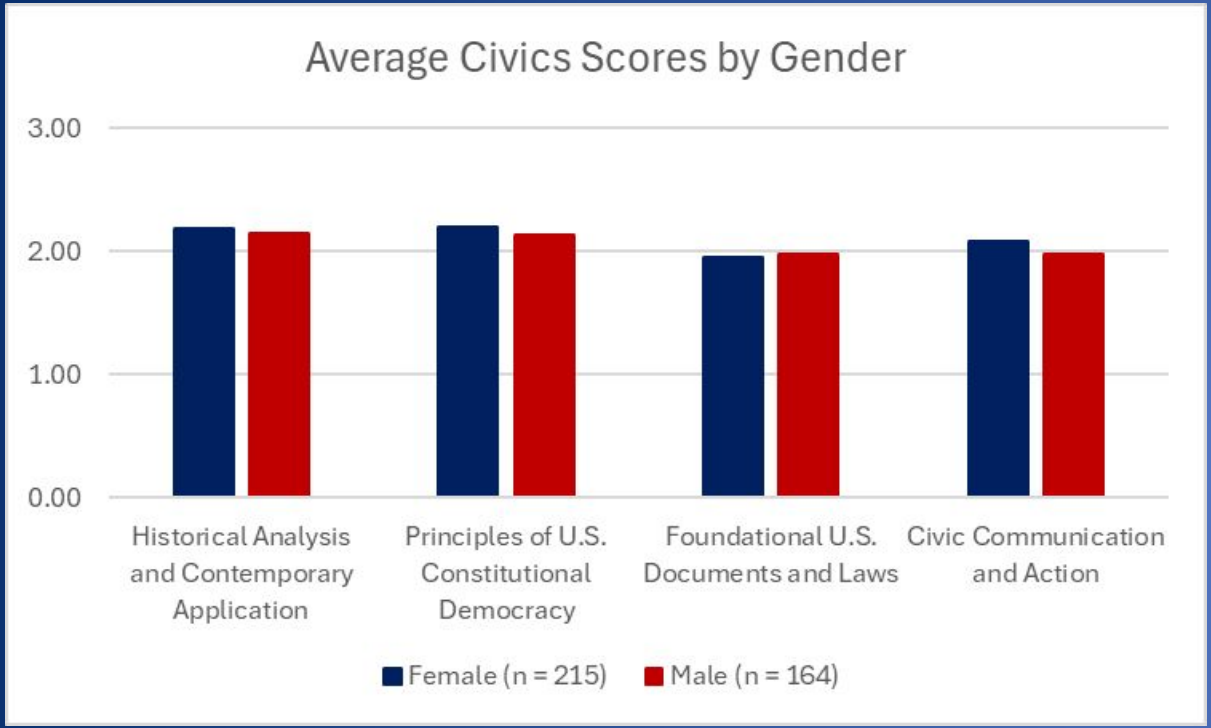
Assessment type	Example
Rubric-based	AAC&U Civic Engagement Rubric
Survey-based	Civic Engagement Module of the National Survey of Student Engagement, NSSE
Standardized tests	The ETS HEIghten Civic Competency Engagement Test
Course examinations	The American Experience test

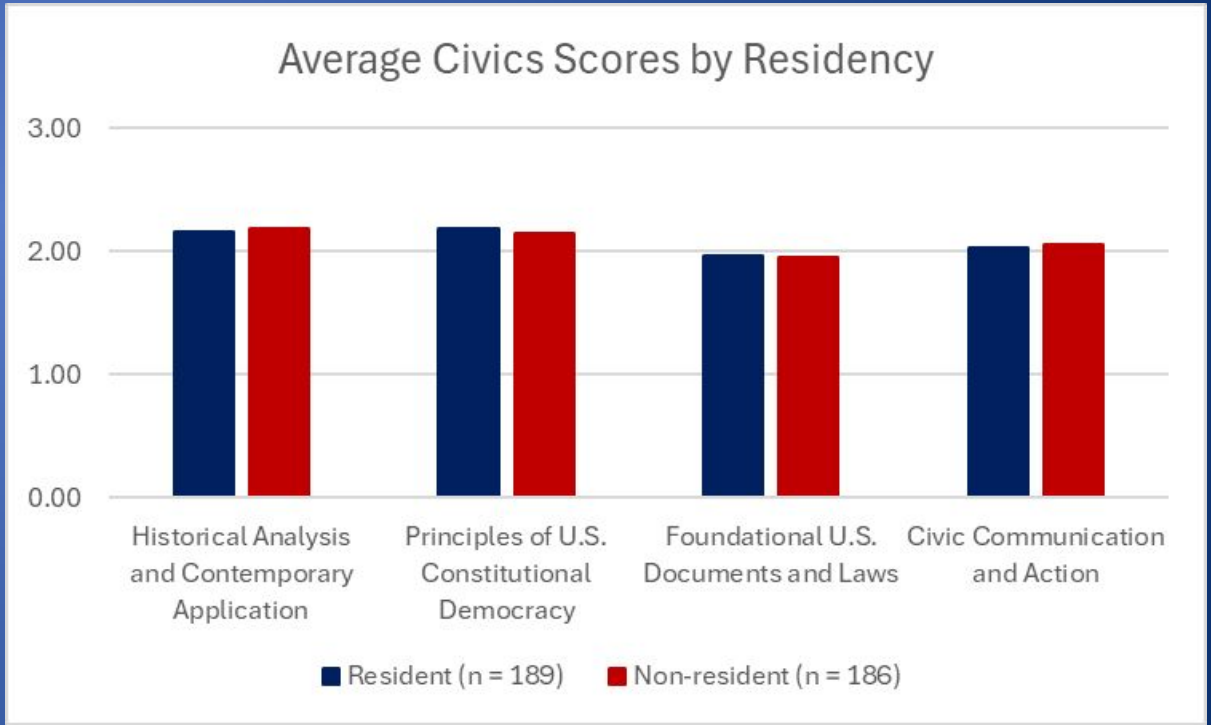
How did we compare with peer institutions?

U of A results were aligned to or slightly better than rubric-based civic learning assessments at other institutions.

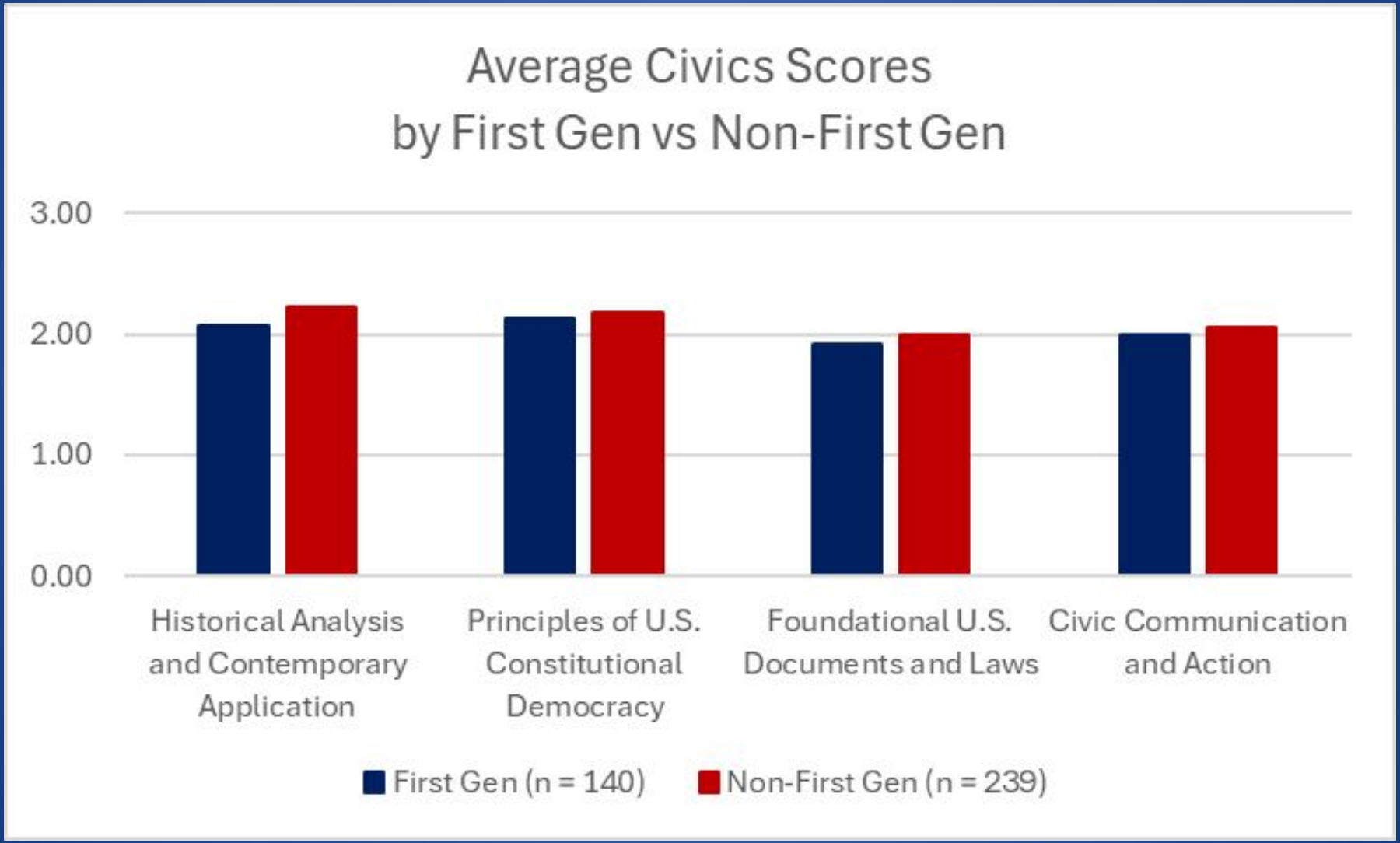
- Chapman University in 2020
- Texas A&M University in 2021
- University of Hawaii at Manoa in 2022

Gender and Residency

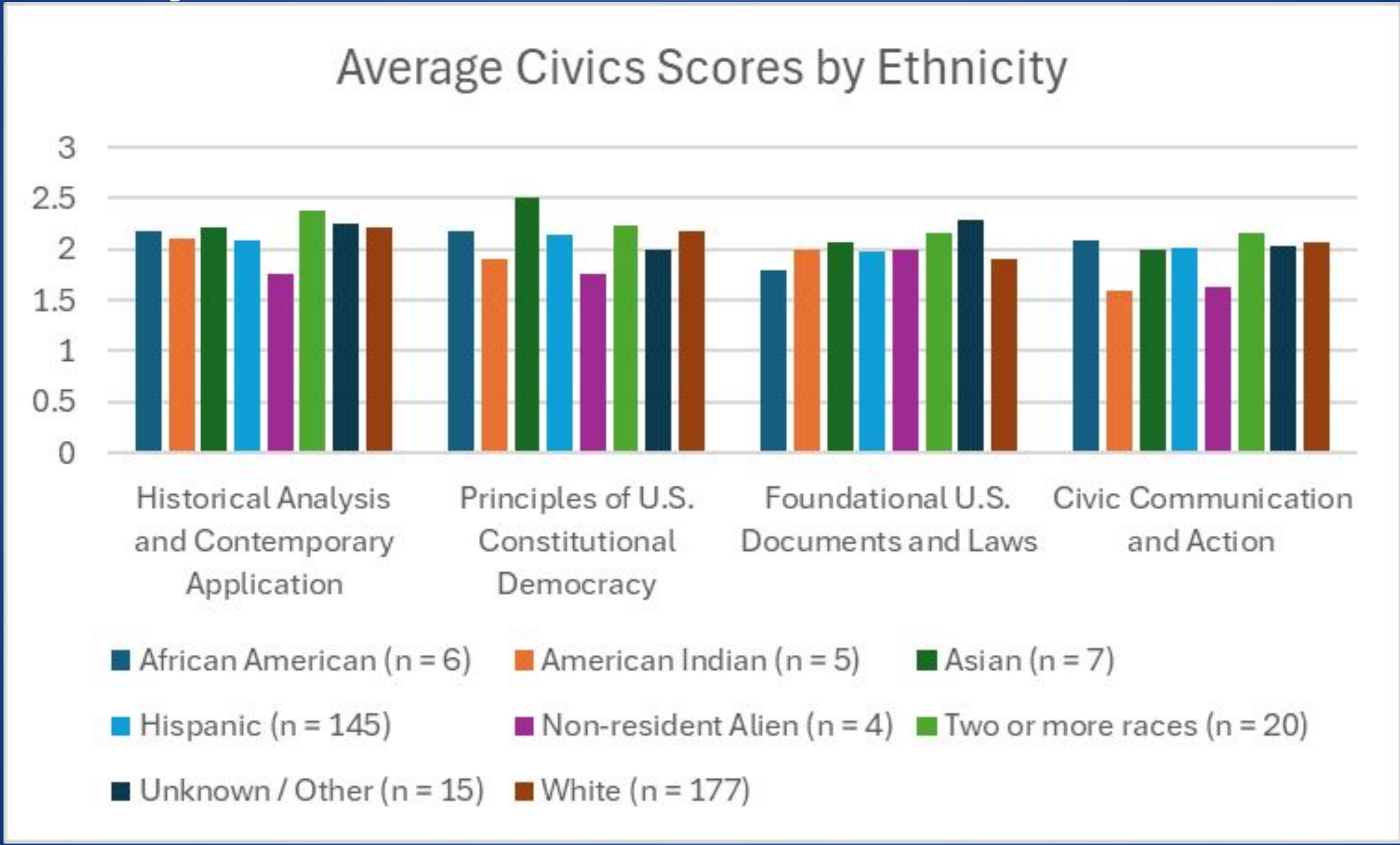




First Generation vs. Non-First Generation



Ethnicity


Average Civics Scores by Ethnicity
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
0.5
0
Historical Analysis and Contemporary Application
Principles of U.S. Constitutional Democracy
Foundational U.S. Documents and Laws
Civic Communication and Action
African American (n = 6)
American Indian (n = 5)
Asian (n = 7)
Hispanic (n = 145)
Non-resident Alien (n = 4)
Two or more races (n = 20)
Unknown / Other (n = 15)
White (n = 177)

Challenges

- We do not yet have GE courses with an emphasis on Civic learning/Civic Knowledge
  - Finding assignments that included all the rubric criteria
  - Was difficult to get enough artifacts
- Calibrating raters since not everyone is an expert in civics

Considerations

- What questions are we not asking of our student learning?
- What changes might be suggested to the rubric?
- How can we get more instructors to participate in providing artifacts?
- What support for developing and teaching “civics” classes do we need to offer?

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC

Coming soon….

Civic Learning/Civic Knowledge requirements

Thank you for attending!

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY