

Example of Part C: Reflection on Historical Methodology

While attempting to answer the question “How and why did the ‘meanings’ of college football change during World War II?” I relied heavily on the student newspapers, yearbooks, and media guides to help gain insight into the minds of those who watched the wartime football games. However, one key limitation that I constantly needed to remind myself was that although the fans may have read these sources, the meanings attached to the games, such as the prominent connection with football as a training ground for future soldiers, may not have been fully accepted by everyone. Thus, even when it seemed that some images were unmistakable, I had to develop strong arguments that still allowed for the possibility that the images were only a shadow of the whole experience. Further, I had to consider how my own interest in the modern game of football and an occasional distrust of government influenced my choice and use of sources. I tended to focus on the quarterbacks as examples of college football recruits playing for a season before shipping off to war, but needed to also consider the fact that the quarterback position was not as prominent in the 1940’s game as it is today. While my bias cannot be completely eliminated, I did recognize my tendency to select sources that focused on the quarterback and began to actively seek news articles and memorabilia that highlighted other players. Doing this illuminated a key concept that coaches, players, and the media often portrayed: that teamwork, in football like in war, was crucial. Further, I realized that I was not able to only use source material from two universities to make an argument about college football in general, and thus, I changed my question to focus specifically on Georgian universities during the war. Further, while I considered the loss of life in the war to be tragic, I had to remain cautious and recognize that the players, soldiers, and fans tended to strongly support the war against fascism. Thus a balance between both elements was something that needed to be conveyed. I attempted to do this most prominently in the story of Georgia Tech’s Clint Castleberry who volunteered to serve after a promising freshman season and never returned home. I have learned that my role as the historian is to present an argument that I can prove, such as the idea that football reflected the changing attitude driven by wartime realities, specifically that in American society watching college football at UGA and GT, patriotism and violence became symbolic of virtue very apparent in the college gridiron experience.

Rubric / Assessment Criteria

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- The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.

1-2

- The reflection contains some discussion of what the investigation highlighted to the student about the methods used by the historian.
- The reflection demonstrates little awareness of the challenges facing the historian and/or the limitations of the methods used by the historian.
- The connection between the reflection and the rest of the investigation is implied, but is not explicit.

3-4

- The reflection is clearly focused on what the investigation highlighted to the student about the methods used by the historian
- The reflection demonstrates clear awareness of challenges facing the historian and/or limitations of the methods used by the historian.
- There is a clear and explicit connection between the reflection and the rest of the investigation.

Questions to consider:

1. Does the student clearly illustrate multiple methods and tools used by historians to do historical analysis?
2. Does the students clearly show that they recognized the challenges faced in doing historical analysis?
 1. NOT - challenges in avoiding procrastination
 2. NOT - challenges in using a computer
 3. NOT - challenges in finding a topic or a research question
3. Does the student clearly show how they managed to overcome the challenges in doing historical analysis?
4. Does the student connect each of the previous questions to their specific historical investigation and their specific historical analysis?

See the following website for more helpful advise: <http://ibhistoryia.weebly.com/section-3.html>