Assessment Report:	**Electronic Writing Portfolio Readings Report**
Assessment Period:	**Academic Year 2023**
Submitted by:	**Dr. Suzie Park, Interim Assistant VPAA**

THE TEAM

Dr. Suzie Park, Interim Assistant VPAA, asked for volunteer readers for the AY 2023 Electronic Writing Portfolio Readings Report.

The readers, along with their academic affiliations, are as follows:

> **David Bell**, Reference Librarian, Booth Library
> **Melissa Caldwell**, English, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
> **Karen Drage**, Technology, Lumpkin College of Business & Technology
> **Terri Fredrick**, Communication Studies, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
> **Nichole Mulvey**, Communication Disorders & Sciences, College of Health & Human Services
> **Jeff Snell**, Management, Lumpkin College of Business & Technology
> **Rashelle Spear**, English, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
> **Tim Taylor**, English, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
> **Gordon Tucker**, Biological Sciences, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
> **Marjorie Worthington**, English, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
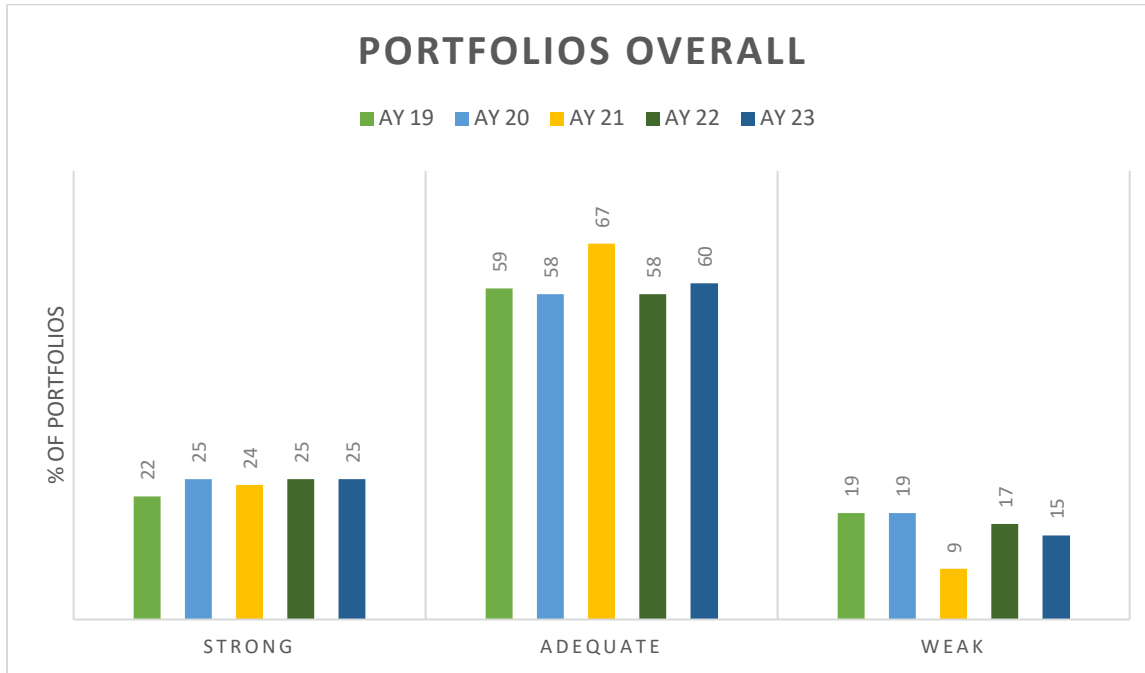
THE PROCESS

To assess student writing during Academic Year 2023, Suzie Park asked for volunteer readers, assigned 6 student writing portfolios to each of 10 readers, and requested complete reading reports of these 60 complete portfolios in May 2023. Since each complete portfolio is composed of 3 papers submitted by a student, chosen at random from complete portfolios only, each reader was assigned 18 papers. Readers conducted a total of 180 individual assessments.

A major development in the review process is the full integration of reviews into the EWP (Electronic Writing Portfolio) interface for designated readers. Many thanks to Web Developer Lucas Lower for making this happen.

Readers were asked to look at writing patterns across the portfolios rather than focus on each individual document submitted to the portfolios. The reading guide asks readers to provide an assessment of writing ability for complete portfolios across seven aspects of writing: **focus/purpose, organization, development, audience, style, mechanics, and use of sources**. Readers completed a reading guide for each of the six portfolios they read. Readers also completed a summative Reader Observations sheet, in which they assessed the whole set of six portfolios that they read.

THE RESULTS

The "Portfolios Overall" chart covers the last 5 years of EWP data collection and assessment. After this chart covering overall results, the remaining charts align with the 7 categories assessed by readers. Note that each chart captures readers' assessment of the portfolios as a whole. This report quotes directly from the readers' comments to lend evidence for our larger assessment. Percentages correlate with the portion of portfolios rated in the 7 categories.
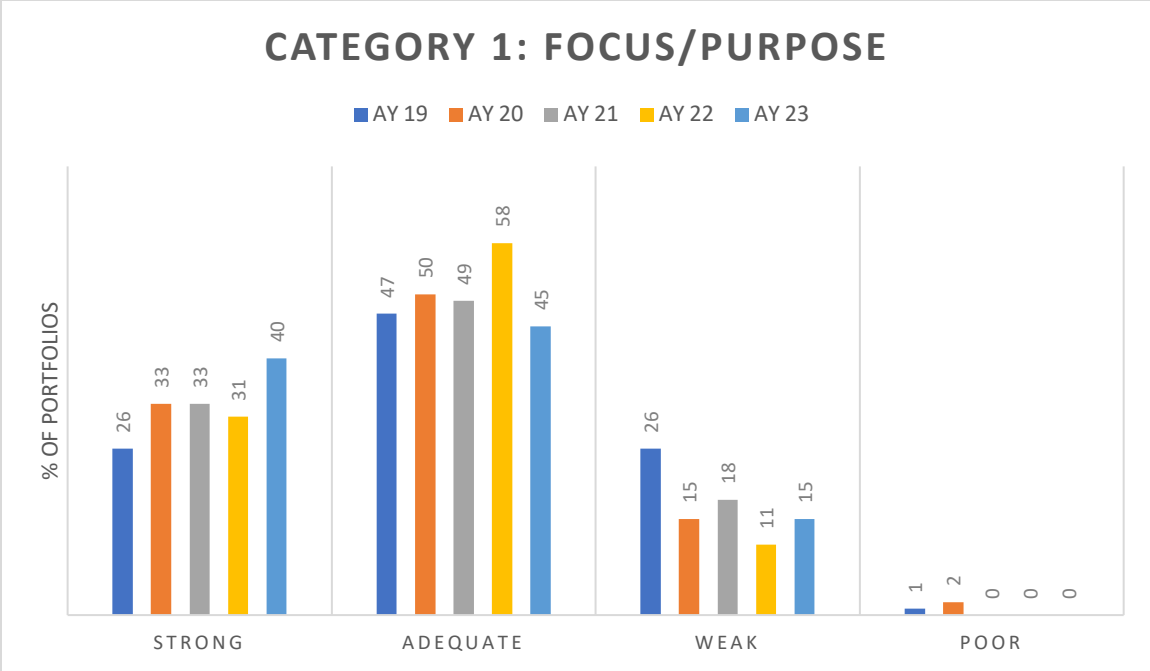
PORTFOLIOS OVERALL

■ AY 19 ■ AY 20 ■ AY 21 ■ AY 22 ■ AY 23

% OF PORTFOLIOS

	STRONG	ADEQUATE	WEAK
AY 19	22	59	19
AY 20	25	58	19
AY 21	24	67	9
AY 22	25	58	17
AY 23	25	60	15

Strong Portfolios: 25%
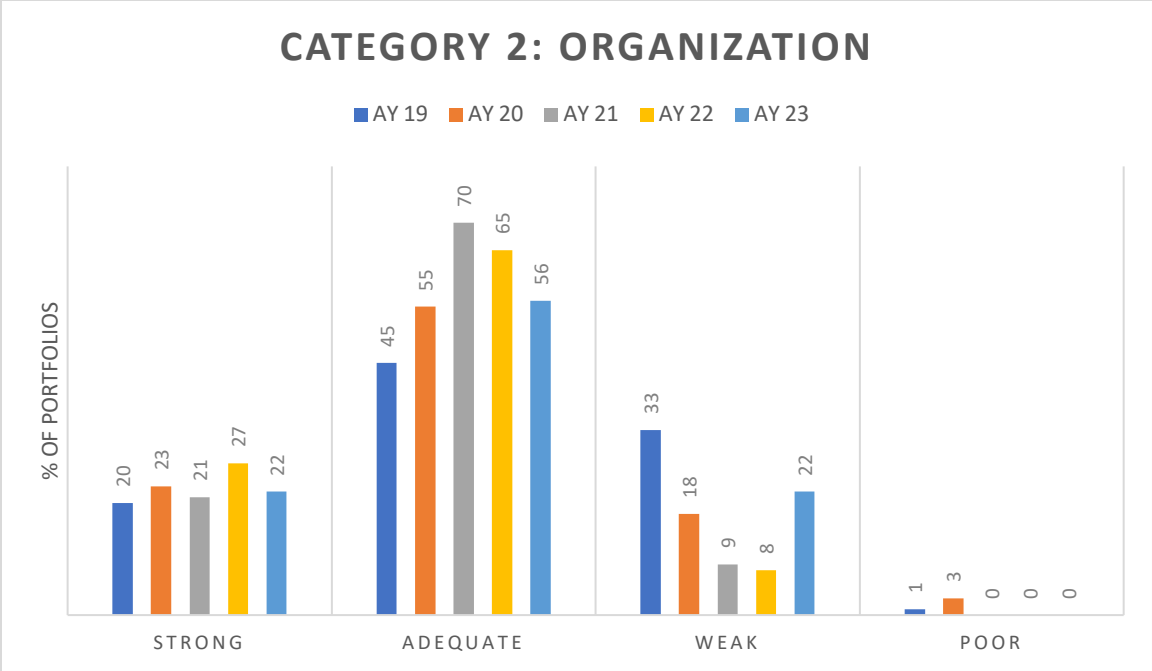Adequate Portfolios: 60%
Weak Portfolios: 15%

Comparing AY 23 over AY 22, the percentage of portfolios rated "strong" stayed flat, at 25%. The majority of portfolios rated "adequate" rose slightly from 58% to 60%. "Weak" portfolios dipped slightly from 17% to 15%. The thing to note is the remarkable consistency in overall ratings of portfolios from year to year.

CATEGORY 1: FOCUS/PURPOSE

■ AY 19 ■ AY 20 ■ AY 21 ■ AY 22 ■ AY 23

	STRONG	ADEQUATE	WEAK	POOR
AY 19	26	47	26	1
AY 20	33	50	15	2
AY 21	33	49	18	0
AY 22	31	58	11	0
AY 23	40	45	15	0

% OF PORTFOLIOS

40% Strong   consistently strong sense of focus/purpose throughout
45% Adequate   clear focus/purpose in most or all submissions
15% Weak   some evidence of ability to focus on a purpose
0 Poor   very little or no evidence of focus

FOCUS/PURPOSE: Comparing AY 23 over AY 22, the percentage of portfolios rated "strong" rose markedly, to 40%. The majority of portfolios are still rated "adequate," a group that dipped to 45%. "Weak" portfolios increased from 11% to 15%. "Poor" portfolios stayed flat at 0.
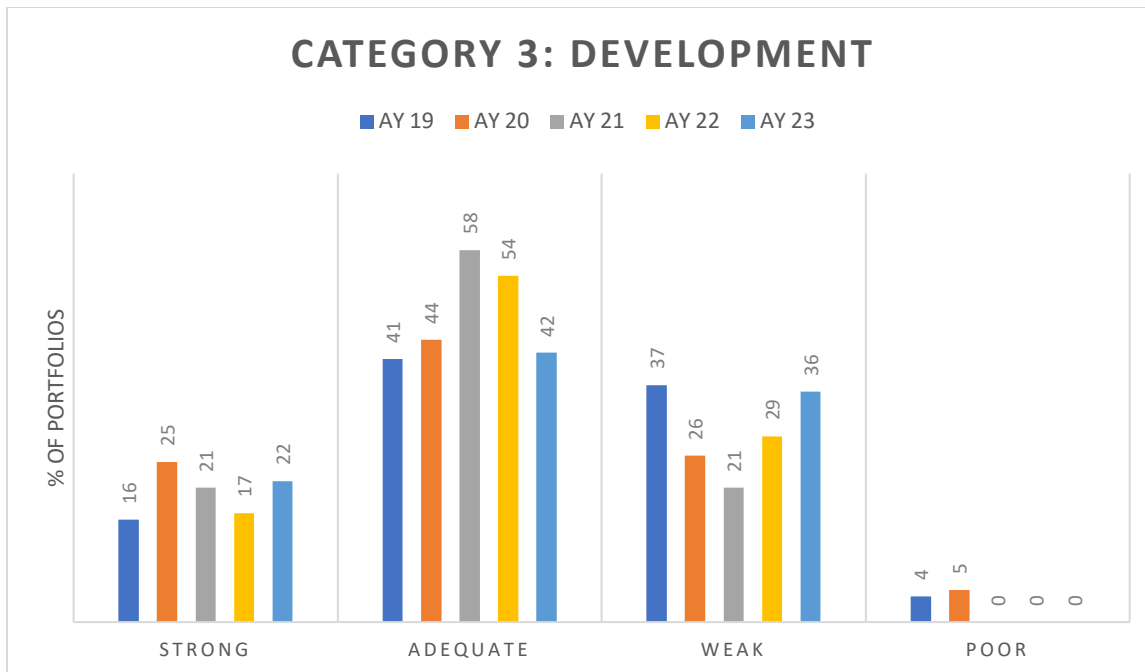
While Focus/Purpose was one of the most bifurcated of the categories that readers assessed in the previous rounds of assessments (AY21 and AY 22 reports), AY23 readers noted a marked improvement (9% increase) in more papers having a strong focus. As one reader put it, a "strong" portfolio in this category guides the reader with an "easy to follow purpose regardless of the paragraph read."

CATEGORY 2: ORGANIZATION

■ AY 19 ■ AY 20 ■ AY 21 ■ AY 22 ■ AY 23

% OF PORTFOLIOS

	STRONG	ADEQUATE	WEAK	POOR
AY 19	20	45	33	1
AY 20	23	55	18	3
AY 21	21	70	9	0
AY 22	27	65	8	0
AY 23	22	56	22	0

22% Strong   Consistent use of structure enhancing presentation of ideas/information
56% Adequate   Logical organization and/or clearly identifiable structure
22% Weak   Inconsistent sense of structure and/or lapses in organization
0 Poor   Very little or no sense of structure or organization

ORGANIZATION: Comparing AY 23 over AY 22, the percentage of portfolios rated "strong" dipped, from 27% to 22%. The majority of portfolios are rated "adequate," a sector that fell, from 65% to 56%. "Weak" portfolios rose markedly from 8% to 22%. "Poor" portfolios stayed flat at 0.

Readers' ratings of portfolios show the greatest divide in the Organization category, with 22% "strong" and 22% "weak." One reader noted a general "improvement overall in organization." The reader notes that the portfolios demonstrate strengths and challenges in organization at global and local levels: "More students across genres are using headings and better paragraphs to aid the flow of the paper. However, there still seems to be some difficulty effectively organizing within paragraphs and including and organizing relevant details."

CATEGORY 3: DEVELOPMENT

■ AY 19 ■ AY 20 ■ AY 21 ■ AY 22 ■ AY 23

% OF PORTFOLIOS

	STRONG	ADEQUATE	WEAK	POOR
AY 19	16	41	37	4
AY 20	25	44	26	5
AY 21	21	58	21	0
AY 22	17	54	29	0
AY 23	22	42	36	0

22% Strong: Ideas consistently developed in depth and supported with rich and relevant details
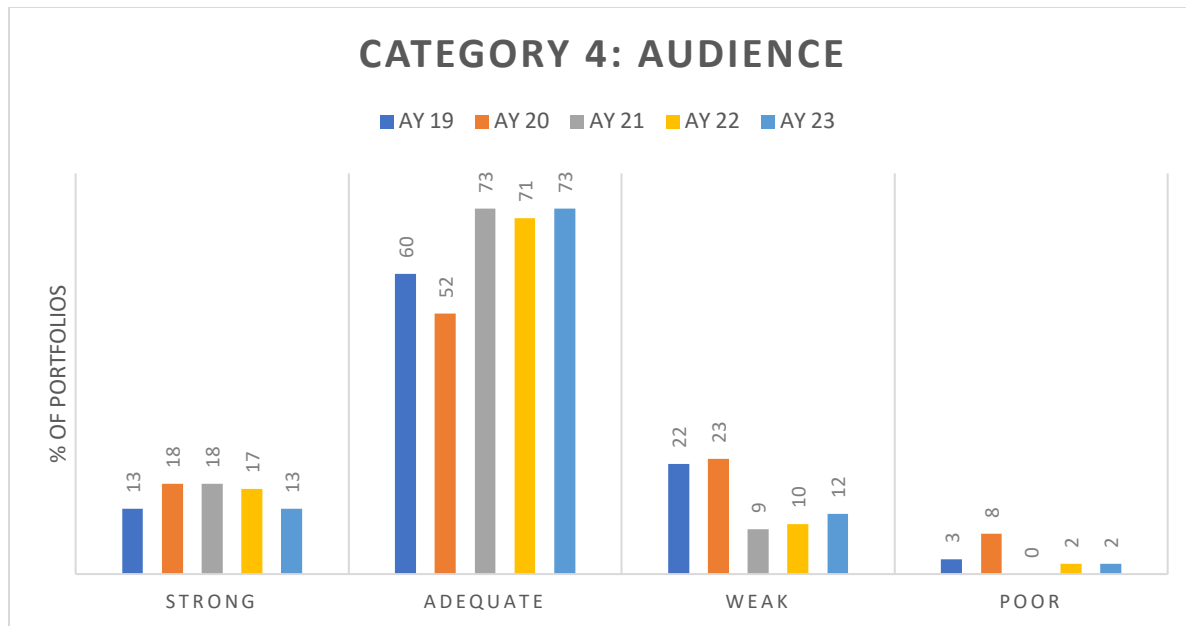**42% Adequate**: Ideas developed in depth with appropriate supporting evidence/details
36% Weak: Some development of ideas and use of supporting evidence/details
0 Poor: Very little or no development of ideas or use of supporting evidence

DEVELOPMENT: Comparing AY 23 over AY 22, the percentage of portfolios rated "strong" rose, from 17% to 22%. The majority of portfolios are rated "adequate," and this sector shrunk, from 54% to 42%. "Weak" portfolios rose, from 29% to 36%. "Poor" portfolios stayed flat at 0.

The majority of portfolios were once again placed in the "adequate" category for Development. However, several readers identified the common problem of students' lack of demonstrated ability to state the main claim and then develop it fully. As one reader noted about thesis statements and follow-through: "there is an overall lack of understanding of the importance of presenting one's stance (even if a paper is information, reflective, etc., there should be a statement early in the document—the intro in papers of this length—that presents that stance clearly, concisely, and in a way that offers readers a roadmap of the essay journey."

CATEGORY 4: AUDIENCE

■ AY 19 ■ AY 20 ■ AY 21 ■ AY 22 ■ AY 23

(Bar chart, Y-axis: % OF PORTFOLIOS)

STRONG: AY 19: 13, AY 20: 18, AY 21: 18, AY 22: 17, AY 23: 13

ADEQUATE: AY 19: 60, AY 20: 52, AY 21: 73, AY 22: 71, AY 23: 73

WEAK: AY 19: 22, AY 20: 23, AY 21: 9, AY 22: 10, AY 23: 12

POOR: AY 19: 3, AY 20: 8, AY 21: 0, AY 22: 2, AY 23: 2

13% Strong: Sophisticated sense of audience—e.g., distinctive voice and/or appropriate tone
**73% Adequate**: Some awareness of and/or attempt to communicate with audience
12% Weak: Little or no awareness of audience
2% Poor: No sense of writing for an audience

AUDIENCE: Comparing AY 23 over AY 22, the percentage of portfolios rated "strong" dipped to 13%. The majority of portfolios are rated "adequate," which rose slightly, from 71% to 73%. "Weak" portfolios rose slightly, to 12%. "Poor" portfolios stayed flat at 2%.

Audience still seems to be the most problematic—and most difficult to gauge—category. The greatest problem seems to be that there is no clear identification of who constitutes the ideal or targeted "audience," and therefore what constitutes "sophisticated sense of audience." Is the audience the faculty member who assigned the paper? Is it the general educated academic reader? Is it an assumed professional colleague?

Perhaps asking students to specify the audience would address this persistent inconsistency in the rating of the Audience category.

CATEGORY 5: STYLE

■ AY 19   ■ AY 20   ■ AY 21   ■ AY 22   ■ AY 23
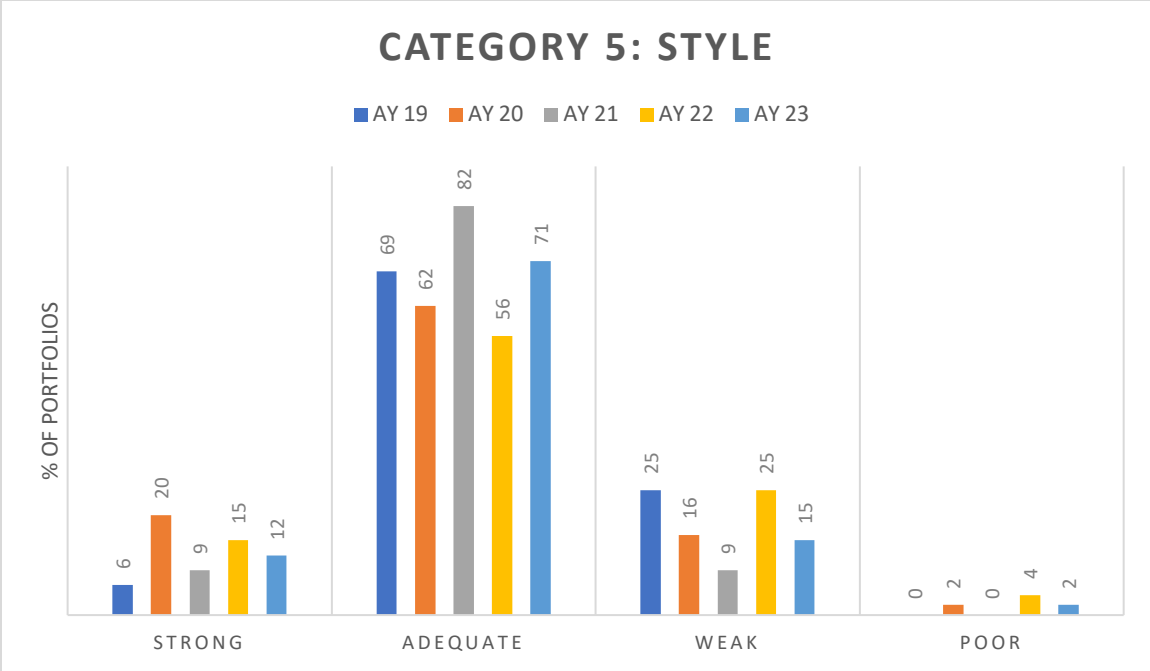
12% Strong: Sophisticated use of language (sentence structure, word choice) enhances presentation of ideas/information
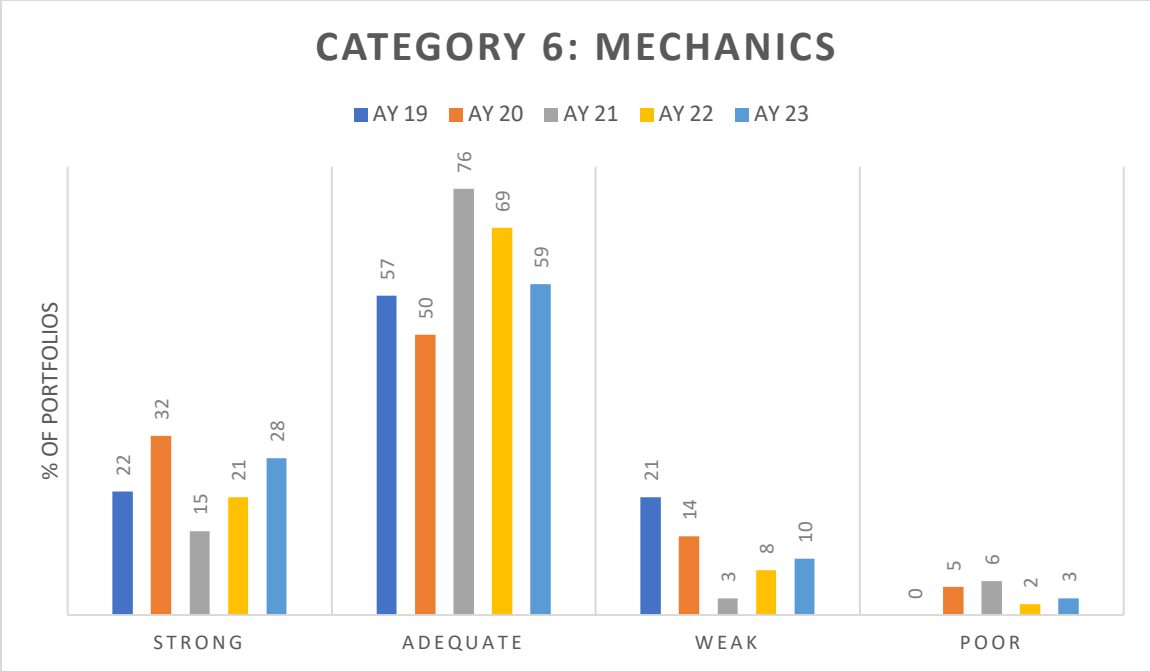**71% Adequate**: Appropriate use of language effectively conveys ideas/information
15% Weak: Use of language is awkward, unnecessarily complex and/or overly simplistic
2% Poor: Use of language is highly inconsistent or indeterminate

STYLE: Comparing AY 23 over AY 22, the percentage of portfolios rated "strong" dipped, from 15% to 12%. The majority of portfolios are rated "adequate," which rose from 56% to 71%. "Weak" portfolios fell, from 25% to 15%. "Poor" portfolios fell, from 4 to 2%.

The major gain in "adequate" and the major drop in "weak" indicates significant improvement overall in the category of "style." We could see style as the invisible enhancer—or detractor— for many of the other categories. The lack of "sophisticated use of language" may be the result of a disconnect between the students' ability to integrate and engage with source materials and students' comprehension of assignments.

CATEGORY 6: MECHANICS

Legend: AY 19 ■ AY 20 ■ AY 21 ■ AY 22 ■ AY 23

% OF PORTFOLIOS

Rating	AY 19	AY 20	AY 21	AY 22	AY 23
STRONG	22	32	15	21	28
ADEQUATE	57	50	76	69	59
WEAK	21	14	3	8	10
POOR	0	5	6	2	3

28% Strong: Few, if any, errors in mechanics relative to length and complexity of documents
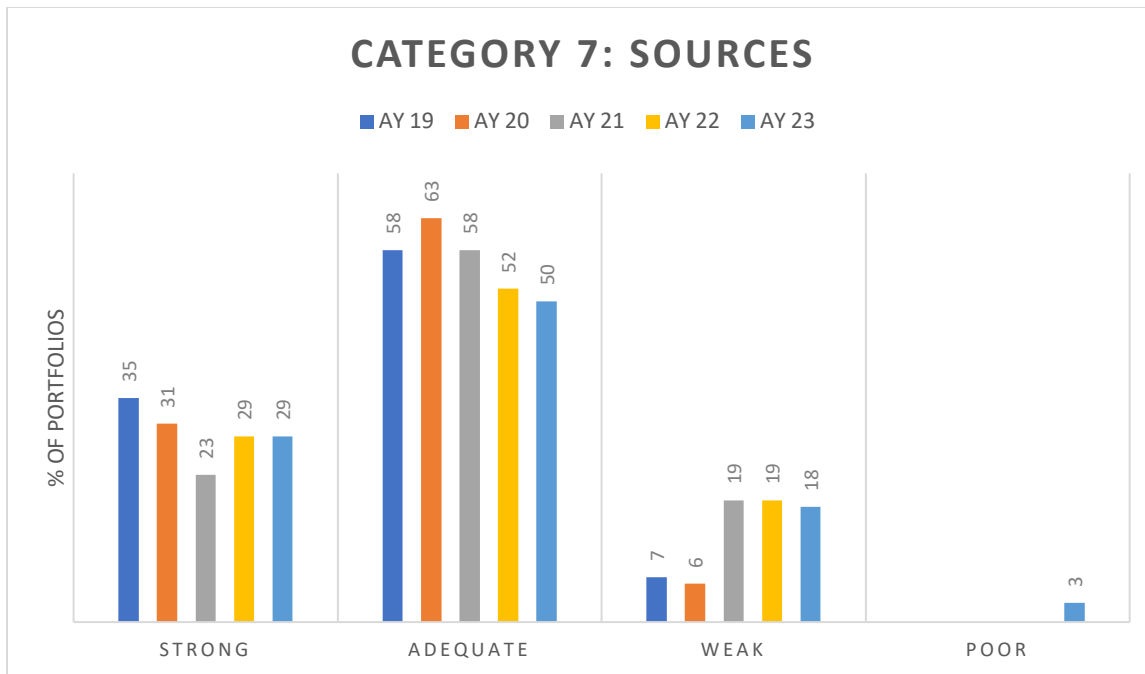**59% Adequate**: Some errors in mechanics that do not interfere significantly with communication
10% Weak: Patters of errors in mechanics that affect clarity and/or credibility of writing
3% Poor: Large numbers of errors in mechanics affecting almost all aspects of writing

MECHANICS: Comparing AY 23 over AY 22, the percentage of portfolios rated "strong" rose, from 21% to 28%. The majority of portfolios are rated "adequate," which fell from 69% to 59%. "Weak" portfolios rose, from 8% to 10%. "Poor" portfolios rose, from 2% to 3%.

To offset a 7% rise in the "strong" category, we see slight increases in the "weak" and "poor" categories for Mechanics. In their overall rating of their collection of portfolios, each reader noted either general improvement or general decline in Mechanics from previous rounds of evaluation. One reader commended focus and organization, but noted that poor mechanics was a major detractor, regardless of the genre: "This was true both in papers that require more sophisticated academic writing and papers that were more informal/reflective."

CATEGORY 7: SOURCES

■ AY 19 ■ AY 20 ■ AY 21 ■ AY 22 ■ AY 23

% OF PORTFOLIOS

STRONG: 35, 31, 23, 29, 29
ADEQUATE: 58, 63, 58, 52, 50
WEAK: 7, 6, 19, 19, 18
POOR: 3

29% Strong: Ability to integrate ideas/information from sources into own writing in meaningful and appropriate ways
50% Adequate: Some effective integration of ideas/information from sources
18% Weak: Inappropriate/ineffective integration of ideas/information
3% Poor*: No sources

SOURCES: Comparing AY 23 over AY 22, the percentage of portfolios rated "strong" rose stayed flat, at 29%. The majority of portfolios are rated "adequate," which dipped slightly, from 52% to 50%. "Weak" portfolios stayed flat, at 18%. *"Poor" was introduced as a rating option in this round of reviews.

The "strong" and "adequate" categories for Sources remained flat. However, the "weak" category also remains flat, at 18%. The majority of readers noted the persistent challenge for students to move beyond simple incorporation of sources and actually integrating others' ideas into their dynamic development of original ideas. Making the leap from borrowing ideas to engaging with them is difficult and worth more concentrated instruction. Readers echoed this sentiment throughout: "There is a wide range of use of sources in the papers that did require sources, but on the whole, I would say that using sources for anything more than information gathering is rare. There's also relatively little argumentation going on in the papers submitted. Papers submitted seem more likely to prove that a student learned a specific content rather than learning about the writing process or developing their experience as a writer."