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| Assessment Report: | **Electronic Writing Portfolio Readings Report** |
| Assessment Period: | **Academic Year 2022** |
| Submitted by: | **Dr. Suzie Park, Special Assistant to the Provost on Student Learning** |

**THE TEAM**

Dr. Suzie Park, Special Assistant to the Provost on Student Learning, asked for volunteer readers for the AY 2022 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
> **Kirstin Duffin**, Science & Math Librarian, Booth Library
> **Nora Heist**, 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
> **Tim Taylor**, English, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
> **Gordon Tucker**, Biological Sciences, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

**THE PROCESS**

To assess student writing during Academic Year 2022, Suzie Park asked for volunteer readers, assigned 6 student writing portfolios to each of 8 readers, and requested complete reading reports of these 48 complete portfolios in May 2022. 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 144 individual assessments.

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.
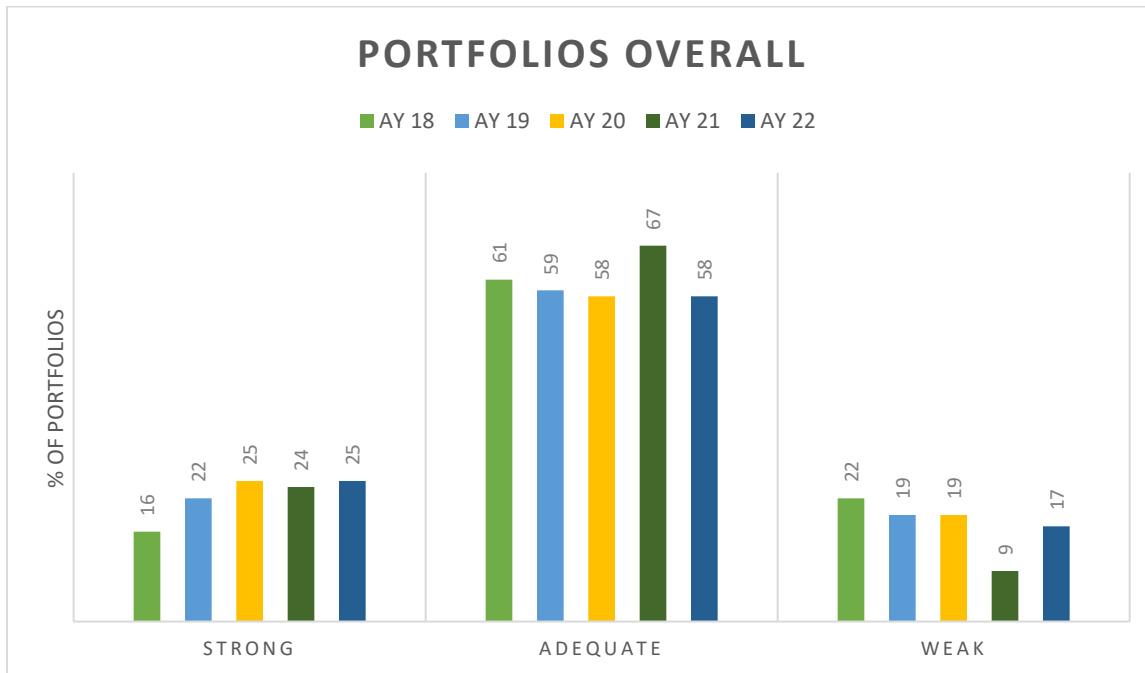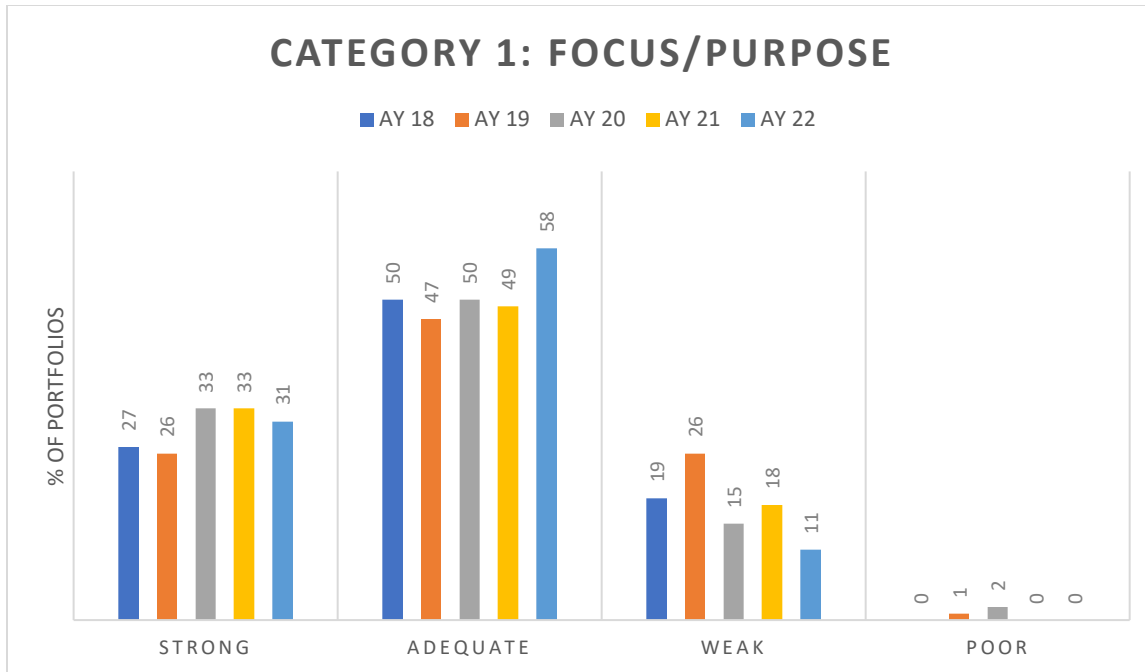


Strong Portfolios: 25%
Adequate Portfolios: 58%
Weak Portfolios: 17%

Comparing AY 22 over AY 21, the percentage of portfolios rated "strong" stayed flat, at 24%. The majority of portfolios rated "adequate" dipped from 67% to 58%. "Weak" portfolios rose from 9% to 17%.

## CATEGORY 1: FOCUS/PURPOSE

■ AY 18  ■ AY 19  ■ AY 20  ■ AY 21  ■ AY 22

**% OF PORTFOLIOS**

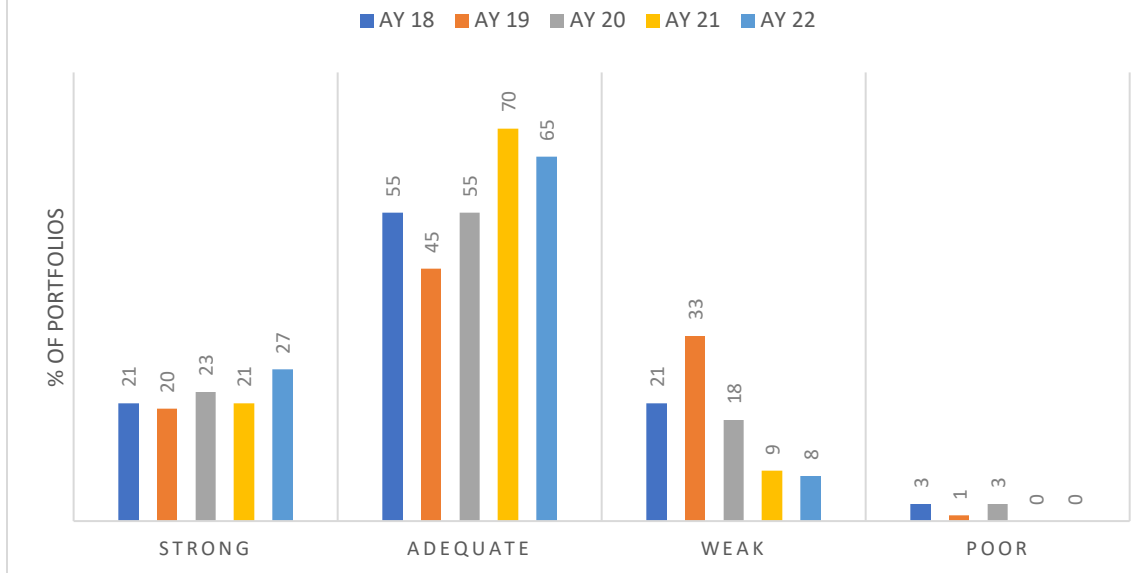| | STRONG | ADEQUATE | WEAK | POOR |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| AY 18 | 27 | 50 | 19 | 0 |
| AY 19 | 26 | 47 | 26 | 1 |
| AY 20 | 33 | 50 | 15 | 2 |
| AY 21 | 33 | 49 | 18 | 0 |
| AY 22 | 31 | 58 | 11 | 0 |

**31% Strong**       consistently strong sense of focus/purpose throughout
**58% Adequate**     clear focus/purpose in most or all submissions
**11% Weak**         some evidence of ability to focus on a purpose
**0 Poor**           very little or no evidence of focus

**FOCUS/PURPOSE**: Comparing AY 22 over AY 21, the percentage of portfolios rated "strong" stayed flat, at 31%. The majority of portfolios are rated "adequate," a group that rose considerably, to 58%. "Weak" portfolios decreased from 18% to 11%. "Poor" portfolios stayed flat at 0.

While Focus/Purpose was one of the most bifurcated of the categories that readers assessed in the previous round of assessments (AY21 report), AY22 readers noted a marked improvement (9% increase) in more papers having at least an adequately clear focus. As one reader put it, the wildly different levels of sophistication did not detract from an overall pattern of students being "generally effective at getting their ideas across."

## CATEGORY 2: ORGANIZATION

■ AY 18　■ AY 19　■ AY 20　■ AY 21　■ AY 22

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

*% OF PORTFOLIOS*

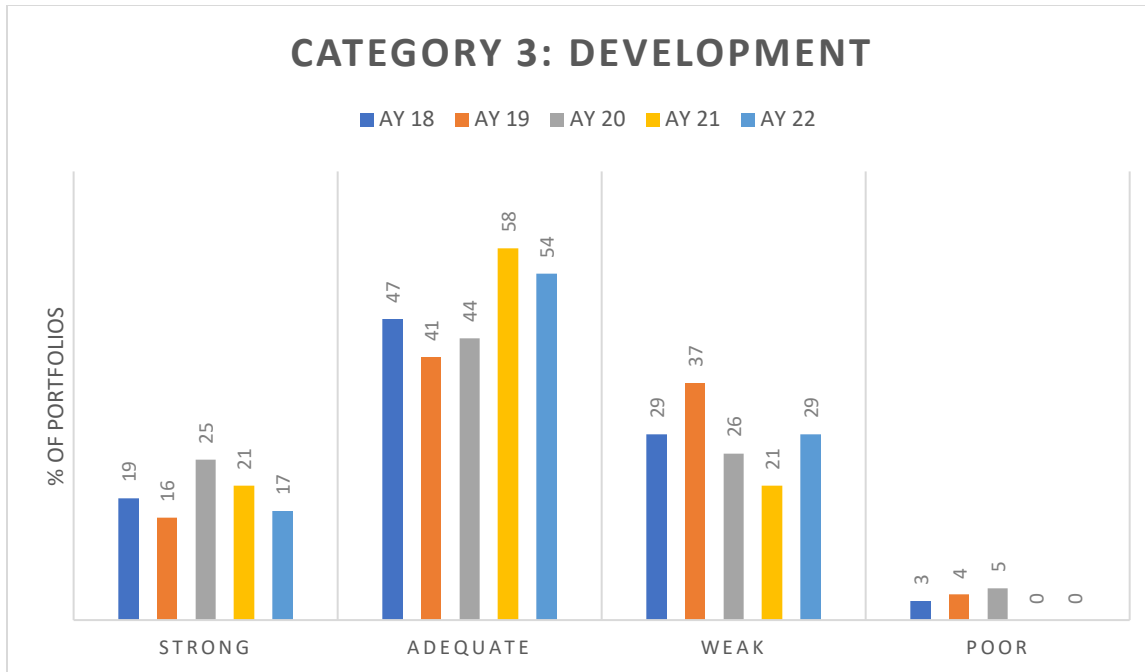| | |
|---|---|
| **27% Strong** | Consistent use of structure enhancing presentation of ideas/information |
| **65% Adequate** | Logical organization and/or clearly identifiable structure |
| **8% Weak** | Inconsistent sense of structure and/or lapses in organization |
| **0 Poor** | Very little or no sense of structure or organization |

**ORGANIZATION**: Comparing AY 22 over AY 21, the percentage of portfolios rated "strong" rose, from 21% to 27%. The majority of portfolios are rated "adequate," a sector that fell, from 70% to 65%. "Weak" portfolios fell from 9% to 8%. "Poor" portfolios stayed flat at 0.

The greatest gains in Organization are in the "strong" rating, with more than one reader remarking on students' use of "headings, spacing, and paragraphs more effectively to convey more succinct and related ideas."

## CATEGORY 3: DEVELOPMENT

■ AY 18　■ AY 19　■ AY 20　■ AY 21　■ AY 22

**% OF PORTFOLIOS**

| | STRONG | ADEQUATE | WEAK | POOR |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| AY 18 | 19 | 47 | 29 | 3 |
| AY 19 | 16 | 41 | 37 | 4 |
| AY 20 | 25 | 44 | 26 | 5 |
| AY 21 | 21 | 58 | 21 | 0 |
| AY 22 | 17 | 54 | 29 | 0 |

**17% Strong**: Ideas consistently developed in depth and supported with rich and relevant details
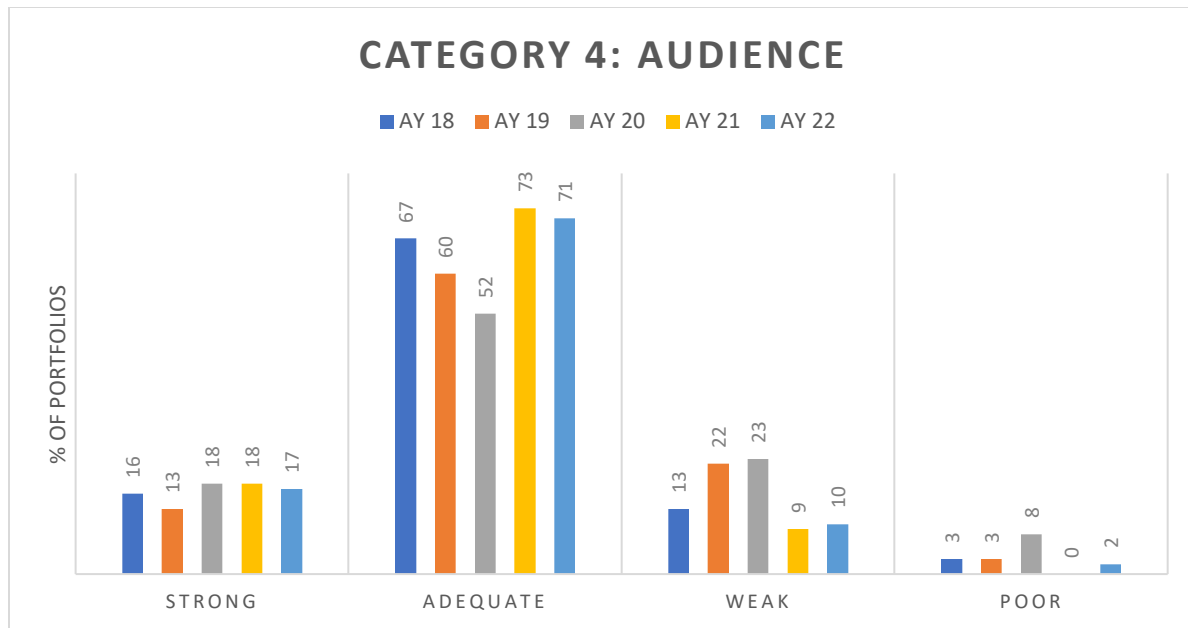**54% Adequate**: Ideas developed in depth with appropriate supporting evidence/details
**29% Weak**: Some development of ideas and use of supporting evidence/details
**0 Poor**: Very little or no development of ideas or use of supporting evidence

**DEVELOPMENT**: Comparing AY 22 over AY 21, the percentage of portfolios rated "strong" fell, from 21% to 17%. The majority of portfolios are rated "adequate," and this sector remained constant, from 58% to 54%. "Weak" portfolios rose, from 21% to 29%. "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 ownership of their ideas. Whether this lack of originality is due to the nature of the writing assignments or something else, many portfolios do not show strong development of original ideas. As one reader put it, "It almost feels as though the more students use sources, the less they are developing their own ideas, when the opposite should be the case."

## CATEGORY 4: AUDIENCE

Legend: ■ AY 18  ■ AY 19  ■ AY 20  ■ AY 21  ■ AY 22

Y-axis: % OF PORTFOLIOS

**STRONG**: AY 18: 16, AY 19: 13, AY 20: 18, AY 21: 18, AY 22: 17
**ADEQUATE**: AY 18: 67, AY 19: 60, AY 20: 52, AY 21: 73, AY 22: 71
**WEAK**: AY 18: 13, AY 19: 22, AY 20: 23, AY 21: 9, AY 22: 10
**POOR**: AY 18: 3, AY 19: 3, AY 20: 8, AY 21: 0, AY 22: 2

**17% Strong**: Sophisticated sense of audience—e.g., distinctive voice and/or appropriate tone
**71% Adequate**: Some awareness of and/or attempt to communicate with audience
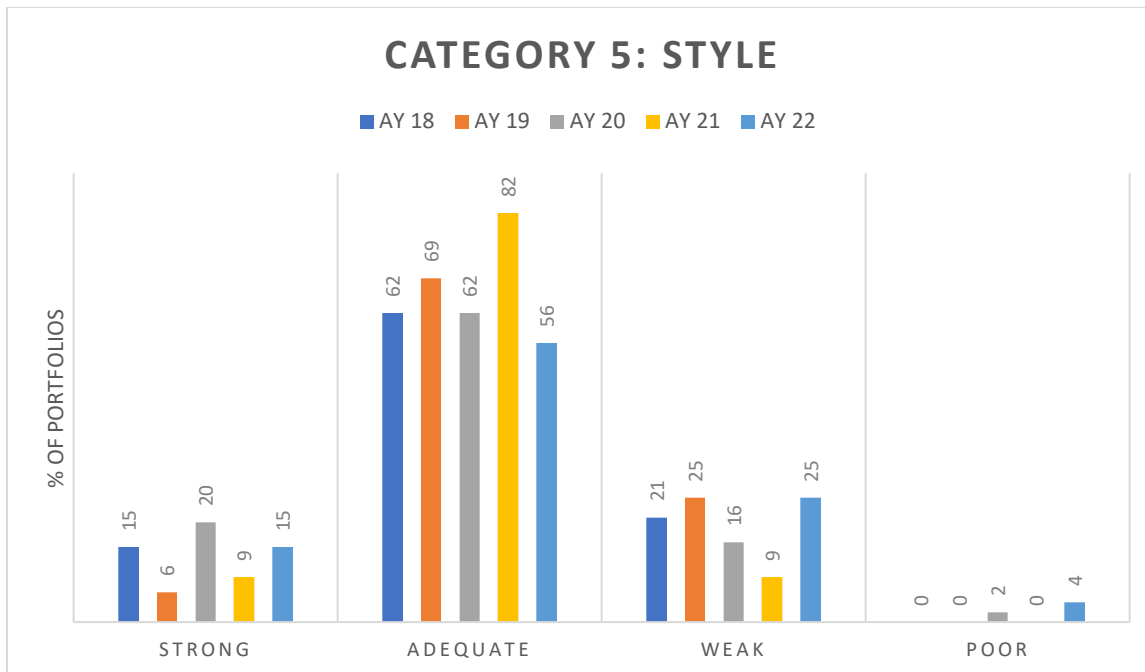**10% Weak**: Little or no awareness of audience
**2% Poor**: No sense of writing for an audience

**AUDIENCE**: Comparing AY 22 over AY 21, the percentage of portfolios rated "strong" stayed flat, at 17%. The majority of portfolios are rated "adequate," which dipped slightly, from 73% to 71%. "Weak" portfolios stayed flat, at 10%. "Poor" portfolios rose, from 0 to 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



Bar chart legend: AY 18, AY 19, AY 20, AY 21, AY 22

% OF PORTFOLIOS

| Rating | AY 18 | AY 19 | AY 20 | AY 21 | AY 22 |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| STRONG | 15 | 6 | 20 | 9 | 15 |
| ADEQUATE | 62 | 69 | 62 | 82 | 56 |
| WEAK | 21 | 25 | 16 | 9 | 25 |
| POOR | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4 |

**15% Strong**: Sophisticated use of language (sentence structure, word choice) enhances presentation of ideas/information
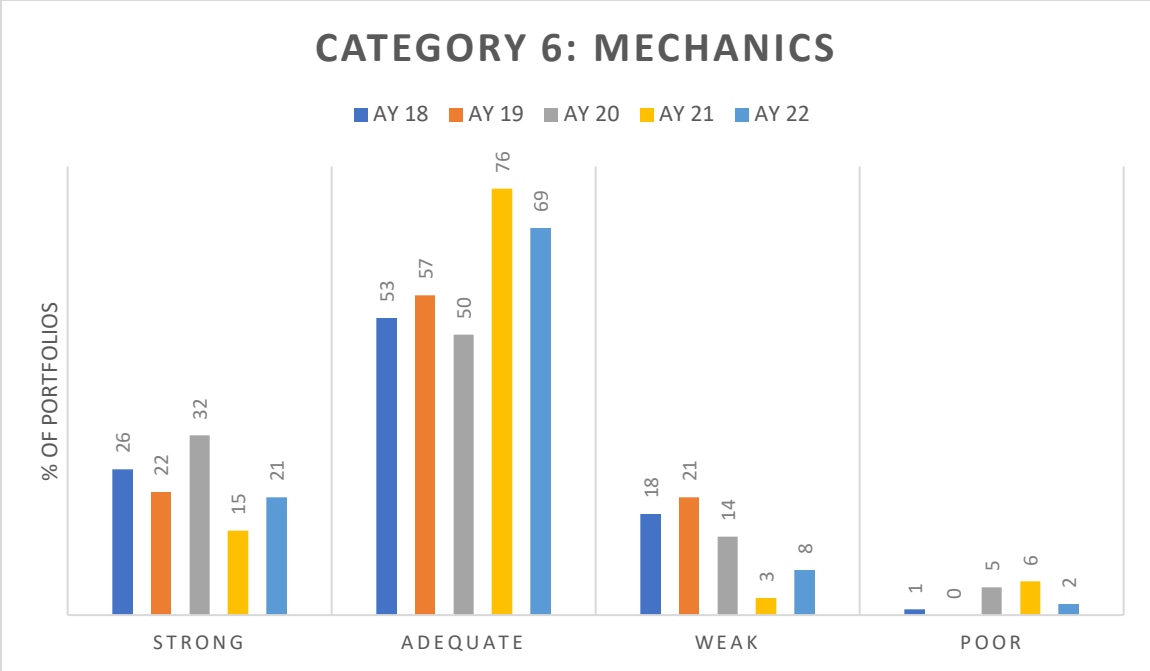**56% Adequate**: Appropriate use of language effectively conveys ideas/information
**25% Weak**: Use of language is awkward, unnecessarily complex and/or overly simplistic
**4% Poor**: Use of language is highly inconsistent or indeterminate

**STYLE**: Comparing AY 22 over AY 21, the percentage of portfolios rated "strong" rose, from 9% to 15%. The majority of portfolios are rated "adequate," but this category dipped from 82% to 56%. "Weak" portfolios rose, from 9% to 25%. "Poor" portfolios rose, from 0 to 4%.

Although there was a 6% increase in the "strong" category, the concomitant 16% rise in the "weak" category deserves our attention. 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. Several readers recommended clearer instruction on the management of sources, which affects the level of demonstrated college-level style: "Require more nuanced writing assignments. Increase opportunities for students to incorporate instructor feedback to strengthen writing."

## CATEGORY 6: MECHANICS

Legend: AY 18, AY 19, AY 20, AY 21, AY 22

Y-axis: % OF PORTFOLIOS

**STRONG**: AY 18 = 26, AY 19 = 22, AY 20 = 32, AY 21 = 15, AY 22 = 21

**ADEQUATE**: AY 18 = 53, AY 19 = 57, AY 20 = 50, AY 21 = 76, AY 22 = 69

**WEAK**: AY 18 = 18, AY 19 = 21, AY 20 = 14, AY 21 = 3, AY 22 = 8

**POOR**: AY 18 = 1, AY 19 = 0, AY 20 = 5, AY 21 = 6, AY 22 = 2

**21% Strong**: Few, if any, errors in mechanics relative to length and complexity of documents
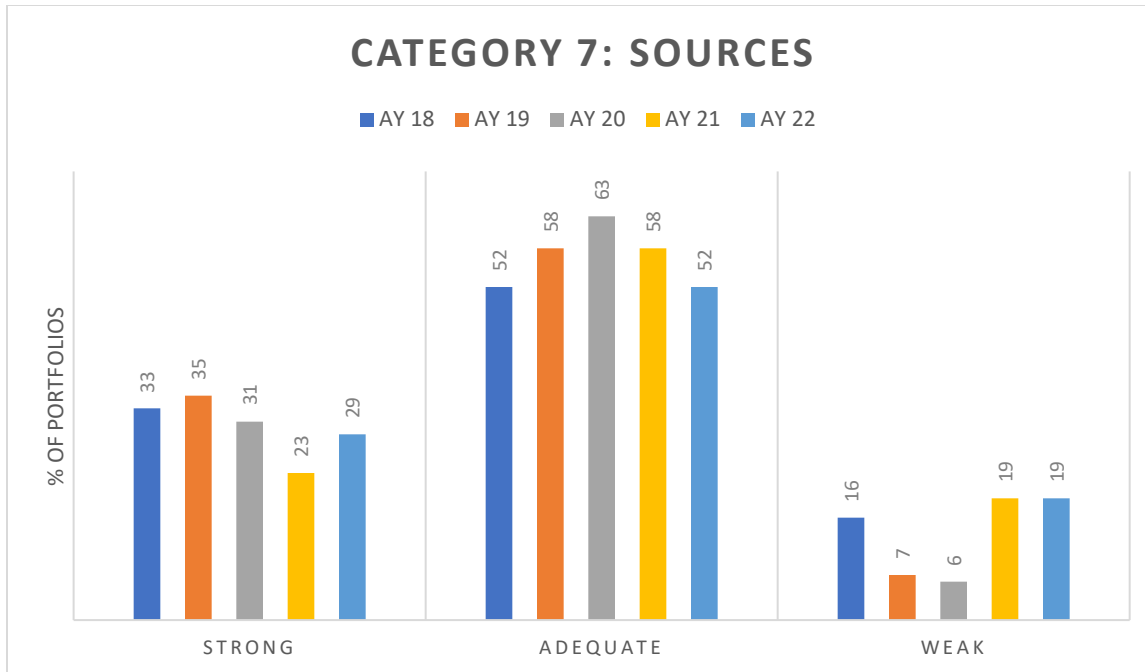**69% Adequate**: Some errors in mechanics that do not interfere significantly with communication
**8% Weak**: Patters of errors in mechanics that affect clarity and/or credibility of writing
**2% Poor**: Large numbers of errors in mechanics affecting almost all aspects of writing

**MECHANICS**: Comparing AY 22 over AY 21, the percentage of portfolios rated "strong" rose, from 15% to 21%. The majority of portfolios are rated "adequate," which fell from 76% to 69%. "Weak" portfolios rose, from 3% to 8%. "Poor" portfolios fell, from 6% to 2%.

To offset a 6% rise in the "strong" category, we see a 5% increase in the "weak" category 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. A reader who noted students' marked struggle with mechanics recommended "provid[ing] more support for rudimentary writing skills such as use of language, grammar, proof reading, etc."

## CATEGORY 7: SOURCES

Legend: ■ AY 18 ■ AY 19 ■ AY 20 ■ AY 21 ■ AY 22

**STRONG**
- AY 18: 33
- AY 19: 35
- AY 20: 31
- AY 21: 23
- AY 22: 29

**ADEQUATE**
- AY 18: 52
- AY 19: 58
- AY 20: 63
- AY 21: 58
- AY 22: 52

**WEAK**
- AY 18: 16
- AY 19: 7
- AY 20: 6
- AY 21: 19
- AY 22: 19

Y-axis: % OF PORTFOLIOS

**29% Strong**: Ability to integrate ideas/information from sources into own writing in meaningful and appropriate ways
**52% Adequate**: Some effective integration of ideas/information from sources
**19% Weak**: Inappropriate/ineffective integration of ideas/information

**SOURCES**: Comparing AY 22 over AY 21, the percentage of portfolios rated "strong" rose, from 23% to 29%. The majority of portfolios are rated "adequate," which dipped from 58% to 52%. "Weak" portfolios stayed flat, at 19%.

The greatest increase was in the "strong" category for Sources. However, the "weak" category remains at 19%. 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. Readers echoed this sentiment throughout: "Though I am seeing more sources and more *attempts* at citations and integration of ideas, most portfolios used citation for direct quotes or did not know how to cite information properly."