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CC: The 2016 Portfolio Assessment Committee: Michael Benard (Biology), Jennifer Butler (Psychological Sciences), Eric Chilton (English), Erin Discenza (Nursing), Colin Drummond (Engineering), Tina Howe (Religious Studies), Kurt Koenigsberger (English), Marie Lathers (Modern Languages and Literature), Rakesh Niraj (Weatherhead), Cassi Pittman (Sociology), Vasu Ramanujam (Weatherhead), Timothy Wutrich (Classics)

FROM: Megan Swihart Jewell (English) and Erika Olbricht (English), Committee Coordinators

SUBJECT: **SAGES Writing Portfolio Assessment Committee Report**

DATE: 8 August 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2016 SAGES Writing Portfolio Assessment Committee, consisting of 14 faculty members from across the university, read and evaluated 978 student portfolios submitted between May 2015 and May 2016.

The committee's overall holistic assessment found 73% of students' portfolios to be Proficient or Acceptable, which is higher than last year's number (68%). The committee found that 19% of students were writing at the Proficient, or highest, level. In the holistic scoring section 76% of students scored Proficient or Acceptable in terms of their engagement, a measure indicating an awareness of audience as well as the successful presentation of a problem or question. The highest-scoring category, Readability, was assessed at 83% Proficient or Acceptable (see Table 15), with only 2% of portfolios falling in the Unacceptable range. The criterion of Readability has in previous years always been students' consistent strength.

The committee was once again pleased to see the range of engaging paper topics and students' clear expression of the value of the SAGES program to their writing, particularly as it helped them to develop confidence in their skills. However, we observed that students continue to have difficulty with the critical skills of argumentation, especially articulating thesis statements and using evidence in critically sophisticated ways. Therefore, the committee's major recommendation is that SAGES and the Writing Program should continue their emphasis on

argumentation, giving particular attention to the accurate and persuasive use of evidence beyond its ability to provide factual information.

Points of concern to the committee are as follows:

- Readers found that 28% (Table 4) of the research essays evaluated did not include academic (peer reviewed) sources.
- More than a third (38%, Table 1) of thesis statements in the researched essays were assessed as Developing or Unacceptable.
- A third (35%, Table 1) of arguments in the researched essays were assessed as Developing or Unacceptable in terms of their Reasoning/Development abilities. Only 23% of portfolios demonstrated proficiency in sustaining their arguments.
- In the categories of both quality and use of evidence in the researched essay, the committee found that 32% (Table 1) of essays were Developing or Unacceptable. The committee identified students' weakness in using evidence as a superficial engagement with sources (23%, Table 8), or merely using them to provide factual information.
- The committee was concerned that 23% of researched essays (Table 3) presented arguments that were inappropriate in scope, being either too broad or too narrow.

These data led faculty to suggest the following recommendations: first, we reiterate last year's committee recommendation to stress the importance of a clearly articulated, insightful, and debatable central thesis statement. The 2016 committee would also like to see more emphasis placed on helping students to conceive of arguments with an appropriate scope. Committee members felt that emphasizing the various disciplinary purposes of academic writing might assist students to better conceptualize what they can accomplish in their writing. Further, readers would like students to become more adept at their critical use of sources, not only to become more discerning in the types of sources they include, but also to consider how they might use them in ways other than only factually supporting their claims.

HISTORY

Faculty evaluation of student writing portfolios during the SAGES pilot and first years of implementation (2002-2008) focused solely on assessing individual portfolios in order to provide feedback to students who submitted them as a graduation requirement. SAGES writing portfolios have always required the following four components: a Reflective Essay, First Seminar essay, a University Seminar Essay, and a Researched Essay from their other University Seminar. In June 2009, the portfolio review process was modified to provide programmatic feedback on student writing to SAGES and English Department Writing Program administrators. From 2009-2014 a consistent but evolving process was used to assess portfolios. In that time period, the committee increasingly stressed argument writing rather than report-based writing; subsequent years show more argument writing identified in portfolios. For example, in 2009, readers found that only 66% of researched essays contained arguments; in 2014, that number had risen to 85%. See previous years' reports (at writing.case.edu) for additional details.

In 2014-15, SAGES adopted a new set of Student Learning Outcomes (Appendix 1). Therefore, in order to more closely align with the new outcomes, the writing portfolio assessment categories

and rubrics were modified significantly. In response to previous years' committee concerns about weaknesses in the researched essay, this newer reading process began with a detailed assessment of the researched essay from randomly selected students' portfolios. The resulting changes to the portfolio reading process signified a break in continuity with previous years' results. The data we collected in 2015 established a new descriptive benchmark for the assessment of student writing that now serves as the basis for subsequent committee evaluation.

In 2016, therefore, we used the same assessment criteria and rubrics for the assessment of portfolios (Appendix 2) and continued the practice of closely evaluating selected researched essays.

METHODOLOGY

As was the practice in 2015, the 2016 reading process was divided into two parts. First, each reader assessed the research essay from approximately 25 randomly chosen portfolios. Then, each portfolio was read holistically. (See Appendix 2 for rubrics and instructions to readers.) Committee members met for three full days of discussion based on their assessments of approximately 80 portfolios each.

The first committee meeting day was spent discussing the research essay rubric, anchor research essays, and sample research papers in order to calibrate reader assessment of the research essays. Readers had five days to read the researched essays and enter data into a Qualtrics survey form.

The second meeting day (a week later) was split between discussing initial impressions of the data gathered from the researched essay assessments and discussing the holistic reading process, the anchor portfolios (those portfolios designated to define each performance category), and three calibration portfolios. Readers had twelve days to read portfolios (an average of 75 per reader) and enter data into a Qualtrics survey form.

The third meeting day was used to discuss the holistic data generated and the review process itself, and to draft the committee's conclusions and recommendations for classroom instruction and program implementation.

The coordinators drafted this report based on notes from the discussions and reader questionnaires; committee members were asked to offer feedback on the report before it was made public.

RESULTS

Results of the researched essay evaluation and holistic assessment are included below.

Researched Essay Evaluation Results

In their portfolios, students must submit a researched essay from one of their university seminars. The online portfolio submission guidelines explicitly define the genre of this essay:

By “research essay,” SAGES means a sustained engagement with an academic conversation - summarizing and critiquing what others have said on your topic - that includes your own novel claim or argument. This paper must do more than catalog the research you have done (i.e., an annotated bibliography is not sufficient); it should demonstrate your ability to synthesize academic research on a specific topic and to offer your own analysis or critical intervention. Such a paper will have a single controlling idea that represents your own thinking about the topic The research paper should be approximately 10-12 pages long The research essay must integrate and cite primary and/or secondary source material and include a properly formatted bibliography. (sages.case.edu)

Each reader assessed the researched essay from approximately 25 of their assigned portfolios, for a total of 338 essays, or 35% of portfolios. Readers acknowledged that the researched essays as a whole showed a wide diversity of topics that allowed many students to undertake thoughtful, critical, and engaging research projects and to explore meaningful questions and problems.

As in years past, the evaluative ratings continue to indicate that the quality of argumentation needs significant improvement. The three weakest criteria in the overall assessment of the researched essay were: the thesis statement, reasoning/development of the argument, and the use of evidence. In each case, at least a third of papers were in the Developing or Unacceptable categories (38%, 36%, and 32%, respectively; Table 1). The quality of evidence (31% Developing or Unacceptable, combined) and engagement with a research problem (30% Developing or Unacceptable, combined) also showed room for improvement (Table 1).

The categories of Audience/Ethos and Style/Correctness had the highest scores, at 75% and 82% respectively in the Proficient or Acceptable categories (Table 1). These numbers are consistent with the 2015 assessments of these categories.

Genre

This committee has long been concerned with the genre of the researched essay, preferring to see research presented in the form of an academic argument, which encourages stronger critical thinking and persuasion than a report, personal narrative, or other genre. This year, eighty-seven percent of research papers were determined to be argument essays (Table 2), a number up from 81% last year. Initial review committees saw larger than usual numbers of expository reports, but this year, the percentage of those classified as exposition/report fell to 11% (from 16% last year).

Thesis Statements

Readers stressed the need for precise argumentative thesis statements, which were often inadequate in the researched essays read. While 29% of papers' thesis statements were evaluated as Proficient (Table 1), having a "clear, precisely stated, argumentative thesis that is insightful, compelling, and appropriate in scope," an equal percent (30%) had Developing thesis statements, meaning that theses were either implicit, only articulated part of the argument, lacked insight, or had an inappropriate scope.

Shortcomings in Argument

This year, the committee tried to determine the nature of argumentative shortcomings they saw in papers (Table 3). Twenty-three percent of the papers worked within a scope that was either too narrow or too broad for the paper. Many papers (20%) had trouble framing the argument or articulating it sufficiently. The survey also asked if the argument shifted substantially (6%), or if more than one (potentially competing) argument was presented (8%). Another 8% had shortcomings not enumerated on the survey list. However, the committee found that 35% of papers had proficient arguments.

Types and Use of Evidence

Seventy-two percent of papers used academic (peer reviewed) sources, 75% used popular (journalistic or non-academic press) sources, and 63% used online sources (Table 4). Online sources include: Academic (e.g., websites ending in .edu), Government (e.g., websites ending in .gov), Organizational (e.g., websites ending in .org), and Popular (e.g., websites ending in .com). (See Rubric in Appendix 2, p. 23.) Readers were pleased to discover that only 4% of essays used Wikipedia or other collaborative online reference sites (Table 4). For the most part, evidence was used to either provide factual information or to support or enhance the claims of the writer. While percentages varied across the types of evidence, these two uses yielded consistently the highest percentages (Table 7).

While 68% of researched essays were assessed in either the Proficient or Acceptable categories for the use of evidence (Table 1), and 70% of papers demonstrated appropriate engagement with sources (Table 8), in conversation, readers consistently expressed disappointment with how students used evidence. For example, readers frequently commented that the researched essays reveal student weakness in using evidence to build an argument rather than only as a source of factual information. Readers also expressed disappointment that there were not more scholarly and peer-reviewed sources in students' papers: 28% of researched essays did not use academic sources at all (Table 4). Readers overall were concerned with students' use of many non-scholarly sources and the use of sources for factual evidence or superficial support rather than for setting up a more complex position. In particular, the committee discussed the role of counterarguments in strengthening a writer's argument; yet, few papers showed such sophisticated uses of evidence.

When asked about the presentation of evidence in the research essay, readers found that only 25% of papers consistently established the relevance of the source to the writer's argument, but that evidence was consistently smoothly incorporated into the writer's prose in 51% of papers (Table 9). More concerning was the analysis of evidence included in research essays: only 38% of papers consistently explain, analyze, and connect their evidence to the argument being

developed (Table 9). Twenty-three percent did not or only rarely warranted the evidence used in the paper. Readers concluded that there is room for improvement in how students analyze the evidence they use in their papers and how they establish the relevance of the sources they use.

Citation Style

Overall, the correct and consistent use of citation styles seems to be improving. Whereas last year, 29% of researched essays used the citation format “very correctly and consistently,” that number rose to 39% this year. Last year, 29% used the style either poorly or very poorly, or the reader was unable to tell; this year, that number dropped to 19%. The remaining 42% of essays used the style “mostly correctly and consistently” (See Table 11).

However, when citations are missing or used incorrectly, they stand out; readers were disappointed by citation practices, noting that following a citation style consistently and correctly is a comparably easy task.

Holistic Assessment

For the holistic evaluations, readers were asked to assess the portfolios as a whole, including the Reflective Essay, First Seminar essay, the University Seminar Essay, and the Researched Essay. Nearly all (98%) portfolios were standard (i.e., did not contain substitutions from non-SAGES classes). Readers considered the overall effectiveness, impact, and quality of the combined whole as opposed to taking a simple average or sum of the individual parts.

Reflective Essay

Readers were asked to answer a series of descriptive questions regarding the Reflective Essay in the holistic assessment of portfolios. Readers answered a prompt regarding students’ perceptions of writing development in SAGES and then identified those aspects of writing in which they cited improvement. Faculty readers also indicated their own perception of students’ writing development in the holistic scoring section. Our major conclusion regarding the reflective essay is that more students are expressing improvement in argument and critical thinking skills as well as the use of evidence. We found this increased awareness of the importance of these skills, emphasized in Writing Program training, to be a positive indicator that more instructors are focusing on these “higher-order” writing skills, and that fewer students are equating “good writing” with sentence-level correctness. Readers also noted a high number of students indicating that their SAGES seminars positively influenced their confidence and comfort levels with writing, and that this year there were fewer critiques of the SAGES program in the reflections and more focus on individual writing development.

As was the case last year, in the reflective essays, nearly all students (91%) acknowledged strong or some improvement in writing, and the clear majority of faculty readers saw strong or some improvement in students’ writing across the portfolios (83%; Tables 12 and 13). More students (46%) saw “strong improvement” in writing skills than did faculty readers (18%). This discrepancy was also present last year; readers speculated that the discrepancy of these data points indicates students might respond to the prompt with an overly positive representation of their writing improvement. Readers also speculated that students are able to see improvement in

intangible ways, such as cultivation of a better writing process, that might not be visible to the reader.

Finally, as was also the case last year, many students were grateful for the exposure to different disciplinary topics, with some realizing how some writing in their First Seminar contributed to assignments in University and Departmental Seminars. Students did tend to note, however, that they felt their writing was better when they were more interested in their seminar topics. The committee was also impressed by positive reflections written by students in more technical and professional fields, such as Engineering and Nursing, and who cited the usefulness of SAGES writing instruction to their fields.

Overall Holistic Evaluation Results

Readers evaluated each portfolio according to the 2015 revised holistic rubric (Appendix 2). The holistic scores represent readers' assessments of the entire portfolio. The holistic scoring results indicate that the solid majority of students are writing at a Proficient (19%) or Acceptable (54%) level (Table 15). Yet, while these aggregate numbers on the holistic rating suggest strong positive programmatic influence on student writing, the number of Developing portfolios (25%) was slightly higher than the number of Proficient portfolios (19%). Further, the ratio of Developing-to-Proficient portfolios was also slightly higher in the categories of Engagement, Argument, and Evidence. The relatively high percentage of Developing portfolios was a concern to this year's committee and supports the view that these skills should continue to be emphasized. Further, lower Proficiency numbers in the same categories reinforce readers' conclusions that more instructional and programmatic emphasis could be placed on the skills of argumentation.

As was the case in 2015, the majority of students are Proficient or Acceptable in terms of the readability category. This year readability slightly increased from 78% in 2015 to 83% in 2016 (Table 15).

ESL Holistic Scoring

This year, readers evaluated 53 portfolios from students enrolled in a First Seminar for non-native speakers of English (see Table 16). As is the case with those of native speakers, ESL portfolios show a range of abilities. Similar to results for all students, there are more Developing portfolios in each of the categories than Proficient. When compared to last year's data, readers noted slightly poorer numbers in each category, particularly Unacceptable Argument, which increased from 7% in 2015 to 13% in 2016. Whereas in 2015, 23% of ESL portfolios were deemed Proficient, this year only 4% were assessed at that level. We will continue to track these trends in 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Seminar Leaders

As was the case in 2015, this year's recommendations for writing instruction primarily focus on strengthening instruction in argumentative writing with a specific emphasis on articulating a clear thesis and using research materials persuasively as evidence. Committee members felt that more classroom time should be exclusively devoted to teaching argumentation skills. In particular, the committee wishes to stress the following best practices as continued recommendations: inclusion of SAGES learning outcomes on syllabi and discussion of them with the class, the use of recommended writing texts, sequenced writing assignments leading to the research essay, stronger collaborations with writing instructors and the Writing Resource Center (WRC).

SAGES administrators will implement the 2016 recommendations to instructors in various ways: at summer teaching orientations, during weekly SAGES pedagogy sessions, in campus-wide Writing Resource Center workshops for students, at a dedicated UCITE session, and in the new Guide for Teaching in SAGES (to be available in the 2016-17 academic year). Committee members encouraged this report to be more widely disseminated to relevant university entities; that distribution list is at the end of this report.

Committee members wish to make the following recommendations to instructors:

- Instructors should help students understand that arguments are composed of supporting claims and appropriate evidence. Instructors should emphasize that claims and evidence need to be structured in ways that support the overall argument. Additionally, instructors should also help students see the benefit of presenting and refuting counter-claims or counter-evidence that seem to question their arguments. Instructors should remind students that counterarguments do not weaken, but, rather, can usefully strengthen their positions.
- More emphasis should be placed on helping students use evidence in more sophisticated ways than the repetition of factual information. For example, students could include counterarguments in their essays, as suggested above.
- Instructors should spend class time instructing students how to write appropriate thesis statements. The committee recommends providing students with models of thesis statements in order to make the conventions of academic writing more explicit.
- Instructors should emphasize and help students to differentiate between the multiple genres of academic, creative and popular texts appropriate for academic writing.
- Instructors should mention the portfolio requirement more frequently to their students. Additionally, in teaching the value of reflection and or other writing skills, such as attention to audience, Instructors might want to remind students that their portfolios will be read by a committee and, as a useful classroom exercise, ask them to imagine the response of such an audience to their writing.

Recommendations to SAGES Administrators

Committee members wish to introduce the following recommendations:

- SAGES and/or the Writing Program should consider producing a one-page “quick-start” document for instructors emphasizing argumentation, effective evidence use, advice on using recommended texts, and integrating the Fourth Hour timeslot into course content and instruction. (Under advisement: the Director of Composition, the Director of the Writing Resource Center, and the SAGES Instructional Coordinator)
- SAGES should consider devoting more attention at the instructional and portfolio-review level to its Ethics outcomes, encouraging more involvement in both pedagogy training and portfolio review by its current Fellow in Ethics. (Action item for the Associate Director of SAGES and the SAGES Fellow in Ethics; in process.)
- SAGES should continue to support multilingual language learners through its curriculum and resources, such as the WRC and supplemental writing courses through the English department. (Action item for the Director of SAGES and the Director of ESL Writing; in process.)
- The Portfolio Review committee should consider disaggregating data by matriculation rather than graduation date in order to more accurately determine the success of pedagogical initiatives year to year. (Under advisement: the Portfolio Coordinator and the Director of Composition.)
- Many committee members supported SAGES’ exploration of SIS milestones or other kind of transcript notations to ensure timely submission. Others suggested additionally sending a notification to Department chairs of students who have yet to complete the requirement. (Under advisement: the Director of SAGES)
- The committee’s recommendations should be more widely publicized in more venues such as the SAGES website, and also distributed to important groups such as the Undergraduate curriculum committees in professional schools, the UGA, and FSCUE. (Action item for the Director of SAGES; to be completed by September 1, 2016)
- Committee members advocate for an administrative mechanism for denoting ESL portfolios, so that the reader does not have to make that determination. Committee members discussed, but did not resolve, the question of whether readers knowing such information in advance might be biased in their assessment of such portfolios. (Under advisement: the Portfolio Coordinator)

Last year’s recommendations to administrators were implemented as follows:

- In order to promote timely submission, SAGES and the Writing Programs should sponsor an end-of-term workshop on portfolio compilation whereby students compile their essays, draft their reflection, and submit their portfolios.

Action: The SAGES Portfolio Coordinator (PC) offered six workshops in AY 15-16, reaching approximately 25 students. In 2016-17, the PC will be offering to visit SAGES Seminar classrooms and/or distribute workshop materials to help students in those classes draft their reflections and compile their portfolios for submission.

- SAGES should continue to investigate establishing a similar assessment process for Departmental Seminars and University Capstone courses.

Action: The Associate Director of SAGES is working with capstone professors in various disciplines to create an assessment process, to be piloted by Spring 2017.

- SAGES should continue to encourage more faculty from across campus to participate in the portfolio evaluation process in order to cultivate additional faculty investment in writing instruction.

Action: The portfolio committee in 2016 was composed of members of all schools at CWRU, due in part to recruitment.

Distribution List:

All CWRU Deans and Department Chairs
Fall 2016 SAGES Instructors
CEP
FSCUE
UGA

TABLES

I. Research Essay Data Tables

Table 1. Overall Assessment of Research Essays

	Proficient (3)	Acceptable (2)	Developing (1)	Unacceptable (0)
Engagement				
Problem/Question	25%	46%	25%	4%
Audience/Ethos	27%	47%	21%	4%
Argument				
Thesis Statement	29%	33%	30%	8%
Reasoning/Development	23%	41%	30%	5%
Evidence				
Quality	36%	33%	26%	6%
Use	25%	44%	28%	4%
Readability				
Arrangement/Organization	35%	38%	24%	2%
Correctness and Style	43%	39%	16%	2%

Table 2. Research Essay Genre

Argument/Analysis	87%
Exposition/Report	11%
Personal Narrative	1%
Other	1%

Table 3. Shortcomings in paper's argument

<i>Please indicate the statement that most accurately describes shortcomings in the argument (select one):</i>	
The argument shifts substantially (i.e., “thesis drift” occurs)	6%
More than one (potentially competing) argument is present	8%
The argument is framed/articulated insufficiently (e.g., the argument appears in the introduction and/or conclusion, but disappears in the body of the essay, or vice versa)	20%
The argument's scope is inappropriate (it is too broad/ambitious or too narrow/specific)	23%
N/A—The argument is proficient: clearly stated, focused, and fully developed	35%
Other	8%

Table 4. Types of Sources in the Research Essay

<i>Does the Research Essay include ...</i>	<i>Academic (Peer Reviewed) Sources</i>	<i>Popular (Journalistic or Non-Academic Press) Sources</i>	<i>Wikipedia or other crowd-sourced reference site</i>	<i>Online Sources other than Wikipedia</i>
Yes	72%	75%	4%	63%
No	28%	25%	96%	37%

Table 5. Types of Online sources

<i>Please indicate the kind(s) of online sources or websites used (check all that apply)</i>	
N/A—The essay does not use Online Sources other than Wikipedia	36%
Academic (e.g., websites ending in .edu)	14%
Government (e.g., websites ending in .gov)	20%
Organizational (e.g., websites ending in .org)	30%
Popular (e.g., websites ending in .com)	45%
Other	5%

Table 6. Other kinds of sources

<i>Please indicate any other kinds of sources used in the Research Essay</i>	
None	52%
Personal narrative	8%
Observational or interview data collected by the writer	7%
Primary materials (e.g., literary work, film, art work, archival material, etc.)	24%
Reference source (dictionary, encyclopedia, Facts on File, government documents, etc.)	14%
Other	5%

Table 7. Primary Use of Sources

<i>Please indicate the primary use of the Source(s) in the essay (choose one):</i>	<i>Academic</i>	<i>Popular</i>	<i>Online</i>
N/A—The paper does not use [this type of] Source	28%	25%	36%
To provide context or purpose (i.e., to outline the problem/question being discussed)	13%	10%	7%
To supply a definition, theoretical concept, or argument that the writer then applied to another object of study	8%	2%	1%
To provide others' ideas that support/enhance the claims of the writer	28%	27%	19%
To introduce alternative viewpoints (i.e., other perspectives or counter-arguments)	3%	2%	2%
To provide factual information (i.e., examples, statistics, definitions, etc.)	19%	31%	33%
As an object of analysis	1%	3%	1%
As "filler" or without clear purpose	1%	0%	0%
Other	1%	0%	2%

Table 8. Overall Engagement with Sources

<i>Please indicate the most accurate description of the Research Essay's engagement with its sources</i>	
Superficial engagement with sources	23%
Appropriate engagement with sources	70%
Over-reliance on sources	6%
Other	1%

Table 9. Presentation of Evidence in the Research Essay

<i>In this Research Essay ...</i>	<i>sources are introduced to establish their relevance</i>	<i>evidence (i.e., quotations, examples, data, etc.) is thoroughly explained, analyzed, and connected to the argument(s) being developed</i>	<i>evidence (i.e., quotations, examples, data, etc.) is smoothly incorporated into the writer's prose (including, if appropriate, the use of tables/figures/images)</i>
Not at all	10%	4%	4%
Rarely	26%	19%	14%
Occasionally	38%	39%	31%
Consistently	25%	38%	51%

Table 10. Number of Sources in Research Essay

<i>How many sources does the Research Essay list in the Works Cited/Bibliography</i>	
0-1	0%
2-5	8%
6-10	49%
11 or more	41%
Works Cited/Bibliography Missing	1%

Table 11. Correct and Consistent use of Citation Style

<i>How correctly and consistently does the author use a single citation style (e.g., MLA, APA, CMS, etc.)?</i>	
Very correctly & consistently	39%
Mostly correctly & consistently (minor errors)	42%
Poorly (a few citations missing and/or many errors)	14%
Very poorly (many errors & citations missing or impossible to decipher)	2%
Cannot Tell	3%

II. Holistic Data Tables**Table 12. Student Perception of Development**

	Strong improvement in writing skills	Some improvement in writing skills	No change in writing skills	Regression in writing skills
<i>Student perception of development in his/her writing skills across SAGES</i>	46%	45%	8%	1%

Table 13. Reader Perception of Student Development

	Strong improvement in writing skills	Some improvement in writing skills	No change in writing skills	Regression in writing skills
<i>Reader perception of development in student's writing skills across SAGES</i>	18%	65%	16%	1%

Table 14. Aspects of writing discussed in reflective essay

<i>Which aspects of writing did the student discuss in his/her reflective essay? (check all that apply)</i>	
Identifying questions/problems that motivate writing	21%
Awareness of context, purpose, and audience	25%
Developing/refining argument (thesis, controlling idea, etc.)	52%
Critical thinking/ethical deliberation (incorporating multiple points of view, attending to the implications of one's own & others' arguments, etc.)	38%
Evaluation of evidence/sources (quality, reliability, etc.)	30%
Use of evidence/sources in writing	49%
Organization/arrangement of sentences, paragraphs, etc.	45%
Editing for sentence-level fluency and correctness (word choice, sentence structure/grammar, passive voice, etc.)	43%
Writing process (drafting, outlining, rewriting, etc.)	33%
Revision practices (rethinking/refocusing arguments, incorporating additional points of view, responding to additional materials/research)	24%
Responding to feedback (of peers and/or instructors)	22%
Other	16%

Table 15. Results of Holistic Assessment for all portfolios

	Proficient (4)	Acceptable (3)	Developing (2)	Unacceptable (1)
Engagement	26%	50%	22%	2%
Argument	17%	43%	37%	3%
Evidence	19%	44%	34%	3%
Readability	30%	53%	15%	2%
Overall Assessment	19%	54%	25%	2%

Table 16. Results of Holistic Assessment for ESL portfolios

	Proficient (3)	Acceptable (2)	Developing (1)	Unacceptable (0)
Engagement	9%	39%	47%	4%
Argument	6%	32%	49%	13%
Evidence	9%	39%	43%	8%
Readability	6%	39%	42%	13%
Overall Assessment	4%	39%	51%	6%

APPENDIX ONE: SAGES Student Learning Outcomes and Performance

Standards

SLO	Proficient (UCAP)	Developing 2 (DSEM)	Developing 1 (USEM)	Benchmark (FSEM)
ACADEMIC INQUIRY. Student will be able to contribute insightful ideas that answer a question or solve a problem relevant to an academic discipline.	Complete a capstone project that articulates insightful, relevant ideas that contribute to the solution of a vital question or problem within a discipline	Participate in disciplinary conversations by contributing insightful, relevant ideas	Participate in a variety of academic conversations by contributing insightful, relevant ideas	Participate in an academic conversation by contributing insightful, relevant ideas
CRITICAL THINKING AND ETHICAL DELIBERATION. Student will be able to think critically and deliberate ethically to answer questions and solve problems within an academic discipline.	Consider differences in values and assumptions to think critically, deliberate ethically, and respond articulately to a chosen question/problem within a discipline	Consider differences in values and assumptions to think critically, deliberate ethically, and respond articulately to discipline-specific questions/problems	Consider differences in values and assumptions to think critically, deliberate ethically, and respond articulately to questions/problems	Consider differences in values and assumptions to think critically and deliberate ethically
RESEARCH AND INFORMATION LITERACY. Student will be able to research, evaluate, and apply information to answer question/solve problem within an academic discipline.	Perform original, independent, discipline-appropriate scholarship and apply it to a question/problem within a discipline	Research and apply discipline-specific scholarly concepts and information	Research and apply scholarly concepts and information	Read, summarize, and apply scholarly concepts and information
PERSUASIVE WRITING. Student will be able to use researched evidence and disciplinarily appropriate forms to write a clear and persuasive argument.	Use a discipline-appropriate form to write a clear, insightful, persuasive, research-based, and appropriately documented argument that responds to a question/problem within a discipline	Write clear, insightful, persuasive arguments using discipline-appropriate forms and conventions	Write clear, insightful, persuasive, research-based, and appropriately documented argumentative essays	Write clearly and persuasively
ORAL AND NEW MEDIA COMMUNICATION. Student will be able to communicate information orally or in other	Effectively communicate information to a public audience about one's scholarship through discipline-appropriate oral	Effectively communicate information through discipline-appropriate oral and/or new media presentations	Effectively communicate information through oral and/or new media presentations	Effectively communicate information orally and/or through new media

Definitions of SAGES Student Learning Outcomes

ACADEMIC INQUIRY. Upon completion of the SAGES program, students should be able to pose a question or problem relevant to an academic discipline and independently use knowledge to answer or solve it. Academic inquiry is founded on the ability to identify questions and problems that engage others. It includes the ability to apply appropriate theories and methods of investigation, ones capable of producing insightful ideas that help answer a question or solve a problem relevant to an academic discipline. In addition, academic inquiry is attended by certain attitudes: passion for learning, a sense of agency, an appreciation of deep rather than surface knowledge, and a willingness to reflect on and assess one's own learning.

CRITICAL THINKING AND ETHICAL DELIBERATION. Upon completion of the SAGES program, students should be able to think and act with an awareness of their own values and reasoning, as well as an appreciation of the perspectives of others. Critical thinking starts with the ability to formulate questions and problems clearly and precisely. It also involves the ability to identify the assumptions that frame our thinking and determine our actions, as well as to gauge the degree to which those assumptions are accurate and valid. Critical thinkers are able to look at ideas and decisions from multiple perspectives, and consider open-mindedly the assumptions, implications, and practical consequences of alternative systems of thought. Based on this information, they derive well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards. This awareness of one's own values and assumptions, combined with an appreciation of the different perspectives of others, forms the basis of ethical deliberation. By developing a coherent ethical framework and considering the likely consequences of a proposed solution as viewed by different value systems, ethical thinkers can make justified, autonomous choices about matters of the human good, of social justice, or of natural value, and do so with self-awareness and clarity.

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION LITERACY. Upon completion of the SAGES program, students should be able to independently research and evaluate information to answer a question or solve a problem relevant to an academic discipline. This ability originates in the determination of the nature and extent of information needed to answer a question or solve a problem. It includes the skills needed to find, access, and evaluate that information critically, as well as to use it effectively and ethically in support of an answer or solution to a question or problem. In disciplines where inquiry depends on the generation and quantitative analysis of raw data, this outcome assumes that all students should understand how to use data once it has been processed into information.

PERSUASIVE WRITING. Upon completion of the SAGES program, students should be able to write a clear and persuasive argument in support of an answer to a question or a solution to a problem. In an academic setting, all effective communicators are able to express their ideas in writing. The emphasis that SAGES places on open-ended inquiry and critical thinking requires that students be able to articulate and defend an argument that supports an answer to a question or a solution to a problem. Effective communicators are able to express their ideas with an awareness of purpose, as well as how to engage both discipline-specific and broader audiences. In addition, although there may be variations in disciplinary conventions for writing genres and formats, persuasive academic writing demands that the explanation or defense of a proposed answer or solution use a coherent thesis to govern the structured and clear presentation of a persuasive argument based on reasons and evidence.

ORAL AND NEW MEDIA COMMUNICATION. Upon completion of the SAGES program, students should be able to communicate information in a clear and coherent formal oral or other media presentation appropriate to an academic discipline. In addition to being able to write persuasively, effective communicators can express their ideas using a range of disciplinary-appropriate media (e.g., discussion, oral presentations, posters, websites, videos, multimedia presentations, mobile apps) and genres (e.g., technical reports, funding proposals, ethnographies, journal articles, reviews). As with academic writing, effective communicators organize the presentation of ideas with an awareness of purpose and audience, and use their understanding of the medium and genre being used to ensure delivery of a clear central message.

APPENDIX TWO: INSTRUCTIONS TO READERS AND RUBRICS

Summer 2016 Portfolio Reading Committee Rubrics
24 May 2016

Part I: Focused Reading of a Sample of Research Essays **Reading Dates: May 24-31**

The Summer 2015 Portfolio Committee found that students continued to have difficulty meeting expectations:

- in their articulation of clear and sustained arguments, particularly the articulation of a guiding thesis statement; and
- in their use and integration of scholarly sources.

As a response to these findings, part one of the committee's work this summer is to gather more specific information about students' arguments and uses of sources/evidence in writing. To assess these skills, we will conduct a detailed review of a sample of the Research Essays contained in SAGES Writing Portfolios.

The Writing Portfolio Submission Guidelines provide the following description of the Research Essay:

Your portfolio must contain a research essay from one of your two University Seminars. By "research essay," SAGES means a sustained engagement with an academic conversation – summarizing and critiquing what others have said on topic – that includes your own novel claim or argument. This paper must do more than catalog the research you have done (i.e., an annotated bibliography is not sufficient); it should demonstrate your ability to synthesize academic research on a specific topic and to offer your own analysis or critical intervention. Such a paper will have a single controlling idea that represents your own thinking about the topic. A laboratory report, therefore, is not an appropriate substitute, unless it goes well beyond reporting the procedure and results of an experiment.

The research essay should be approximately 10-12 pages long; the absolute minimum length is 8 pages of prose (not counting the bibliography). The research essay must integrate and cite primary and/or secondary source material and include a properly formatted bibliography.

Please verify that you are reading the essay that the *student* has identified as the Research Essay on the Portfolio Submission Form. (In many cases, portfolios will contain two or more source-based essays, but we are interested in the one students identify as the Research Essay.)

PLEASE NOTE: In rare cases, portfolios contain substitutions (i.e., papers not written for SAGES courses are included because a student doesn't have access to SAGES papers). If one of your sample portfolios contains a Research Essay that is *not* from a SAGES course, please select another random portfolio from your group (that does contain a Research Essay from a SAGES course) to read instead for this part of the reading process.

Part I: Research Essay Evaluation (~25 sampled essays)

Student's CWRU Network ID (e.g., abc123): _____

Reviewer's Initials: _____

Overall Assessment

Please characterize the genre of the Research Essay:

- Argument/Analysis

 Personal/Narrative
 Exposition/Report

 Other: _____

Please evaluate the Research Essay based on the "Researched Argument Rubric" (see Appendix A)

		Unacceptable (1)	Developing (2)	Acceptable (3)	Proficient (4)
Engagement					
	Content/Ideas				
	Purpose, Content & Audience				
Argument					
	Thesis Statement				
	Reasoning/Development				
Evidence					
	Quality				
	Use				
Readability					
	Arrangement				
	Sentence Level Correctness & Style				

Argument

Please indicate the statement that most accurately describes any shortcomings in the argument (select one):

- N/A – The argument is proficient: clearly stated, focused, and fully developed.
 The argument appears primarily in the introduction and/or conclusion of the essay (but is not developed fully in the body of the essay).
 The argument appears in the body of the essay, but is not clearly articulated in the introduction and/or conclusion of the essay.
 The argument shifts substantially from the beginning to the end of the essay.
 More than one (potentially competing) argument is presented.
 An alternative/potential argument is suggested by one or more statements in the essay, but the author does not identify it as the primary argument of the essay.

- An analysis or report of information is presented, without a clear argument.
- A personal opinion or a non-scholarly (e.g., common sense or “straw man”) argument is presented.
- Other: _____

Use of Sources & Evidence

Does the Research Essay use/cite Academic (Peer-Reviewed) Sources?

- Yes
- No

Please indicate the primary use of the Academic Source(s) in the essay (select one):

- N/A – the essay does not use Academic Sources
- To provide context or purpose (i.e., to outline the problem/question being discussed)
- To supply a definition, theoretical concept, or argument that the writer then applied to another object of study
- To introduce others’ arguments that support/enhance the claims of the writer
- To introduce alternative viewpoints (i.e., other perspectives or counter-arguments)
- To provide factual information (i.e., examples, statistics, definitions, etc.)
- As an object of analysis
- As “filler” or without clear purpose
- Other: _____

Does the Research Essay use/cite Popular (Journalistic or Non-Academic Press) Sources?

- Yes
- No

Please indicate the primary use of the Popular Source(s) in the essay (select one):

- N/A – the essay does not use Popular Sources
- To provide context or purpose (i.e., to outline the problem/question being discussed)
- To supply a definition, theoretical concept, or argument that the writer then applied to another object of study
- To introduce others’ arguments that support/enhance the claims of the writer
- To introduce alternative viewpoints (i.e., other perspectives or counter-arguments)
- To provide factual information (i.e., examples, statistics, definitions, etc.)
- As an object of analysis
- As “filler” or without clear purpose
- Other: _____

Does the Research Essay use/cite Wikipedia?

- Yes
- No

Does the Research Essay use/cite other Online Sources or websites?

- Yes

No

Please indicate the kind(s) of online sources or websites used (check all that apply):

- Academic (e.g., websites ending in .edu)
- Government (e.g., websites ending in .gov)
- Organizational (e.g., websites ending in .org)
- Popular (e.g., websites ending in .com)
- Other: _____

Please indicate the primary use of the Online Source(s) in the essay (select one):

- N/A – the essay does not use Online Sources
- To provide context or purpose (i.e., to outline the problem/question being discussed)
- To supply a definition, theoretical concept, or argument that the writer then applied to another object of study
- To introduce others' arguments that support/enhance the claims of the writer
- To introduce alternative viewpoints (i.e., other perspectives or counter-arguments)
- To provide factual information (i.e., examples, statistics, definitions, etc.)
- As an object of analysis
- As "filler" or without clear purpose
- Other: _____

Please describe any other kinds of Sources/Materials used/cited in the Research Essay (check all that apply):

- None
- Personal narrative
- Observational or interview data collected by the writer
- Primary source (e.g., literary work, film, art work, archival material)
- Reference source (dictionary, encyclopedia, Facts on File, etc.)
- Other: _____

Please indicate the most accurate description of the Research Essay's engagement with its sources:

- Acceptable scholarly use of a range of sources.
- Over-reliance on a few (1-2) sources.
- Superficial use of several sources.
- Other: _____

In this Research Essay, sources are introduced accurately and with relevant details that establish the value of the source to the argument:

- Not at all
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Consistently

In this Research Essay, evidence (i.e., quotations, examples, data, etc.) drawn from sources is thoroughly explained, analyzed, and connected to the argument(s) being developed:

- Not at all
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Consistently

In this Research Essay, evidence (i.e., quotations, examples, data, etc.) drawn from sources is smoothly incorporated into the author's prose (including, if appropriate, the use of tables/figures/images):

- Not at all
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Consistently

Citation Practices

How many sources does the Research Essay list in the Works Cited/Bibliography?

- 0-1
- 2-5
- 6-10
- 11 or more
- Works Cited/Bibliography Missing

How correctly and consistently does the author use a single citation style (e.g., MLA, APA, CMS, etc.)?

- Very correctly & consistently
- Mostly correctly & consistently (minor errors)
- Poorly (a few citations missing and/or many errors)
- Very poorly (many errors & citations missing or impossible to decipher)
- Cannot Tell

Conclusion/Other Comments

Other comments about this essay? (Optional) Please use this space to document any other thoughts you have about this Research Essay and to let us know if this essay might be an outstanding or challenging example for classroom/pedagogical use.

Part II: Holistic Reading of Portfolios

Reading Dates: June 2-13

This reading is intended to assess portfolios holistically based on **University Seminar Outcomes**. The goal of University Seminars in SAGES is “to enable students to contribute to general academic conversations by establishing expertise with core academic skills, including the ability to do independent research.” (SAGES Outcomes AY 2014-2015.)

According to the **University Seminar Course Outcomes**, at the completion of each course, students will be able to:

- Participate in a variety of academic conversations by contributing insightful, relevant ideas.
- Consider differences in values and assumptions to think critically, deliberate ethically, and respond articulately to questions/problems.
- Research and apply scholarly concepts and information.
- Write clear, insightful, persuasive, research-based, and appropriately documented argumentative essays.
- Effectively communicate information.

The SAGES Writing Portfolio – Holistic Rubric (Appendix B) is designed to assess students’ ability to meet these outcomes based on readers’ overall assessment of their Writing Portfolios.

Part II: Holistic Portfolio Assessment (~80 portfolios)

Student's CWRU Network ID (e.g., abc123): _____

Reviewer's Initials: _____

Student's Expected Graduation Date (5/14 format): _____

Does this portfolio contain substitutions/
variations from the standard elements: Yes/No

Did the student take an ESL First Seminar? Yes/No

Reflective Essay

Please indicate the student's perception of her/his writing development:

- Strong improvement in writing skills
- Some improvement in writing skills
- No change in writing skills
- Regression in writing skills

Please indicate the aspects of writing that the student discusses in her/his reflective essay (check all that apply):

Engagement

- Identifying questions/problems that motivate writing
- Awareness of context, purpose & audience

Argument

- Developing/refining argument (thesis, controlling idea, etc.)
- Critical thinking/ethical deliberation (incorporating multiple points of view, attending to the implications of one's own & others' arguments, etc.)

Evidence

- Evaluation of evidence/sources (quality, reliability, etc.)
- Use of evidence/sources in writing

Readability

- Organization/arrangement of sentences, paragraphs, etc.
- Editing for sentence-level fluency and correctness (word choice, sentence structure/grammar, passive voice, etc.)

Writing Process/Other

- Writing process (drafting, outlining, rewriting, etc.)
- Revision practices (rethinking/refocusing arguments, incorporating additional points of view, responding to additional materials/research)
- Responding to feedback (of peers and/or instructors)
- Other: _____

Comments on the reflective essay? Please let us know if there are significant concerns raised or important insights described in the reflective essay.

Holistic Assessment

Please evaluate the portfolio based on the “SAGES Writing Portfolio–Holistic Rubric” (see Appendix B).

	Unacceptable (1)	Developing (2)	Acceptable (3)	Proficient (4)
Engagement				
Argument				
Evidence				
Readability				
Overall Assessment				

Conclusion/Other Comments

After reading the portfolio, please indicate your own perception of the student’s writing development:

- Strong improvement in writing skills
- Some improvement in writing skills
- No change in writing skills
- Regression in writing skills

If you believe that this portfolio should receive additional attention, please indicate your assessment:

- Exceptional – this portfolio should be recognized as being in the top 2-3% of all portfolios submitted
- Unacceptable – this portfolio suggests that the writer will struggle to meet expectations in her/his future coursework that requires writing and the writer should be contacted and advised to seek additional writing support
- Not Applicable

Other comments about this portfolio? Please use this space to document any other thoughts you have about this portfolio and to let us know if this portfolio might provide outstanding or challenging examples for classroom/pedagogical use.

Appendix A: Researched Argument Rubric

		Unacceptable (1)	Developing (2)	Acceptable (3)	Proficient (4)
Engagement	Content/Ideas	Inadequately engages a question or problem or merely reports what is already known	Partially engages a relevant and somewhat focused question or problem to reveal some insight(s)	Thoroughly engages a relevant and mostly focused question or problem to reveal somewhat important insight(s)	Thoroughly engages a relevant and focused question or problem to reveal significant—perhaps even highly original—insight(s)
	Purpose, Context, and Audience	Little or no attention to purpose, context, and/or audience	Attends to purpose, context, and audience, though often inconsistently or partially	Attends to purpose, context, and audience, though sometimes inconsistently or partially	Thorough and nuanced attention to purpose, context, and audience
Argument	Thesis Statement	No thesis statement or thesis statement unrelated to the argument	Thesis statement only partially articulates argument or is too general	Articulates argument through clear thesis statement, though it may be somewhat imprecise or broad in focus	Articulates argument through clear, focused, and precise thesis statement
	Reasoning/Development	Develops all claims superficially, repeats ideas, or wanders from the argument	Many claims are only moderately developed, or argument contains several minor—or one major—logical inconsistencies	Claims mostly developed, though contains one or two partially developed claims, or minor logical inconsistencies that do not seriously affect overall argument	All parts of the argument (major and sub-claims) are developed thoroughly, deeply, and logically
Evidence	Quality	Evidence is missing, irrelevant, unreliable, or undocumented	Uses evidence from somewhat reliable sources documented to ensure retrievability	Mostly uses relevant evidence from reliable and properly documented sources	Always uses relevant evidence from reliable and properly documented sources
	Use	Does not use evidence, merely reports it without explanation, or plagiarizes	Uses some evidence, but may struggle to integrate it logically or smoothly into the argument, or to explain it fully	Mostly integrates and explains evidence to support the primary claim(s)	Consistently integrates and fully explains evidence to support all claims thoroughly and carefully
Readability	Arrangement	Does not use transitions, or sentence and paragraph arrangement interferes with logical coherence	Simple transitions limit the coherence and/or complexity of sentences and paragraphs	Mostly uses effective transitions to enhance the coherence of sentences and paragraphs	Consistently uses sophisticated transitions to enhance the coherence of sentences and paragraphs
	Sentence Level Correctness and	Mechanically incorrect or stylistically unclear sentences critically impede	Sentences usually mechanically correct and clear; reader	Sentences almost always mechanically correct and stylistically	Sentences always mechanically correct and stylistically sophisticated;

SAGES Writing Rubric – Terminology

Engagement – SAGES pushes students to engage with current research and thinking about a wide range of topics. In each writing assignment, students should thoroughly understand – and be able to explain – the central question, problem, or idea that motivates their written work. At its root, this category assesses how well a paper performs the task(s) laid out in the assignment; but good, persuasive writing should be compelling to a smart reader who may not know the specifics of the assignment prompt. So, a proficient writer will provide necessary context in a compelling and audience-aware way.

- *Content/Ideas* assesses the relevance and significance of the paper’s central insight(s). There are many words that can define our expectations for engagement of a problem/question—thorough, careful, creative—but we have found that words like “insightful,” “significant,” and “original” can be helpful in pushing students to go beyond what they read or discussed in class and their old habits of information retrieval in order to begin doing the kind of independent thinking that characterizes college work.
 - *Purpose, Context, and Audience* assesses the writer’s ability to engage respectfully with diverse perspectives and to present her/himself as a credible and persuasive voice on the topic. Purpose: Is the writer able to express the motivation for writing? Context: Does the writer frame the essay’s ideas such that the reader can locate them in a broader conversation? Audience: Does the writer correctly assume what readers should know and properly introduce what they do not? Does the writer acknowledge other points of view, especially ones that may conflict with the writer’s?
-

Argument – SAGES asks students not only to engage with questions/problems, but also to respond with persuasive and valuable answers and solutions. This category assesses students’ abilities to present their contributions in the forms of clearly stated and thoroughly developed arguments. The proficient writer will articulate a strong, precise, and insightful thesis that governs the development of the paper.

- *Thesis Statement* assesses the clarity and precision of the governing statement. It is possible for a student to write a great piece without an explicit thesis statement, but it’s so hard for student writers to do so that we encourage them to use one. The thesis is the one-sentence (even if it technically uses more than one) version of the piece. It governs everything that gets said in it, telling the writer (and reader) what should be included (and left out), as well as suggesting the order in which information will be presented.
- *Reasoning/Development* assesses the depth and nuance of the argument throughout the paper. Do the claims made in the body of the piece link back to the thesis? Is each claim logically persuasive (i.e., does the writer establish premises first, then logically build toward reasonable conclusions)? Does the writer push on the ideas presented to go deeper into them, beyond the obvious or superficial? You may note that there is some overlap here with ENGAGEMENT. One way to think about the difference: a writer may ENGAGE an insight through a flash of brilliance, but it is how thoroughly and well the writer *develops* that idea that should determine the grade for ARGUMENT.

Evidence – SAGES introduces students to a range of evidence and teaches them to evaluate and make use of credible, persuasive information in their writing. This category assesses students’ abilities to identify appropriate (often scholarly) evidence to support their arguments, as well as their abilities to accommodate and use potentially discrepant data or contradictory ideas.

- *Quality* assesses the relevance and reliability (for researched arguments, the gold standard of reliability is peer-reviewed scholarship) of the evidence used. Evidence refers not only to secondary sources, but also anything that could be used to support a claim, including observational data or personal experience.
 - *Use* assesses the way the writer integrates information into her/his argument. Is the evidence presented necessary *and* sufficient to support the claim(s)? How is evidence introduced, analyzed, and incorporated into the writer’s text? Typically, the logical relationship between evidence and claim is not self-evident and thus must be stated explicitly through an explanatory sentence (often called a warrant).
-

Readability – SAGES teaches students to attend to the mechanics and style of their written performances. This category assesses papers on their “surface” features, including mechanical correctness and artful style.

- *Arrangement* assesses the paper’s coherence (sometimes called “flow”) and its intentional structure and wording. Although arrangement might refer to the order of paragraphs, it also refers to the transitions used between paragraphs, as well as the inclusion and order of sentences within them. So for example, if a paragraph begins with a non-sequitur, but then introduces an evidence-supported claim that logically links back to the thesis, we might say that the point is *argued* logically, but that the paragraph is not yet as readable as it could be.
 - *Sentence Level Correctness and Style* assesses the paper’s technical consistency. This criterion refers to what many graders call “grammar,” but what linguists would refer to as a writer’s control of “Standard Edited English.” For mechanics and correctness, consider persistent patterns of error and errors that interfere with comprehension to be most serious.
-

Appendix B: SAGES Writing Portfolio – Holistic Rubric (2016)

	Expectations for SAGES Writing Portfolio, submitted at the end of the First & University Seminar Sequence	Unacceptable (1) (portfolio mostly does not meet expectation)	Developing (2) (portfolio marginally meets and occasionally does not meet expectation)	Acceptable (3) (portfolio mostly meets and occasionally exceeds expectation)	Proficient (4) (portfolio consistently meets and often exceeds expectation)
Engagement	<i>Responds to complex and compelling questions/problems; Attends flexibly & ethically to the demands of audience, context & purpose.</i>				
Argument	<i>Contributes insightful, relevant ideas in the form of independent arguments or controlling ideas that are developed logically and thoroughly.</i>				
Evidence	<i>Demonstrates effective use of researched scholarly sources, concepts, and information in support of arguments.</i>				
Readability	<i>Demonstrates clear and precise language use, effective sentences and paragraphing, and mastery of standard English conventions.</i>				
Overall Assessment					