Synthesis

Synthesis is connecting different ideas into a new, coherent text to create new meaning. A synthesis is easier for readers to digest than a patchwork of ideas that have no connection.

When would you synthesize?

Imagine the following scenario. You attended TTU's gala, where you talked with alumni and professors about the future of the university. You are so excited about what you heard, and you want to share it with your friends. Where do you start? How can you group the conversations you overheard and took part in? Who said what? How did the participants in the conversations agree or disagree with each other? How do your ideas fit in with theirs? Did your ideas change after hearing theirs? How can you report the information? Answering such questions will help you synthesize these conversations into an effective, cohesive message for your friends.

Here are a few additional questions to consider when synthesizing multiple sources:

- Who wrote these texts? Who appears in them? Who would likely want to read them?
- What are these texts about? What do the authors want you to understand about these texts? What happens in these texts?
- When were these texts written? Who published them?
- What is the author's purpose in writing about these subjects? What is the significance of these texts?

Using our earlier hypothetical situation, let's look at an example of synthesis:

During TTU's gala, the president announced a sizeable endowment for the university. Many faculty and staff had different opinions on how the money should be spent. Some thought it should all go toward tuition refunds, while others thought it should go into research focusing on wind energy. In the end, the chancellor had the final say and decided it should all go to the Writing Centers of TTU.

A key takeaway is this: Synthesis is a useful method for presenting information from multiple sources in a cohesive manner.