

Good student examples of synthesizing sources

In Example #1, the student uses both of her sources to explain one particular aspect of the main problem she's discussing (segregation between Black and white communities). She is synthesizing based on the fact that the sources suggest something similar.

Segregation based on race and language is apparent in the police brutality endured by members of the predominantly Black communities. One need not look farther than the death of Reggie Jordan described in June Jordan's essay. At the end of Jordan's essay, she includes a piece written by Willie Jordan in which he explains his brothers' death. He writes:

I recently received a painful reminder that racism, poverty, and the abuse of power are global problems... On October 25, 1984 at approximately 3:00 p.m. my brother, Mr. Reginald Jordan, was shot and killed by two New York City policemen from the 75th precinct in the east New York section of Brooklyn. His life ended at the age of twenty-five. Even up to this current point in time the Police Department has failed to provide my family...with a plausible reason for Reggie's death. (Jordan 344)

From Willie's account, it can be inferred that if it had been a white person the family would have received more media coverage and attention from the police department, or that the tragedy wouldn't have occurred at all. Kelley also explores this issue, and he takes a look into lyrics by gangsta rappers that portray police brutality. Kelley writes that, "Police repression remains gangsta rap's primary target. We must bear in mind that this subgenre was born amidst the militarization of Compton, Watts, and other black communities...which became the battlefields of the so-called 'war on drugs' in L.A." (378). Kelley says that some rappers have even dubbed this police repression as a "genocidal war against black men" (379). He writes that a common theme among gangsta rappers is to point out the viciousness of police officers, and that police have a racist motive of keeping the black community "in check." He points to lyrics by one rapper, Ice Cube, which reads "Every cop killer goes ignored, /they just send another nigger to the morgue. /A point scored. They could give a fuck about us. /They'd rather catch us with guns and white powder" (379). It can be logically deducted from both Jordan and Kelley's information that police brutality is an act of racism that pits the black community against the dominant community. The struggle that the community has against this type of action could be viewed by outsiders as resistance to authority. Kelley notes that this brutality aids in the continuation of the stereotype of crime and drug use being rampant in the black community (380). Therefore, if the dominant view in America is that Black communities have an ample amount of drug use and crime, and resist authority, they would not want the communities to assimilate into the mainstream culture.

In Example #2, the student uses her sources in a "cause and effect" manner, where one source is used to explain the cause of the problem (poor education for minorities) and the other source describes the effect(s).

What, then, about the future of education and minorities? What is in store for them? Judging from the way things are going now, it seems like it will continue revolving in a never-ending circle: the ones who are in power now will stay in power and the less privileged will remain less privileged. Jordan states in response to the current society, "Despite our multi-lingual population, and despite the deepening Black and white cleavage within that conglomerate, white standards control our official and popular judgments of verbal proficiency and correct, or incorrect, language skills, including speech" (334). Hence, even though America has become a diverse country, education does not address the differences, leaving the future of minorities bleak. Language has become a huge barrier and an even larger indicator of success in education, one which minorities must overcome to succeed in the current school system. While schools continue teaching this way, diverse groups will begin to lose their identity in trying to assimilate into a culture unlike its own, a nearly impossible task, as Corson says on page 24: "In summary, then, the school passes on training and information which can only be fully received by those who have had the culturally and linguistically appropriate training that the school does not give." These invisible problems must first be recognized before anything can change. Curricula that are in the best interest of culturally and linguistically different children must be formulated. Corson writes that it would be wise to transfer "real decision making power to those who are actually in touch with the things that oppress them, or with the things that they value" (31). This may be the only way to alleviate the social problems that society has developed.