Writing Assignment #2
The Four-Source Essay: Basic Synthesis

Summary of assignment

- Task: The four-source essay asks you to synthesize the arguments of four sources.
- **Length:** Minimum of 1000 words. The instructor will give you comments on the first draft and let you know if you need more development beyond 1000 words.
- **Format:** APA
- **Sources:** Four sources, all of which you will find through library searches. If you haven't firmly chosen a topic for WA#1, you will select a topic of your choice, conduct searches in the library databases, focus the topic, and determine four sources to use in this essay. (Of course, you may have chosen a firm topic that you used for WA#1. Four of these five sources are appropriate to use for WA#2 unless your instructor indicates otherwise.)

    - **All of your sources must be from scholarly journals or credible trade journals**. No sources can be from popular journals.
    - **Please use *only four sources*.** Please do not incorporate more than four sources into this essay.

Articles to Use for the Essay

For this essay, you will select four articles on a topic of your choice. *The articles should be on the same topic but feature different perspectives, opinions, or conclusions about some aspects of the topic.*

For example, if you are majoring in cybersecurity, you might locate four articles about the need for improved training for employees on mobile security issues. The four articles might take different angles on the topic, perhaps even disagreeing in some respects.

To use another example, if you are majoring in criminal justice, you might locate four articles on the CSI Effect. The articles should take different perspectives on the topic. Perhaps one or two of them say that the CSI Effect exists and one or two say that it does not exist. Or perhaps all agree that it exists but they all take slightly different approaches to addressing the problem.

Organization for this Essay

You will write an *introductory paragraph with a thesis statement*. Your thesis statement will demonstrate what the various sources say on the topic.

You will also have various body paragraphs that show *synthesis*. In synthesizing sources, you will divide your paper into themes.

For example, let us assume that you find four articles on the need for improved training for employees on mobile security issues. In this situation, assume that the four articles emphasize different issues. One emphasizes the costs of data breaches to companies. Another emphasizes reasons that employees do not practice safe cybersecurity practices. Another discusses methods for training employees. Another mentions costs of training for such initiatives.

You might divide the paper into two categories:

- Reasons for implementing a training program
- Methods of and costs involved in implementing a training program

After developing the body of your essay, you will want to write a strong conclusion. Remember to summarize the material developed in the body in the conclusion. You might also consider calling for further research on the topic in your conclusion.

Point of view

For this essay, you will use third-person point of view.

Please do not use first person point of view (e.g., “I,” “me,” “we”) in writing this essay.

In addition, please do not use second-person point of view (“you” or “your”) in writing this essay.

For example, instead of “Smith argues that, as a director, you have a duty to coordinate cybersecurity efforts...” you would write, “Smith argues that directors have a duty to coordinate cybersecurity efforts...”

APA Style

The paper should be formatted in APA style. The Week 3 link "APA 7th edition example student essay". In summary, you should observe the following:

- Use one-inch margins.
- Double space.
- Use size 12 Times New Roman font.
- Include page numbers.
- Include a title page.
- Include a “References” page on which you list the four articles in APA style
- Do *not* include an abstract. This paper is not long enough to warrant an abstract.

Submitting the assignment:

You will submit a first draft of the essay to the assignment folder. The first draft will not be graded. The instructor will provide comments to it.

After receiving comments from the instructor, you will submit a revised draft. The final draft will be graded.

Helpful Resources

- Kennedy, M.L. and Kennedy, W., “Synthesis,” from *Writing in the disciplines: A reader and rhetoric for academic writers*. **This chapter in in the e-reserves of our class.** It provides an

excellent description of an exploratory synthesis essay, a literature review, and a thesis-driven synthesis essay.

• Graff, G. and Birkenstein, C., *They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing with Readings*. **This chapter in in the e-reserves of our class.** It mentions various techniques to apply in stating what an author said and your response to the author. It is recommended that you read through that chapter so that you might apply these techniques to this essay.