

Synthesizing: Unsuccessful and Successful Examples

❖ *Example of an unsuccessful passage that is not synthesized*

In this passage, the student writer has not compared the authors' ideas by pointing out similarities. She has treated each author's ideas separately, in different paragraphs.

Simms and de Loë (2010) surveyed several small rural communities. They visited these communities, where they looked at the water treatment facilities and interviewed those responsible for water safety. They reveal that water in Canada is under threat in terms of quality. They argue that this is particularly the case in small communities, where infrastructure, capacity and resources are lacking.

Patrick (2011) conducted a study of uneven access to clean water for First Nations. He found that many First Nations have problems with their water supply. Infrastructure is generally poorly maintained and out of date, and there is an over reliance on chemicals. He suggests that the problems that he and others have identified in small remote communities are mainly due to inadequate training, high operational costs, and institutional and jurisdictional barriers.

The Water Survey Agency (WSA) (2012) has conducted several surveys of Saskatchewan water in communities in the North. The agency has found that water systems are not well maintained in rural and remote communities, where services are typically lacking.

❖ *Example of a successful passage that is synthesized*

In the second draft of the same passage, the student writer has successfully compared the ideas of several authors in the same paragraph. Notice how the writer's own voice is heard in the topic sentence and in the paragraph's final sentence. The middle part of the paragraph contains evidence to support the writer's claims. She uses the phrases "similar findings" and "in related research" to show connections among studies.

Providing safe drinking water is challenging for small and rural communities (Simms & de Loë, 2010; Water Security Agency (WSA), 2012; Holmes 2002), particularly for First Nation communities (Patrick, 2011). The WSA (2012) found that small communities often have difficulties meeting drinking water standards because of challenges in maintaining and renewing their systems. In a survey of Northern Saskatchewan communities, Simms & de Loë (2010) had similar findings, identifying limited resources and lack of capacity as the major impediments for rural systems. In related research on northern First Nation communities, Patrick (2010) identified numerous problems plaguing water treatment operations, including improper training, reliance on chemicals for water treatment, high operational costs, poor infrastructure set up, and jurisdictional problems. All the problems identified in these studies suggest that small remote communities need support in the planning of their drinking water supply.