**Synthesis Notes from an AP Reader**

* If you only use two sources, you cannot go above a four.  You have to USE them.  If you used three sources, but one is still poorly used, you can still move past a four IF your essay is good enough to support it.  Three sources will at least qualify you for a 5, but anything less than that gets a four….
* A thesis that uses parallel structure is pretty formulaic.  The reader will think:  Your thesis is like a road map.  Now, when I am done reading the thesis, I might say that “well, I’m not dying to go there,” but I might say “well, at least I’m not going to get lost.”  Intro generally tells a reader what the paper will score.
* The ratio of sources to student ideas should be 25:75.  Students need to look at how much of their own ideas are in the paper---Your ideas should dominate, so weaving your source into the paragraph is the key.  Blend!  Blend!  Blend! You certainly don’t have to give a summary of the source.  Just give context
* Try not to simply quote the source only to do little with it.  If something is worth quoting, it’s worth commentary.
* Be careful not to misread a source.
* Sigh.  “So, in conclusion…”  is the sign of a weak conclusion.  Nothing new.  Just rehashed info.
* A score of a 5 is like a radio going in and out.  Sometimes you are getting a signal, sometimes you are not.
* The readers actually call some writings a “piñata essay.”    In a “piñata essay,” the writer piles on more and more, usually unrelated, sources in the hopes of finally getting something out of the essay.  It’s like hitting a piñata over and over until that piece of candy finally comes out of it.
* Question?  Do you give more credit to the kid who seamlessly blends quotes or do you give kids credit for just integrating the source?   Answer:  Just having 3 source references will not keep you from a 6, but a really quality paper almost seems as if the student could have written the paper without the sources. The sources are just blended to enhance the writing.
* Could-a, Would-a, Should-a, College Board doesn’t care if you wrote well in your essay.  If you plagiarize the paper by not citing sources, you don’t receive an 8.  In fact, you get a 2.
* Remember:  “There are many rooms in the house of 6.”
* A Hand Turkey = 1