**Developing a strong argument**

Our world now is very different compared to our grandparents’ time. We are more connected and share similar beliefs in many areas of our lives. However, there are also many occasions when we may disagree with other people.

To be able to present a different perspective and persuade others – with strong, coherent arguments, logic and evidence – to accept our point of view is a useful skill in your social, academic and professional life. In the out-of-class work, you saw that a strong argument generally comprises statements that are logical, relevant and supported by evidence or data, or could be verified.

These skills are important for developing your competency with coherence (CO) and synthesis (SY).

1. **Discussion – What is a strong argument?**

Before class, you made notes on arguments from the sources provided which could argue against Amina’s views below:

1. “I just don’t understand why people are so worried about the powers of *social media*! It has given me nothing but positive experiences!”
2. “I truly believe the use of *VR and AR in commercial applications* is dangerous and irresponsible!”

Now share the notes you made before class with your group mates. Identify the strongest arguments that would persuade Amina to change her mind on each topic. Explain your decisions, using some of the learning points from the out-of-class work.

1. **Practice – Writing**

Now consider how you would argue your *own* opinion about Amina’s topic above.

With a partner, choose ONE of Amina’s views above and write one paragraph together which makes ONE strong argument either for or against the statement. Ensure your argument is built on claims that are logical, relevant and can supported with evidence, to demonstrate good coherence (CO).

You can use ideas from the out-of-class work if you want, or your own ideas. Use the learning points from the previous lesson about how to structure a main body paragraph.

After you finish, consider your learning points from the writing practice and feedback you have received. Remember that you will need to submit an essay during Unit 3 on one of the topics from the previous lesson, and you should try to keep these learning points in mind when writing your essay.

1. **Analysis and reflection**

For your portfolio essay, and any other kind of academic writing at university, you will need to find quality, relevant sources and synthesize ideas from these sources into your essay to support your points. Synthesis (SY) is a core competency for academic work.

Do you know how to find quality sources and integrate ideas from them effectively into your text to build a strong argument in academic style, which demonstrates good skills with synthesis?

Work with your partner through the steps below, to consolidate your knowledge of synthesis (SY).

1. Read Candy’s paragraph below and decide whether it is a strong argument or not.

**Candy’s writing:** *YouTube has proved that videos do not need to be expensive nor exclusive to capture attention. They only need good content to leave an impact on the viewers. Notably, the “It Gets Better” project has used YouTube to raise awareness and funds, and to educate people on LGBTQ issues, with great success. Kanani (2012) cites the example of author Dan Savage and his partner Terry Miller, who created a YouTube video on LGBTQ issues to inspire hope to youths who face harassment in school regarding their sexual orientation. This simple move generated overwhelmingly positive responses from all around the world, including from the US President at that time, Barack Obama.*

1. Identify why Amina’s writing below is inappropriate.

**Amina’s writing**: *I think you may change your mind when I tell you this. According to Diana Gominah, 2019, disasters arising from social media are not accidental mistakes but are well planned and executed.*

1. Read the first paragraph of this article and identify why the Bo Yung’s writing below is inappropriate. <https://www.classvr.com/virtual-reality-industry-work/>

**Bo Yung’s writing**: *VR can actually save time and significant cost in addition to providing a safe, immersive and realistic experience for users.*

1. One way to make arguments persuasive is to use a range of good sources to develop ideas. How do you know what is a good source? Whose advice below do you agree with?

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| --- |
| **Mark:** Simple! Just go to Wikipedia.  **Lana**: I google the topic until I find an article that proves my point.  **Sean**: I try to include as many references as I can, in my essay.  **Janet:** Books are more authoritative than internet articles.  **Selina**: I always check to see when the information is published or updated. This is to make sure the details are current enough for my purpose.  **Jeff**: I try to find out if the author is an expert in that field, industry or topic.  **Priya**: I ask myself why this piece of information is published – is it to inform, teach, sell, persuade or entertain? The answer will help you decide if it’s an authoritative source or not. If the article aims to sell or entertain, it might not be authoritative.  **Ranjit**: Ideas must be supported by evidence. You can’t just say, ‘well, um, generally speaking, this causes that’ – you must give proof for that.  Adapted from: Authoritative Sources 101 - <https://wordagents.com/authoritative-sources/> |