
CC0001 INQUIRY AND COMMUNICATION IN AN INTERDISCIPLINARY WORLD

DR PRASANTHI RAM



OP-ED STRUCTURE

1. Paragraphs 1-3 | Description Analysis Question (DAQ)
2. Paragraphs 4-5 | Source 1 Summary & Evaluation
3. Paragraphs 6-7 | Source 2 Summary & Evaluation
4. Paragraph 8-9 | Synthesis Argument and Conclusion (SAC)

HOW TO APPROACH SYNTHESIS



What is wrong with this attempt at synthesis?

Barthes believes that toys brainwash kids into accepting the world as is, while Robinson argues that the education system is outdated, treating children like factory products.

HOW TO APPROACH SYNTHESIS

Synthesis is to frame the two sources in conversation with each other and show how they can help to address your RQ

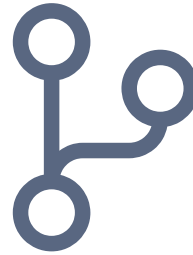


- ❑ What do the two sources agree on?
 - Both believe that... Both agree that...
 - **Consider:** Do they provide similar or different reasons for their stance? Does one present a wider scope than another?
 - ❑ What do the two sources disagree on?
 - While A argues that... B instead argues...
 - ❑ What can be applied from one source to another?
 - If we apply A's concept onto B, it becomes clear...
 - A's argument reveals a gap/shortcoming in B...
 - ❑ Does one source give you additional ideas?
 - A goes even further than B by arguing that...
 - A provides additional insight on...
-

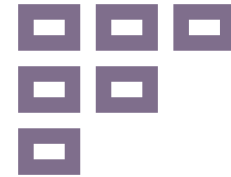
WHAT MAKES UP YOUR FINAL ARGUMENT?



Initial ideas (DAQ)



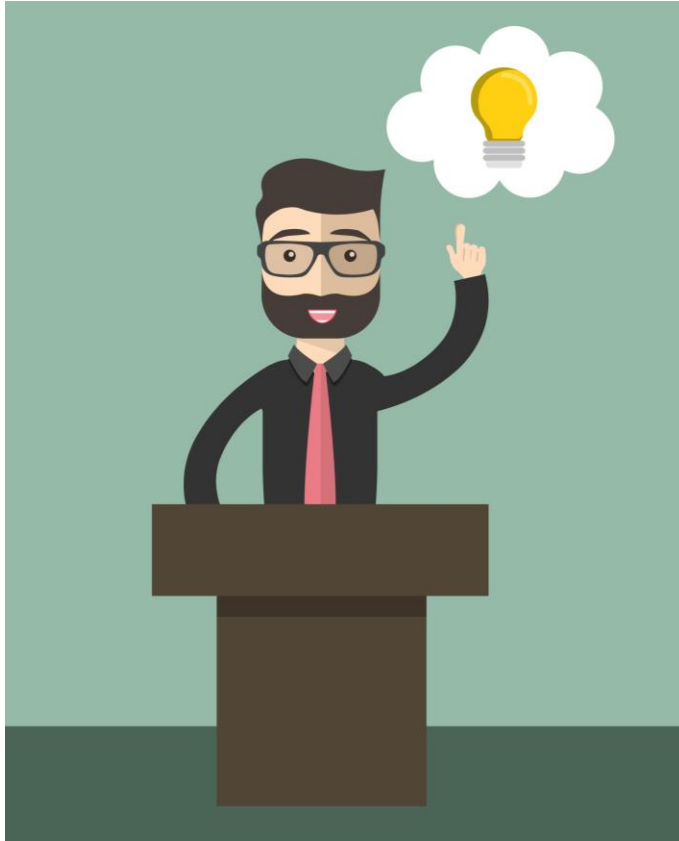
Source ideas (Which you will
synthesise)



Additional insight (Beyond
sources)



BEYOND THIS



To develop your synthesis, you can choose to introduce new insight:

- Can the ideas of Source 1 and Source 2 be combined to create a new concept?
- Can the ideas of one source be applied to the second source for new insight?
- Is there something the authors do not consider? Could this be crucial to addressing the question adequately?
- Is there something particular to today's context (2024) or the Singaporean context (if this is your question's focus) that could help illuminate or extend parts of the claim?

Why do children lose their inherent creativity over time?

ROLAND BARTHES, "TOYS"

The system is flawed (lacks reinvention / not tailored to children)

Toys imitate the adult world and are not innovative in design.

Children are forced to conform to the system

Children are expected to accept and conform to the world as it is without questioning.

They are not nurtured to be creative / lose their creativity

With such toys, children are only owners and users, never creators.

KEN ROBINSON, "CHANGING PARADIGMS"

The education system is outdated and adopts a production line mentality.

Children are anesthetised in this digital age that is filled with distraction so that they can conform to the demands of standardised testing.

Children lose their capacity for divergent thinking (the ability to think laterally and of multiple answers) as they become educated.

WHAT DO BOTH AGREE ON?

Connecting the two sources (play and education):

Both Barthes (1972) and Robinson (2010) agree that children lose their inherent creativity over time as they are conditioned by society to conform. Barthes argues that this phenomenon begins with play, since most toys do not allow for innovation, and Robinson shows us that this continues through their years of formative education, where divergent thinking is routinely punished and standardisation is emphasised. As a result, children become adults who have minimised or even no capacity for creativity.

ARGUMENT: WHAT DO THEY NOT CONSIDER?

Going beyond the sources: What about the invisible actor, the adults?

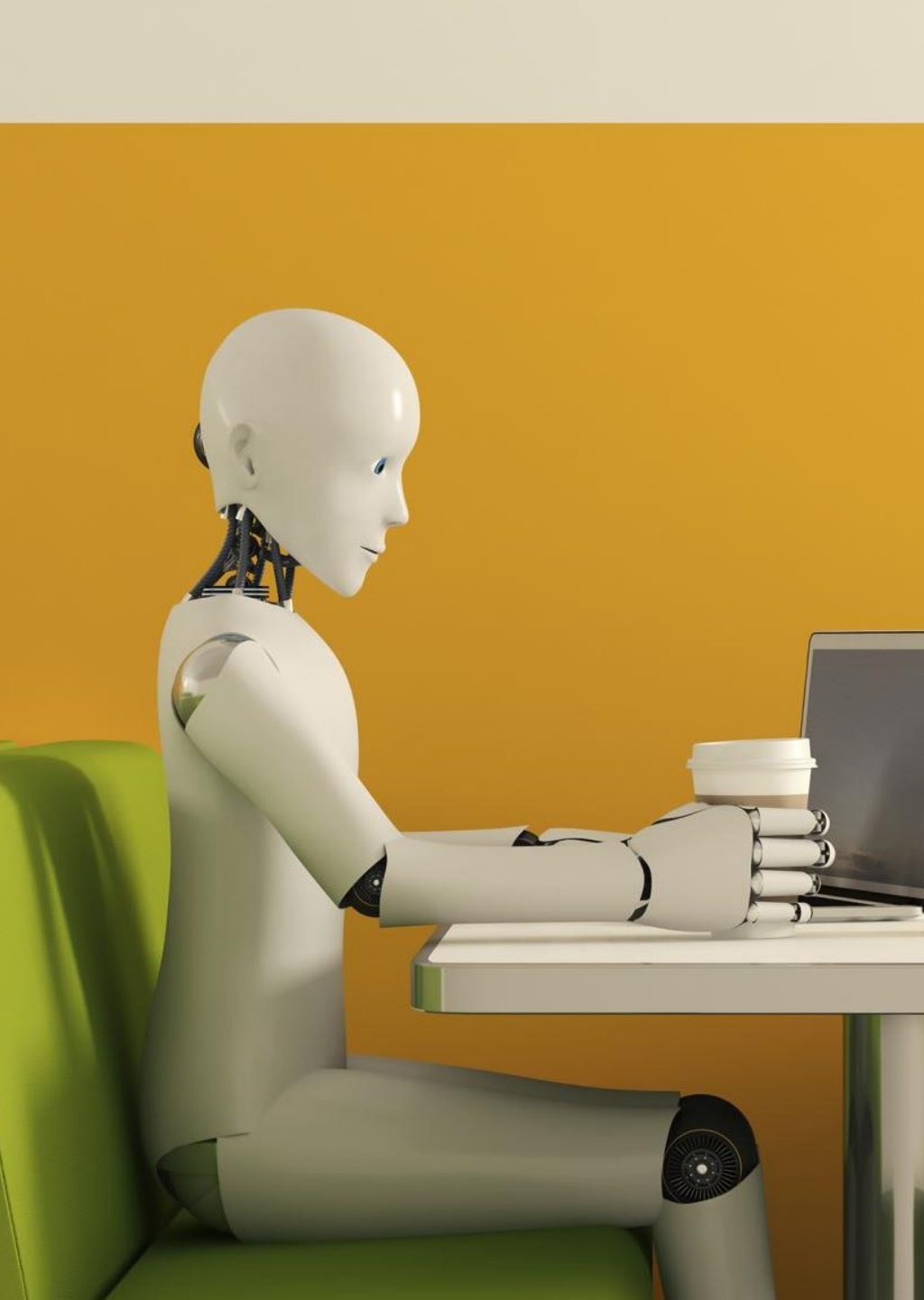
- While Barthes and Robinson both blame systems (toy producers and public education), **I argue that** they do not emphasise the active role adults play in diminishing children's creativity.
- Adults have the power to guide children to play and learn creatively. It is thus a matter of whether they exercise this power at all.
- Going further, it may require adults themselves to unlearn decades of standardised thinking before they are able to positively impact both systems of play and education.



ARGUMENT

An example of presenting your own insight | Extending Robinson's argument on digital distractions:

- As digital natives, children today live in an era with **even more distractions** than Robinson described in his video back in 2010.
- They are constantly bombarded by new social media applications (TikTok and Metaverse), new forms of artificial intelligence (Siri and ChatGPT), and new types of devices with greater capacities than before.
- Therefore, this **hyperstimulation only exacerbates the detrimental impact** of forcing them to conform to an education system that is not designed to fit them.



ARGUMENT

An example of presenting your own insight | Bringing up a new factor entirely to build on Robinson's argument:

- I would argue that in today's digital era, distractions are not the only issue. With the **rise of artificial intelligence** where one can easily rely on chatbots to answer sensibly on their behalf, **it is plausible** that divergent thinking and therefore, creativity are at an even greater risk than before.
- As such, children who are already forced to conform to linear types of thinking in the education system may find themselves **losing even more incentive to think critically on their own.**



RETURNING TO THE CLEANERS OP-ED

- 1) What is stigma caused by?
- 2) How is stigma worsened?

SYNTHESIS

RQ: Why is there such a lack of appreciation towards cleaners in Singapore?

Do the sources agree with each other: stigma

Both articles agree that there is a lack of appreciation towards cleaners in Singapore due to (1) stigma perpetuated by sociocultural beliefs about class and hierarchy. Rabelo and Mahalingam (2019) also argue that another factor contributing to stigma is the (2) perception of such work and thus, by association, the cleaners themselves as inherently dirty. Furthermore, the authors stress that the stigma is (3) worsened by the invisibility of both the work and the cleaners themselves.

Any additional insight from either source? Yes Source 2 – invisibility

SYNTHESIS

- 1) What is stigma caused by?
- 2) How is stigma worsened?
- 3) **NEW: Who is responsible?***

RQ: Why is there such a lack of appreciation towards cleaners in Singapore?

However, while Rabelo and Mahalingam (2019) argue that that such beliefs are perpetuated by society at large, Prof. Tommy Koh (Singapore Government, 2018) suggests that this is particularly driven by the elite in Singapore.

While the sources' ideas end here, can you end your essay here?

MOVING TO ARGUMENT

RQ: Why is there such a lack of appreciation towards cleaners in Singapore?

However, while Rabelo and Mahalingam (2019) argue that that such beliefs are perpetuated by society at large, Prof. Tommy Koh (Singapore Government, 2018) suggests that this is particularly driven by the elite in Singapore.

Possible questions to provide your own insight on:

1. **Extending from S1 on elitism:** Why is then there a pronounced issue of elitism in Singapore?
2. **Challenging S1 and S2 on assumption:** Is it truly a lack of appreciation or could there be another cultural explanation in Singapore's context?

BLOG 2 – COMMON ERRORS

feedback

SUMMARY

❑ Issues with source introduction

- Instead of calling it "my/the source," identify the type of source and year. For example: "In a 2019 **news article**...in a 2021 **research paper**...in a 2015 **journal article**..."
- Refer to your author by their surname: Lee argues...
- If you have two authors: Lim and Lee (2019) argue...
- If you have three or more authors: Lim et al. (2019) argue...

et al is Latin for "and others"

SUMMARY

❑ Standalone quotes (quote plonking)

- Your quote must be incorporated into your summary
- **Bad example:** This is shown in the following quote, "In Singapore, there is a strong belief in meritocracy."
- **Good example:** The authors posit that Singapore possesses a "strong belief in meritocracy" (Lim & Lee, 2021).

SUMMARY

❑ Mixing evaluation with summary

- **Inserting your response into the summary:** *It is surprising that Walker believes that climate change is real...*
- **Inserting your inferences into the summary:** *This seems to suggest that the environment is unable to keep up with our actions...*
- As a rule of thumb: if something is explicitly stated by the author, summarise.
- If something is implicit and can only be inferred by you (not the author), evaluate.

SUMMARY

Tip: Always frame your author's argument & approach for the reader

- Some of you summarise the article while retaining its original structure – **there's no focus and the argument is not clear as a result**

If they did a study or survey, please explain what it was for

- Instead, think about what your author is arguing about:
 - Is the author presenting **3 reasons why or how...**
 - Is the author looking at **causes and consequences of...**
 - Is the author examining **the criteria for...**

SUMMARY

Tip: Always frame the summary

- Signpost the author's argument:
 - The author argues / claims / posits / stresses / suggests / emphasises / counters / exposes...
- Signpost the author's approach
 - **Numbering:** Firstly...Secondly...Thirdly
 - **Cause:** This is caused by...This is due to... **Consequence:** As a result...Consequently...
 - **Contrast:** On one hand...On the other hand...
 - **Time:** Initially...Eventually...Gradually over time...

EVALUATION

- ❑ Referring to the source as “The source” or “Source 1” or “Source 2”
 - Instead, always cite the author and year:
Walker (2020) highlights...
 - It is also acceptable to refer to the source type:
The article / Walker’s article suggests that...
The interview...
 - Similarly, do not directly refer to the assignment or say things like “This directly answers my question”. Your job is to **show** the reader how the ideas address your question.

EVALUATION

❑ **Evaluating parts that have not been summarised**

- Similarly, do not continue the summary within your evaluation!
- For some, I've highlighted this with the tag [Reorganise]
- You can only respond to an idea that has already been presented (paraphrased or quoted) in the summary.

EVALUATION

- ❑ **Simply stating that a source gave you a new perspective or an idea (Vague) / (Develop Idea) / (?)**
 - For example: "There are cultural differences." Okay, what kind?
 - Again, show, not tell. Do not be vague.
 - Restate your perspective/assumption prior to reading the source
 - Explain how the ideas of the source differ and how your viewpoint has been altered
 - Remember: you are being marked on how well you develop your preliminary ideas through research to address your question.

EVALUATION

❑ **Bringing up limitations for the sake of it** (Redundant) / (Elab.)

- If the limitation is insignificant OR irrelevant to your discussion, please leave it out.
- Only include a limitation if you are going to elaborate further in order to show the reader how you will be applying this source to answer your RQ.
- “This article was written in 2015 so it is outdated. [moves on to an unrelated point]”

EVALUATION

Always signpost your own input (vs. what's from the source)

This ensures that you receive points for expanding on the author's argument & presenting your own response to the research question

How to signpost?

"Extending from the article, I would argue that..."

"If I were to apply the author's claims onto [...], it appears that..."

"In my opinion..."

"I believe that..."

"The article challenged my original perspective..."



CHOICE OF SOURCE

Though some degree of overlap is permissible, your 2 sources should provide you with different ideas.

- ❖ **Different focuses** – for example, one looks at the government's POV, the other looks at activists' POV, or one looks at the emotional impact while the other looks at the physical impact.
- ❖ **Contrasting ideas** – for example, one argues that climate change can be tackled in a bottom-up way while the other completely disagrees.
- ❖ **Different fields of study** – for example, you are exploring the idea of empathy from the perspectives of a psychologist and a linguist.

If your takeaways from both sources are the same, 1 source is redundant and must be changed!

APA CITATION

One author

- Narrative citation: Lee (2021) writes...
- Parenthetical citation: (Lee, 2021)

Two authors (plural)

- Narrative citation: Lee and Lim (2021) write...
- Parenthetical citation: (Lee & Lim, 2021)

Three more or authors (plural)

- Narrative citation: Lee et al. (2021) write...
- Parenthetical citation: (Lee et al., 2021)

APA CITATION

Citing page number

- Single page: (Lee, 2021, p. 22)
- Multiple pages: (Lee, 2021, pp. 22-24)
- Paragraph: (Lee, 2021, para. 3)

Secondary citation (where your author cites someone else)

- (Lim, 1999, as cited in Lee, 2021)

WHAT TO PREPARE FOR WEEK 9

1. **Pre-Class Reading:** Read the Week 9 student op-ed (Paragraphs 4-9)
2. **Pre-Class Homework:** Prepare Draft 1 for Peer Workshop
3. **Pre-Consult Homework:** Prepare pre-consultation checklist for your 30-minute consult with me on Week 9 or 10

**PEER
WORKSHOP
NEXT WEEK**





DRAFT 1

Combine Assignment 1 and Blog 2 into your very first op-ed draft:

- **Option 1:** Copy and paste as is (make sure they are in proper paragraphs!)
- **Option 2:** Revise A1 and B2 based on my feedback before combining into a draft
- **Option 3:** Revise, then attempt Synthesis, Argument and/or Conclusion as much as possible

You should at least have 7 paragraphs (DAQ, Source Summaries and Evaluations). The full draft should have 10 paragraphs.

Bring a printout or prepare a Google Doc copy for class next week!

SIGN UP FOR
CONSULTS

BY END OF
THIS WEEK





WHAT TO PREPARE FOR CONSULT?

Revise Draft 1 into Draft 2

- You will receive peer feedback in Week 9
- Use this to guide your revision

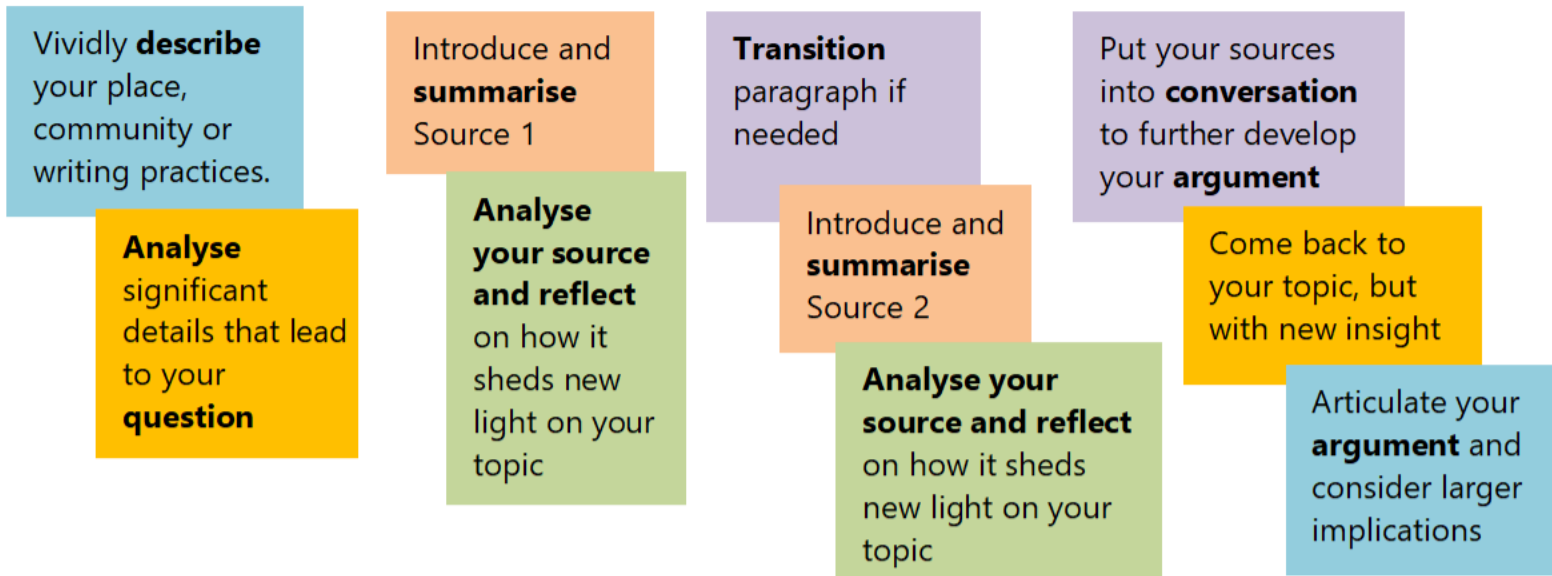
Prepare the pre-consultation checklist

- Pick 3-5 concerns in the checklist and rank them in order
- I will only be giving verbal feedback so come prepared with your laptop or notebook to jot down my suggestions

Refer to p.84 *End of Unit 7*

You can use the following as a guide to what your developing op-ed should contain.

Beginning	Middle	Ending
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get the reader's attention• Why is this topic important and relevant?• Vividly describe and analyse your topic• Clarify your motivation/purpose for writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summarise the arguments of your sources for your reader• Analyse and reflect on the ideas from these sources that help you to shed new light on your topic• Develop your argument and connect your sources & topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarify your argument• Consider the larger implications• Leave the reader thinking



REWORKING BLOG 2

Research Question:	
"Title" (Author, Year)	"Title" (Author, Year)
<i>Idea 1</i>	<i>Idea 1</i>
<i>Idea 2</i>	<i>Idea 2</i>
<i>Idea 3</i>	<i>Idea 3</i>
Synthesis	

When filling out this table:

- Use bullet points only (1 line per idea)
- Place ideas that align with or counter each other in the same row. This will become a "Both agree" or "Both disagree" synthesis
- If an idea from Source 1 has no counterpart, leave the row in Source 2 blank. This will become an "Author 1 introduces an additional insight" synthesis.

REWORKING BLOG 2

Research Question:	
"Title" (Author, Year)	"Title" (Author, Year)
<i>Idea 1</i>	<i>Idea 1</i>
<i>Idea 2</i>	<i>Idea 2</i>
<i>Idea 3</i>	<i>Idea 3</i>
Synthesis	

For additional feedback (optional):

I will be locking our Google Doc after tomorrow 2359

I will give brief feedback on what you've presented within your respective table