

---

# CC0001

## INQUIRY AND COMMUNICATION IN AN INTERDISCIPLINARY WORLD

DR PRASANTHI RAM





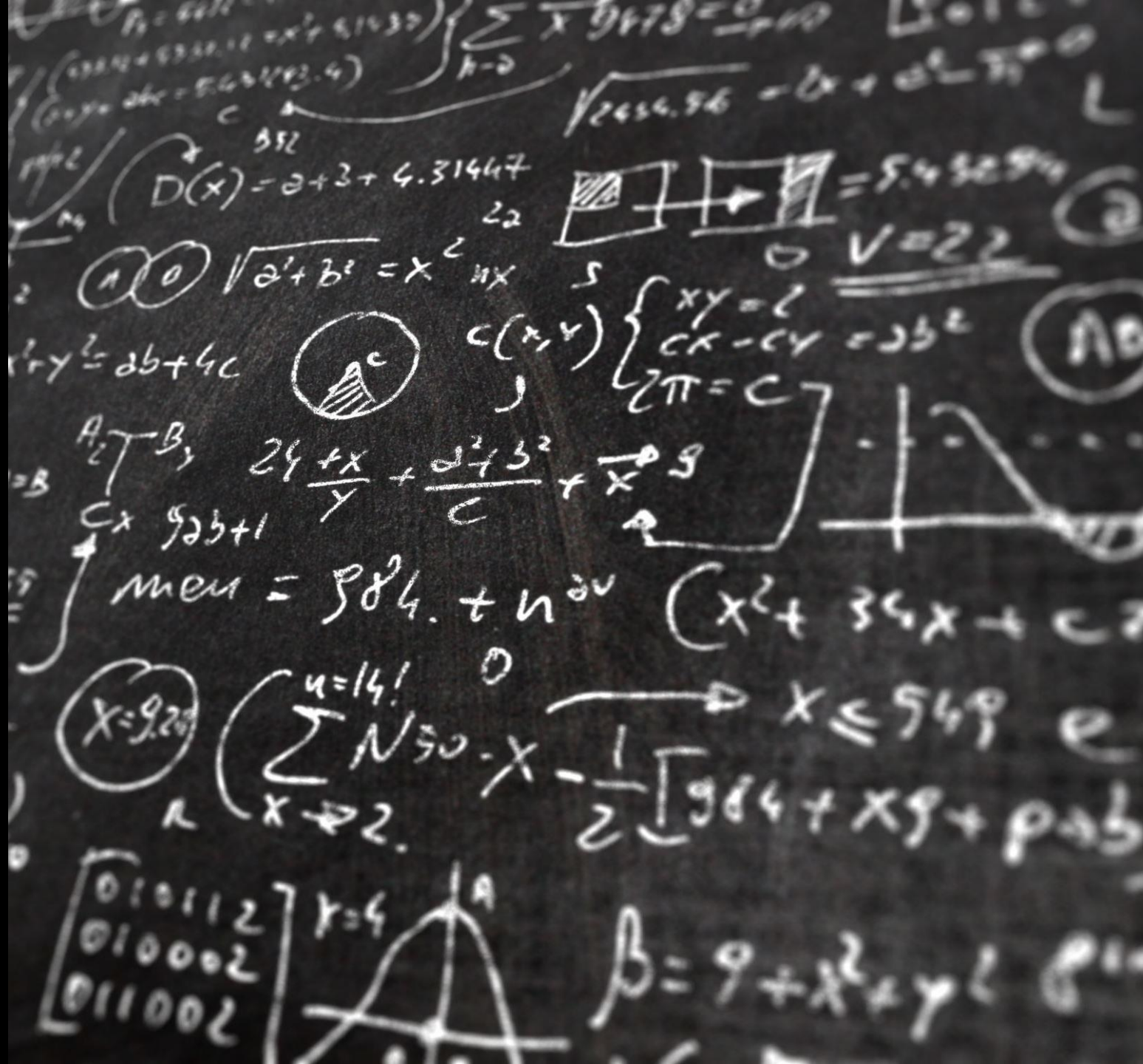
An abstract, textured background featuring a mix of vibrant colors including red, orange, yellow, blue, and purple. The colors are layered and blended in a way that suggests a painting or a collage. A thin, white vertical line runs down the right side of the image, partially overlapping the text.

NO PART OF THIS  
PRESENTATION  
SHOULD BE  
PHOTOGRAPHED,  
VIDEOED OR  
REPRODUCED WITHOUT  
WRITTEN PERMISSION.



---

# UNIT 3: FROM OBSERVATIONS TO QUESTIONS



# LEARNING OUTCOME

Form a compelling question based on your  
observations and analysis



---

# OP-ED INTRODUCTION



Paragraph 1 – Introduction to your topic using General Os



Paragraph 2 – Description of Significant O and Analysis (Personal)



Paragraph 3 – Further Analysis (Conceptual) and Research Question

---

# QUESTIONING



- The purpose of writing is not only to deliver existing knowledge but also to discover new knowledge
  - Instead of writing from a preconceived argument, you will practise the art of writing from a research question!
  - The purpose is to develop an idea that was not in your head before you embarked on your op-ed
-

---

# WHAT MAKES A QUESTION OPEN OR CLOSED ENDED?

Closed-ended questions tend to warrant a "Yes" or "No" response, if not a fixed answer.

- Are you a student?
- Do you have siblings?
- Do you like tea?
- How long did the circuit breaker last?

Open-ended questions do not have a predetermined response and tend to warrant further discussion.

- **Broad topic:** What do you think about today's pop music industry?
  - **Specific topic** (with an underlying assumption): Why is Singapore's education system highly regarded globally?
-

---

# WHAT IS AN EFFECTIVE QUESTION?

---

It should be rooted in your observational writing  
(derived from your Significant O analysis)

---

It should be open-ended and manageable in scope

---

It should NOT be definitively answerable

---

It should deal with CONCEPTS, not issues

---



# CONCEPTS VERSUS ISSUES?

A question focused on an ISSUE seeks to find a solution:

- “In what ways can the government support elderly in their retirement years?”
- Body of essay: Here are three possible ways, i.e. solutions for the issue of insufficient elderly support.
- This resembles a policy paper X

# CONCEPTS VERSUS ISSUES?

**Begin crafting from Blog 1:** This is why Blog 1 asks you to distill concepts – these will eventually be incorporated into crafting your research question!

A question focused on a CONCEPT / CONCEPTS seeks to discuss ideas:

- “How might the prevalence of ageism in society impact our self-perceptions of youth?”
- Body of essay: Unpacking the relationship between Concept 1 (ageism) and Concept 2 (self-perceptions of youth)
- This creates a discussion where there is room for interpretation and disagreement ✓

---

# PICKING THE RIGHT QUESTION



Avoid questions that are too philosophical that they are unanswerable



Avoid questions based on your personal memories or about the unforeseeable future.



Focus on examining your chosen topic in terms of its status quo.



---

# HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO START QUESTIONING

“What does X mean?”  
“What is the nature of X?”

“Why does X matter so much to us?”  
“Why is X relevant to us?”

“What is the relationship between X and Y?”  
“How does X influence Y?”

---



---

## ACTIVITY 3.1

# EFFECTIVE QUESTIONS

---

# CONCEPT QUESTION

## Sample Question

- Why is **politeness** so ingrained into **our behaviour** and what would happen if we stopped following **these unspoken rules**?

## Revised Question

- Why is **politeness** so ingrained into our **interpersonal behaviour** and what would happen if we stopped following **these unspoken social rules**?

## What are the differences?

- Keywords have been refined to be more specific.
- This is crucial when searching for academic sources – so that you can easily filter out irrelevant texts



---

# CONCEPT QUESTION

What are the differences?

## Sample Question

- Why is **politeness** so ingrained into **our behaviour** and what would happen if we stopped following **these unspoken rules**?

## Revised Question

- How do **unspoken social rules** surrounding **politeness** make **interpersonal relations** more difficult?

- Keywords have been refined to be more specific.
  - Changed focus:
    - It is less interested in “politeness” and more interested in the rules surrounding “politeness”
    - **Angle:** Instead of just assuming politeness is ingrained, it assumes politeness makes interpersonal relations “more difficult”
-

# Student Examples

ACTIVITY 3.2

---

# ACTIVE READING OF STUDENT EXAMPLES



**Highlight** General Os that provide the reader with a detailed, sensory picture of the topic.



**Underline** the Significant O and the main point of analysis.



**Assess** the Question using the table from 3.1. Is it conceptual and open-ended?



---

# EXAMPLE 1: PLACE

- Positives

- Description balances showing and telling well
- Interesting significant observation

- Negatives

- Analysis carries a strong assumption that is not backed by observations
- Concept (altruism) in the research question is irrelevant to the significant observation

---

## EXAMPLE 2: COMMUNITY

- Positives

- Good choice of interviewee
- Good quotation that becomes the significant observation

- Negatives

- Too much background information
- Delayed introduction of interviewee
- Insufficient analysis of quotes
- Unclear question – phrasing and concept

---

# EXAMPLE 3: WRITING HABITS

- Positives

- Good overview that includes general patterns observed across various writings

- Negatives

- There is no clear significant observation (jumps from idea to idea)
- Analysis is shallow (only states what is observed, not the thoughts it sparked)
- Two questions instead of one

# Revising Blog 1 through peer workshop

ACTIVITY 3.3 & 3.4



---

# SET UP BLOG 1

## **✓ I have not used any AI**

- Cover Page: Declaration of Academic Integrity Form (Signed)
- Blog 1 Template

## **✓ I have used AI for brainstorming**

- Cover Page: Declaration of Academic Integrity Form (Signed)
- Page 2: AI Usage Form with screenshots and a link to your transcript
- Blog 1 Template

**ONLY IF YOU MUST: you can only use AI minimally for brainstorming and grammar. Please keep a copy of your original document (prior to any use of AI).**

---

# REFER TO YOUR FIRST PARAGRAPH

---

## Telling

“It was a very hot day in Singapore. It was reported on Channel News Asia that the temperature over the island peaked that morning at 34 degree Celsius.”

---

## Showing

“A group of elderly women, dressed in light cotton fabrics, opened colourful umbrellas over their heads even though it was not raining. One of the women hastily slipped on a neon pink visor over her head, as if for added protection.”

---

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SHOW, NOT TELL?



Rather than jumping to present facts, provide sensory description that assists you in building the experience and atmosphere through words.



These details work as evidence to substantiate your subsequent analysis.



A good writer must strike a balance between showing and telling to be persuasive and effective. Do not get carried away with fluffy, dramatic prose!



---

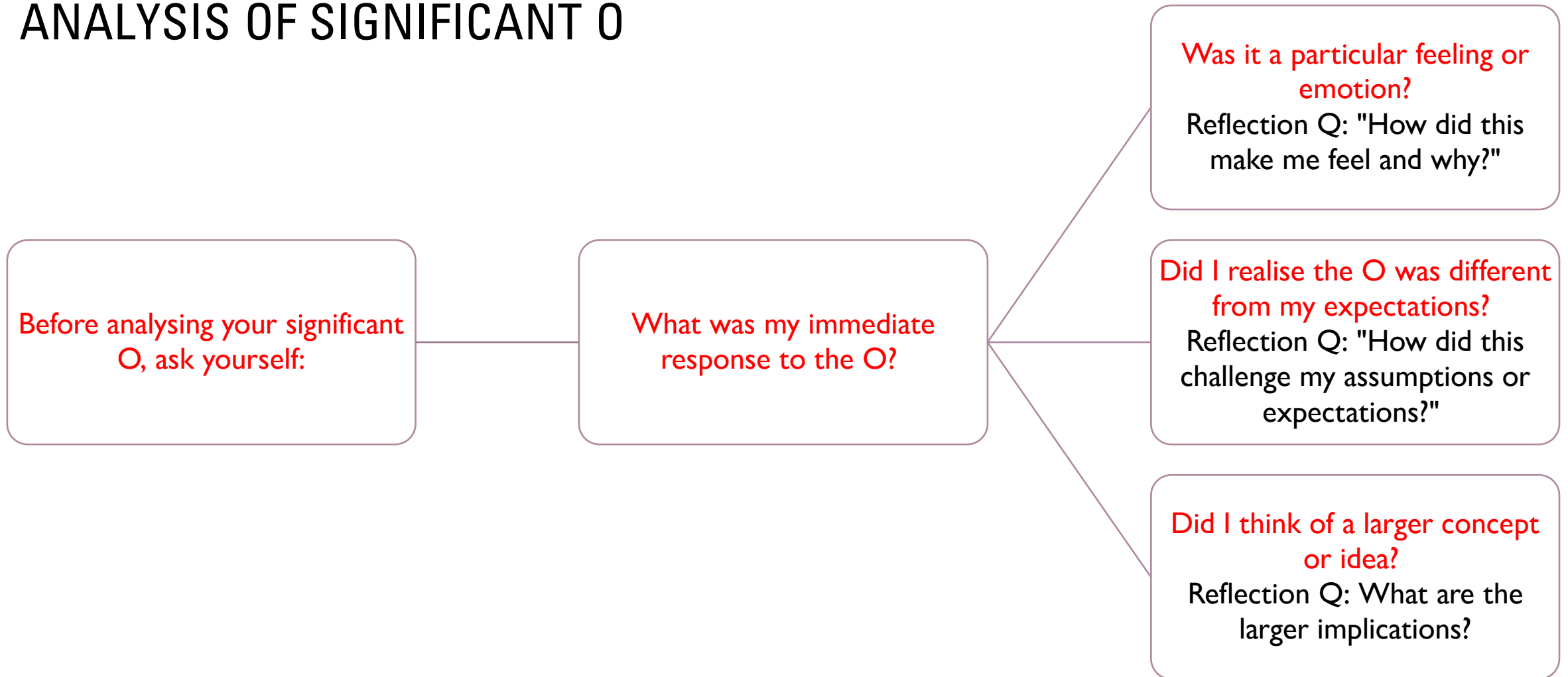
**Pick one detail from Paragraph 1 that you have described by telling. Rewrite it by:**

- **Using concrete details** (be specific when naming objects – "the packet of Indomie instant noodles" instead of "instant noodles")
  - **Using adjectives** (descriptive words - "spicy" noodles)
  - **Using adverbs** (describing the verb - "hurriedly" cooking)
  - He had instant noodles >>> He hurriedly cooked a packet of spicy Indomie noodles.
-



---

# ANALYSIS OF SIGNIFICANT O





---

# BLOG 1 WORKSHOP

## Layout

- Is there a cover page (Declaration)?
- Is there an AI usage form if they used AI for brainstorming?
- Did they use the Blog 1 template?





---

# BLOG 1 WORKSHOP

## Page 1 – Field Notes

- ✓ Do they have at least 10 details?
- ✓ Do the underlined general Os appeal to the senses?
- ✓ Share 2-3 details that stand out to you as interesting or strange.





---

# BLOG 1 WORKSHOP

## Page 2 – Paragraph 1 (General Os)

- ✓ Did they describe 4 details in continuous writing?
- ✓ Is there a balance of telling and showing? Is it sensory?
- ✓ Are the details sufficient in introducing the topic?





---

# BLOG 1 WORKSHOP

## Page 2 – Paragraph 2 (Significant O)

- ✓ Did they zoom on 1 significant detail, 2 contrasting details, or 2-3 details that form a pattern?
- ✓ Is it interesting or strange enough to warrant analysis? Could it be replaced by or paired with a stronger detail?
- ✓ Are the concepts relevant to the significant observation? Is more expansion needed in the description/analysis for this to work? Can you think of any other concepts?

**Blog 1 is due tonight by 2359**  
**Please submit via NTULearn**

ACTIVITY 3.3 & 3.4

Next week's class will be held on Zoom

**T026:** 16 Feb Friday 7pm to 9pm

**T036:** 17 Feb Saturday 10am to 12pm

**T064:** 13 Feb Tuesday 230pm to 420pm

**T074:** 13 Feb Tuesday 430pm to 620pm

ACTIVITY 3.3 & 3.4