Integrating Research: How To Provide Your Perspective

Unless you are asked to write a literature review, a thesis-driven paper takes a position on a particular topic relative to the voices of other scholars. Starting with a summary of others’ views situates your argument within a larger conversation. The three most common ways to respond to ideas include disagreeing, agreeing, or some combination of both.

How to disagree with others

Expressing your disagreement with authoritative voices may seem daunting, but doing so tactfully serves to further academic discourse. If you disagree with another writer’s stance, you must support your opposing view with compelling reasons such as the following:
1) The original text overlooks relevant factors
2) The original text is based on faulty evidence, flawed logic, or questionable assumptions

The following templates can help you structure your arguments for disagreeing with a source:

| Person X’s claim that ___________ inaccurately assumes that ___________. |
| Person X’s views are contradicted by recent research showing that __________. |
| Person X overlooks the deeper problem of __________ by focusing on __________. |

How to agree with others

Even if you agree with the sources you cite, your paper needs to go beyond simply echoing the points of others. You can contribute to the academic discourse in a variety of ways that still agree with the claims you cite:
1) Point out evidence or a line of reasoning that supports Person X’s claims that they themselves don’t mention.
2) Corroborate Person X’s perspective with a personal experience or situation that helps to explain something that needs to be better understood. (*Not all papers allow for this.)

The following templates can help you structure your arguments for agreeing with a source:

| Person X’s theory that __________ holds true because, as she may not be aware, recent studies have shown that __________. |
| Person X’s interpretation of __________ also sheds light on the problem of __________. |
| *I agree that __________ because my experience with __________ confirms it. |
How to agree and disagree simultaneously

Whenever you agree with one person’s view, you are opposing the voices of their critics. Using the following templates will allow you to agree with one view while challenging another.

If Person X is correct in their assumption that __________, then society should question the popular belief that __________.

*I agree that __________, which should be emphasized since many people still believe __________.

Alternatively, you may wish to critique a scholar while simultaneously conceding one or more elements of their argument. In doing so, your writing becomes more nuanced and complex. Using the following templates will allow you to situate your argument relative to others in terms of similarity and divergence.

Although Person X raises an important point about __________, his overriding assumption that __________ is untenable.

Whereas Person X provides ample evidence that __________, researchers Y and Z’s findings that __________ are more compelling.

*Though I concede that __________, I still insist that __________.

How to express a certain degree of doubt

Occasionally, you may find that taking a decisive stance against or in favour of another is not possible. While complete ambivalence may frustrate your reader, acknowledging the lack of a clear-cut resolution demonstrates maturity and sophisticated, complex thought. Indeed, an undecided position may be the most appropriate when evaluating a variety of voices speaking about a novel or multi-layered issue. The following templates can help you communicate ambivalence.

While Person X’s position on __________ is valid, Person Y’s argument about __________ and Person Z’s research on __________ are equally as persuasive.

*I am of two minds about Person X’s claim that __________. On the one hand, I agree that __________. On the other hand, I am unsure if __________.

*Check with your professor if using the first person is acceptable in your paper.

Material adapted from: