

SYNTHESIS: PUTTING DIFFERENT VOICES AND VIEWPOINTS IN CONVERSATION

	Author 1:	Author 2:	Author 3: YOU
What is the topic of conversation or question they are answering?			
What would the authors agree on?			
What would they disagree about?			
What aspect of the larger question do they focus on? (i.e. what more specific question do they pose?)			
What do they say? (i.e. their main claim or a point they make)			
What do they conclude or what do they want? (i.e. what is their purpose for writing?)			
Discourse Community: What group do they represent? Who are they writing to? (their audience)			

SYNTHESIS PARAGRAPH EXAMPLES

From: “The Persistent Myth of the Narcissistic Millennial” by Brooke Lea Foster for *The Atlantic*

Whether it’s *Time*’s 2013 cover story “The Me, Me, Me Generation” or Jeffrey Kluger’s book *The Narcissist Next Door: Understanding the Monster in Your Family, in Your Office, in Your Bed—in Your World*, the same statistics are cited as proof of Millennial narcissism. In a 2008 study published in the *Journal of Personality*, San Diego State University psychology professor Jean Twenge found that narcissistic behaviors among college students studied over a 27-year period had increased significantly from the 1970s. A second study published in 2008 by the National Institutes of Health showed that 9.4 percent of 20- to 29-year-olds exhibit extreme narcissism, compared with 3.2 percent of those older than 65. But there’s a problem with all of this evidence: The data is unreliable. “It’s incredibly unfair to call Millennials narcissistic, or to say they’re more so than previous generations,” says Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, a professor of psychology at Clark University and author of *Getting to 30: A Parent’s Guide to the Twentysomething Years*. Arnett has devoted a significant amount of time and research to disproving the statistics that San Diego State’s Twenge has built a career on. He says that her assertion that narcissistic behaviors among young people have risen 30 percent is flimsy, since she’s basing it around data collected from the 40-question Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), the results of which leave quite a bit up for interpretation. For example, does agreement with statements like “I am assertive” or “I wish I were more assertive” measure narcissism, self-esteem, or leadership?

From: “Working Out the Meaning of ‘Meaningful’ Work” by Katherine Moos for *Vitae*

Adam Smith believed that work forces the worker to sacrifice “his tranquility, his freedom, and his happiness.” Karl Marx criticized Smith’s view and believed that labor in the form of creative problem solving could indeed provide “self-realization.” To Marx, the problem lay not in labor itself, but in the system of wage labor that exploited workers and alienated them from the creation of the final product. A history of economic thought shows us that the progressive scorn nowadays of the do-what-you-love motto, is actually switching sides on a very old debate. Arguing that work is inherently unpleasant reinforces one of the more insidious assumptions in mainstream economics and one of the more cynical claims in our culture: that people are merely consumers trying to maximize their pleasure and minimize their pain. That sort of thinking leads managers to assume that workers are bound to shirk responsibility whenever possible, and are only motivated by money. It breeds extremely dysfunctional work environments with high surveillance and competition among co-workers. The polymath Herbert Simon has written about how workers’ sense of *identification* with the mission of an organization explains why employees actually perform the duties necessary to promote the institution’s goals, and not just pursue their self-interest as economic theory would expect.