Barclay's Formula for Working with Multiple Sources in one Paragraph (or Paragraph Sequence)

Paragraphs are built around claims, questions, or ideas that need to be supported, complicated, and developed with textual evidence and your explanation. Often, different writers have perspectives that can be fruitfully compared or synthesized to develop your claims.

"Here's a pattern you can use to incorporate quotation in to your paragraphs in ways that show your critical thinking through connection. Begin your paragraph with a sentence that contains the main idea you want to make or the connection you want to show between two essays. Introduce the first quotation, provide it, and then perhaps add a sentence that explains that quotation. After a brief transition, move to the second quotation. Then add several sentences that explain the connection you see between the quotations. These sentences should also explain how the relationship between the quotations supports your argument. These sentences record your critical thinking, allowing you to use the connection you've made between these two authors to support your project for the paper." Barclay Barrios, *Emerging*.

Here's a sample:

Both Nicholas Carr and Sam Anderson argue that the way we use the Internet is altering the way we think. In "Is Google Making Us Stupid," Carr worries that our link-hopping, shallow reading habits are fostering inattention and undermining literacy. He argues that the information-seeking state-of-mind we use to search the Internet trains us to neglect a slower, deeper contemplative state of mind necessary to solve complex problems. According to Carr, the slow reading that produces this contemplative mind is valuable for the "intellectual vibrations those words set off within our own minds. In the quiet spaces opened up by the sustained, undistracted reading or a book…, we make our own associations, draw our own inferences and analogies, foster our own ideas" (n.p.). For Carr, these vibrations are the essence of creativity and crucial for ability to solve complex problems. In contrast, when Sam Anderson looks at our link-hopping Internet behavior, he sees the very font of 21st century creativity. For Anderson, creativity is the ability to "powerfully link and synthesize things that have previous been unlinked" (n.p.). And the way to see such connections is through the paradoxical act of "focused distraction" we engage in when we surf the Internet. For me, while I share Carr's belief that slow, complex, contemplative thinking remains necessary for the survival of the species, I put faith in our social and biological ability to adapt to the changing demands of our environment. While the Internet surely is changing the way we think, I doubt that we will lose the ability to dwell thoughtfully in a complex world because we seek out new connections in it. While it might take conscious and disciplined effort to switch from a state of focused distraction to a state of systematic attention, that effort is surely worth making.

Here's a formula to help you structure a paragraph that puts two or more sources into conversation in a way that develops your claim, idea, or question.

The Formula:

$$CL + IQ^1 + Q^1 + EQ^1 + TQ^2 + Q^2 + EQ^1Q^2CL + TCL+1$$

Key to the Formula:

CL - Your claim, question or idea. Set it up with topic sentences and explanation

I - Introduce your quote with signal phrasing and other set up moves: introduce the writer and his or her project or purpose, put the quote into the larger context of the writer's argument, preview your point for the passage

Q - A quote, paraphrase or description

E - Your explanation of how the passage supports, complicates, or develops your claim, idea, or question

T - Transition

EQ^1Q^2CL - Your explanation of how the passages work together to support, complicate or develop your claim.

TCL+1 - Transition to the next claim, idea, or question