Strategies for Teaching Revising for Coherence

Birdville ISD
secondary ELAR
Professional Development 1/19/15
Nature is good at connectivity. The impact of diverse human activities is observed and absorbed throughout nature. Everything is linked. Nature has no problem with coherence. Ecosystems react with their own logic.

_Jonas Gahr Store_

Do not confuse unity and coherence. Coherence involves the clear movement of thought from sentence to sentence or paragraph to paragraph; unity means staying on the topic by staying within the focus.

_Lee Brandon and Kelly Brandon_

Paragraphs may not have a topic sentence, but they must have unity and purpose. All the ideas in a paragraph should relate to a clear point readers will easily understand.

_Mark Connelly_
Definitions

**Unity** depends on how well the student conceives the piece every step of the way and as a whole: does each detail/idea relate to, develop, and clarify the story line, main point, or argument? Does it all fit together?

**Coherence** depends on how seamlessly each sentence and idea flows into the next.

Unity = the “what”  Coherence = the “how”

- *Victoria Young*, TEA, Director of Reading, Writing, and Social Studies Assessments

**Coherence**- noun: systematic or logical connection or consistency

内部一致性 - the connections made between sentences

外部一致性 - the connections made between paragraphs

**Unity**- noun: the quality of oneness in a paragraph or essay that results when all the words and sentences contribute to a single main idea

**Topic sentences**- noun: a sentence, sometimes at the beginning of a paragraph, that states or suggests the main idea or topic of a passage.

**Transitions**- noun: the connection (a word, phrase, clause, sentence, or entire paragraph) between two parts of a piece of writing, contributing to coherence
Types of Transitions to Create Coherence

“Students write coherently when they
• repeat a word or use a synonym,
• sustain thought,
• insert a clause that harkens back to the previous sentence,
• manipulate parallel structure,
• chain pronouns,
• establish chronology, or
• write a coordinating or subordinating conjunction to indicate the relationship between one sentence and the next.”


The versatility and diversity of transitions should be explicitly taught to students through their writing. Identifying and exploring the coherence patterns of mentor writers also makes this concept easier to comprehend for student writers. Transitions can be discussed in craft and organization mini-lessons.
## Transitions

### 1. Addition Transitions
- and
- also
- besides
- first, second, third
- in addition
- in the first place
- in the second place
- furthermore
- moreover
- to begin with, next,
- finally

### 2. Cause-Effect Transitions
- accordingly
- and so
- as a result
- consequently
- for this reason
- hence
- so
- then
- therefore
- thus

### 3. Comparison Transitions
- by the same token
- in like manner
- in the same way
- in similar fashion
- likewise
- similarly

### 4. Contrast Transitions
- but
- however
- in contrast
- instead
- nevertheless
- on the contrary
- on the other hand
- still
- yet

### 5. Conclusion and Summary Transitions
- and so
- after all
- at last
- finally
- in brief
- in closing
- in conclusion
- on the whole
- to conclude
- to summarize

### 6. Example Transitions
- as an example
- for example
- for instance
- specifically
- thus
- to illustrate

### 7. Insistence Transitions
- in fact
- indeed
- no
- yes

### 8. Place Transitions
- above
- alongside
- beneath
- beyond
- farther along
- in back
- in front
- nearby
- on top of
- to the left
- to the right
- under
- upon

### 9. Restatement Transitions
- in other words
- in short
- in simpler terms
- that is
- to put it differently
- to repeat

### 10. Time Transitions
- afterward
- at the same time
- currently
- earlier
- formerly
- immediately
- in the future
- in the meantime
- in the past
- later
- meanwhile
- previously
- simultaneously
- subsequently
- then
- until now
**Vertical TEKS Alignment 6-12**

Coherence skills spiral up from 6th to 12th, and they are assessed on STAAR Writing and English EOC tests in the multiple choice revising sections and in the written compositions.

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<th>Grade</th>
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<td>6.14C revise drafts to clarify meaning and improve transitions by adding/deleting/combining/rearranging sentences or larger units of text</td>
<td>7.14C revise drafts to ensure internal and external coherence and the use of transitions</td>
<td>8.14C revise drafts to ensure internal and external coherence and the use of effective transitions</td>
<td>13B structure ideas in a sustained and persuasive way and develop drafts that include transitions</td>
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Coherence-Related Question Stems
from STAAR and EOC released tests

____ would like to add the following sentence to the ____ paragraph. ... Where is the BEST place to insert this sentence?

____ would like to tell more about the idea he expressed in sentence ____. Which sentence could BEST follow and support sentence ____?

____ would like to improve the transition from the ____ paragraph to the ____ paragraph. How can ____ revise sentence ____ to provide a more effective transition?

____ realized that he left the following detail out of the ____ paragraph. ... Where is the most effective place to insert this sentence.

The transition from the ____ paragraph to the ____ paragraph is weak. Read both paragraphs again. Which sentence could best replace sentence ____ and improve the transition between these two transitions?

____ wants to add a closing sentence to reinforce the controlling idea of his paper. Which of the following ideas could best follow sentence ____ and help accomplish this goal?

The transition from sentence ____ to sentence ____ is not clear. How can ____ revise sentence ____ to create a more effective transition?

____ wants to add an additional detail to help develop his introduction. Read the first paragraph again. What is the best idea ____ could add after sentence ____?

One of the details that ____ has included in the ____ paragraph is interesting but does not support the main idea of the paragraph. Which sentence should ____ delete from this paragraph?

____ is not pleased with the way he ended his paper. He would like to delete sentences ____ and ____ and replace them with sentences that would bring the paper to a better close. Which of the following could BEST close this paper?

____ would like to add the following detail to the ____ paragraph. .... Where is the BEST place to insert this sentence?

____ is concerned that there is a sentence in the third paragraph that does not add anything to this paper. Which sentence should ____ delete from this paragraph? What transition can BEST be added to the beginning of sentence ____?

____ needs more support for the idea she is presenting in the ____ paragraph. Which two sentences could BEST follow sentence ____ and help develop the main idea of this paragraph?
Coherence Testing Strategy

Many students, the most confident readers, do not need any strategies for these types of questions. But, our less confident readers benefit from a simple strategy to help them “see” the connections that are creating the coherence between ideas, sentences, and paragraphs. Discussing coherence in the context of class reading is a great place to start, and this simple testing strategy can also help our lower readers identify the connections that will then help them understand the structure and organization of the existing coherence.

Only for Revising Passages, Not for Editing Passages

Make sure your students carefully read the bold directions before the passage, so they understand whether they will be revising or proofreading.

- Instruct students to highlight the words that are showing internal coherence (repeated key words, echo words/ pronouns, and transitions).
- Then, have students circle the words or phrases that are showing the external coherence.
- As they work through the revision questions, they can refer back to the highlighted and circled words to see how the ideas relate to each other.