

## LUC WRITING CENTER – “FLOW”

### Some principles for making your writing smooth and logical:

Writers at every level exert a great deal of effort to give their writing the elusive quality many people call “*flow*.” For young writers especially, the task of producing “flow” seems impossible. The more they revise, the more they feel it slipping away. We all know what it is like to read a piece of work that moves us seamlessly between its sentences and the steps of its logic. *But how do writers do that?*

#### Principle #1: Elaboration

Although you may not think much about it, *elaboration* is the most natural way you achieve flow when you write and speak. When we listen or read we expect each sentence to offer more information, explanation, and examples to make a topic or claim clear to us. For this reason, elaboration does not always require specific signal words and phrases.

Just look at the first paragraph on this page, for example. In the third sentence, I wrote, “*The more they revise, the more they feel it slipping away.*” There I am providing a clarifying explanation that shows you what it’s like to try to achieve flow.

You’re still learning exactly what it is I’m talking about. I don’t need to say, “*The more they revise, for example, the more they feel it slipping away.*” Nor did I need to say, “*For instance...*” There transitional phrases just interrupt the flow because they are already implied.

Forgoing transitional phrases will keep your writing free of clutter. Still, there are some cases in which you will want to use a **transition** to show elaboration.

#### Here are some examples:

*To show agreement or to make agreement emphatic:*

Indeed

In fact

And

In addition to

Furthermore

Moreover

Too

Also

Likewise

Clearly signal examples or specific instances of a general principle:

For example

For instance

Namely

Such as

To show that you’re summing or generalizing:

in other words

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to put it simply

that is to say

Finally, you may want to indicate you're making a logical conclusion:

In sum

In conclusion

Thus

For this reason

Therefore

Then

Readers understand claims by moving back and forth between the general and the specific. These **transitional words and phrases** can help you do that. Remember, though, that you can always revise them if you decide the transition you're looking for is already implied.

### **Principle #2: Contrast**

Unlike elaboration, contrasts or qualifications are usually not implied. For this reason, when you make a contrast or qualification, you will nearly always want to indicate that you are doing so with some sort of a transitions word or phrase. They do important work, but by their nature they disrupt the flow of a paragraph or sentence.

**Therefore, remember to use them sparingly.**

#### **For example:**

But

Yet

On the contrary

Nevertheless

In spite of

In contrast

On the other hand

Rather