THE WRITING PROCESS: COHERENT PARAGRAPHS

(1) TIPS on making your writing coherent
- Make sure you have a TOPIC SENTENCE in your paragraph followed by details, facts, and examples that support it (directly or indirectly).
- LINK your ideas clearly by showing how they fit together.
- REPEAT key words or ideas by using variations (run, sprint, race; the writer, the author, Dubus, he).
- Maintain CONSISTENCY in verb tense and point of view.
- Use TRANSITIONS in your writing to guide the reader.

(2) The function and importance of transitions:
In both academic writing and professional writing, your goal is to convey information ___________ and ___________. Transitions help you to achieve these goals by establishing logical ___________ between sentences, paragraphs, and sections of your papers. Whether single words, quick phrases or full sentences, they function as ___________ that tell your readers how to think about and react to what you have written. Think of them as bridges between what has been read and what is ahead.

Transitions are not just "window dressing" that embellish your paper by making it flow better. They ___________ signal relationships between ideas, and they alert the reader that another key point is coming up. ___________, a transitional phrase could indicate an exception to the previous statement, link one point to another, or even further define an idea. In short, transitions provide the reader with directions on how to piece together your ideas into a logically coherent argument.

(3) Signs that you might need to work on your transitions
- Your instructor has written comments like "choppy," "jumpy," "abrupt," "flow," "need signposts," or "how is this related?" on your papers.
- Your readers (instructors, friends/classmates) tell you that they had trouble following your organization or train of thought.
- You tend to write the way you think—and your brain often jumps from one idea to another.
- You wrote your paper in several short "chunks" and then pasted them together.
Though the open-space classroom worked for many children, it was not practical for David, age 9. First, David was diagnosed as hyperactive. When he was placed in an open-space classroom, he became distracted and confused. He was tempted to watch the movement going on around him instead of concentrating on his own work. Second, David had a tendency to transpose letters and numbers, an issue that can be overcome only by individual attention from the instructor. No single teacher worked with this student long enough to identify the problem. Finally, David was not a highly motivated learner and his grades began to suffer. In the open classroom setting, he was graded “at his own level.” He received a B in reading yet he was still a grade level behind his classmates.