Paragraph Construction – Levels of Specificity

Paragraphs should be constructed so that each sentence or thought leads logically to the next. Writers accomplish this by building levels of specificity into their sentences.

Example –

Some writers compose essays that reveal a lack of basic reading comprehension: the writer inaccurately summarizes what happened or what was said. Such a writer may have read too quickly, with poor concentration, or without looking up unfamiliar vocabulary. Other writers may be able to summarize accurately but cannot get beyond that activity to interpret what they have read (all reading can, in a general sense, be said to be interpretive, but the term is used here to distinguish commenting on the significance of a passage from reconstructing it). These readers do not recognize connections (be they causal, comparative, chronological, classificatory, or illustrative) among these ideas within or between paragraphs, nor do they see the significance of a passage or a statement in the context of an entire work or college course. A typical example is the student who, when asked to analyze a piece of literature, simply retells the plot. This sort of writer may not know what interpretive questions to ask of the text as she reads. She may not know what literary elements or topics she ought to consider. For example, a naïve reader is not apt to ask what an author gains or loses by choosing a particular narrative stance.

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