

Lesson 1.8 – Transition Sentences (Groups 1/2) and Writing the Conclusion (Groups 3/4)

“But writing is a skill that involves a highly self-conscious use of our linguistic and intellectual resources. It demands from the writer a sustained accountability for his thoughts: ...he must, in short, keep track of where he has been and look toward where he is going or risk losing both his line of thought and his reader” (250).

Mina Shaughnessy, Errors & Expectations

Rationale: Coinciding with their essay writing, the group presentations on transition sentences and writing the conclusion are further opportunities for students to become skilled at the subject by teaching the subject. Transition sentences and conclusions are challenging to many FYC students; rather than the instructor telling the students how to learn these concepts, the students must come up with ways to teach the subject to the rest of the class. The students will have time over the semester to develop the habits of writing that they will need for the rest of their academic career.

Goal: Students will create engaging and informative presentations on the transition sentence or the conclusion of an essay.

Objectives: Students will be able to

1. Define and discuss transition sentences and conclusions, and develop group presentations on one or the other.
2. Present to the class on transition sentences or conclusions, with each group member sharing in the presentation.
3. Share their thoughts and questions with the presenting group.

Assessment:

1. During the day 1 brainstorming/planning session, the instructor will observe each group to check their progress, answer questions, and make sure everyone is on-task. The instructor will make sure that the discussion is centered on the essay component and presentation, and that each group has an adequate understanding of the subject.
2. The presenting group will be graded by rubric, which stipulates that each group member will receive individual points for participation.
3. At the end of each lesson, all students will participate in chalk-talk by sharing on the board their thoughts on the presentation and essay component discussed.

Preparation: Print out initial lesson handouts for the groups; print out rubrics for each student; bring whiteboard markers for chalk-talk.

Process/Procedures:

Class Session 1

1. Assign two base groups to the transition sentence, and two groups to the conclusion. Provide handouts for each group, and allow a few minutes for the groups to look over the instructions. (5 min)
2. Provide in-class time for groups to conference together and brainstorm ideas for their presentations. (45 min)

Class Session 2

3. Groups 1 and 2 will present the lesson on the transition sentence. (30-35 min total, 15-17 min per group)
4. Chalk-talk and round-robin commentary. (Each student walks up to the board and writes a comment, something they learned during the lesson. When every student has had a chance to write their comment, we go around the room and each person shares what they wrote.) (15-20 min)

Class Session 3

5. Groups 3 and 4 will present the lesson on the conclusion. (30-35 min total, 15-17 min per group)
6. Chalk-talk and round-robin commentary. (15-20 min)

Materials: 2 handouts for the groups, one for transition sentence instruction and one for conclusion; 5-10 whiteboard markers; rubrics.

Modifications/accommodations: If time runs out, allow presentations to carry over to the next class session. May take an extra day or two for this entire lesson.