Reading to Connect

讀中生智：英文批判閱讀

Bridging the Gap: from Reading to Writing
Coherence, Cohesion and Unity

Academic Writing Education Center,
National Taiwan University

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Learning Goals / Outcomes

Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand the meaning and importance of coherence and cohesion.
- Recognize the differences between coherence and cohesion.
- Identify problems of coherence and cohesion in written texts.

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Learning Goals / Outcomes

Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Recognize different types of cohesive devices.
- Learn strategies to establish coherence and cohesion in academic writing.

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Maintaining the Flow of Writing

- Coherence
- Cohesion
- Unity

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Coherence in Writing

1. It is the connection and organization of ideas in a text to create unity.

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3. It maintains the flow of the ideas in a logical order.

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Coherence in Writing

1. It is the connection and organization of ideas in a text to create unity.
2. It focuses on the overall (macro) structure of the essay.
3. It maintains the flow of the ideas in a logical order.
4. A lack of coherence in an essay can hinder a reader's ability to understand the ideas and main points of the essay.

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Question:

What factors contribute to coherence in a piece of writing?

Features of Coherence

Coherence can be achieved in the following methods:

- Logical Order/Organization
- Parallel Structure

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Logical Order / Organization

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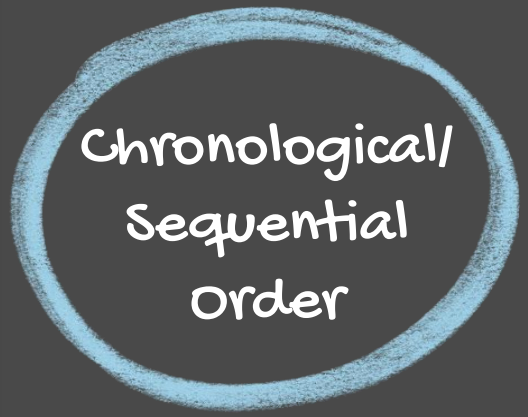

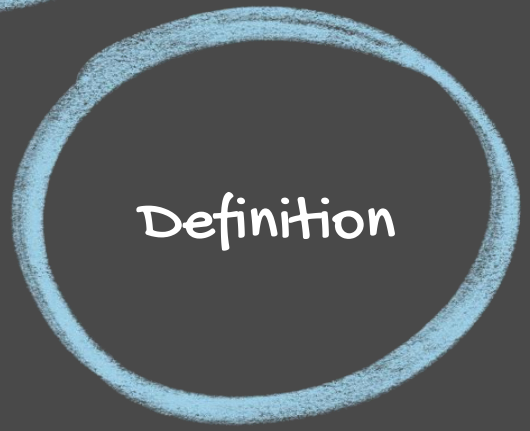

Model Paragraph 1: Sequential Order

An excerpt from

“The Effect of a Social Stories Intervention on the Social Skills of Male Students With Autism Spectrum Disorder”

SAGE Open / Fatemeh Golzari, Ghorban Hemati Alamdarloo, Shahram Moradi, 2015, CC BY 3.0

The Effect of a Social Stories Intervention on the Social Skills of Male Students With Autism Spectrum Disorder

When conducting the intervention, the purpose, method, and length of the intervention were explained to the participants' teachers and parents, and they consented to cooperate. The stages of the intervention were as follows:

The social skills questionnaire by Stone and colleagues (2000) was completed by the parents of the children with ASD as a pre-test assessment. Then, the child's behavior, understanding of language, and reading level were individually assessed in the classroom and the playroom by teachers and researchers. In addition, other problems such as screaming, crying, yelling, as reported by the parents and teacher, were assessed. Based on the results, necessary information was gathered about the frequency of a given behavior, the place where the behavior occurred, and how it occurred. Finally, the social stories were written.

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Model Paragraph 2: Compare/Contrast

An excerpt from

“The Wind and the Sun as Sources of Green Energy”

Composition and Literature /James Sexton, Derek Soles, CC BY 4.0, 2019

The wind and the sun provide renewable energy, at least as long as the wind blows and the sun shines. They are also free, though harvesting their energy is not. Their energy is stored in a similar manner. The sun's heat can be absorbed by specially designed panels, which convert the sun's heat and light into electrical energy, which is stored within a battery. High-tech windmills power a turbine, which converts wind into electrical energy and stores it within a battery. The two sources differ, however, in more ways than they are similar.

Wind energy is more cost-effective than solar energy is. The panels that gather the sun's energy are more expensive to install—so expensive, in fact, that it may take many years before consumers start to save the money they would have spent on oil or natural gas (Anderson). Wind is a more reliable source of energy because it can blow all day and all night. The sun cannot shine all day and all night, and even during the day, it can be blocked by clouds. Solar panels require less maintenance than wind turbines, but not so much less to make them more cost-effective.

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Composition and Literature /James Sexton, Derek Soles, CC BY 4.0, 2019

Model Paragraph 3: Cause/Effect

An excerpt from

"The Impact of Writing Anxiety, Writing Achievement Motivation, and Writing Self-Efficacy on Writing Performance: A Correlational Study of Iraqi Tertiary EFL Learners"

SAGE Open / Ahmed Abdulateef Sabti, Sabariah Md Rashid, Vahid Nimehchisalem, Ramiza Darmi, 2019, CC BY 3.0

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Anxiety is viewed to be a major factor affecting academic performance by a considerable number of researchers (Horwitz et al., 1986; Jebreil et al., 2015; Zrekat et al., 2016). In particular, anxiety has been found to have an adverse effect on the writing outcome of L1 learners (Csizér & Piniel, 2013; Daly & Miller, 1975; Leki, 1990). Sabti et al. (2016), for instance, introduced “anxiety as the major factor in the decline of students’ academic achievement in the EFL/ESL contexts” (p. 208). In addition, anxiety is related to other elements, such as self-efficacy, motivation, as well as attitudes toward writing. Kırmızı and Kırmızı (2015), for instance, stress that “anxiety gives rise to de-motivation and discouragement on the part of the students and as a result they may develop negative self-efficacy and attitudes towards writing” (p. 57). It can be said that anxiety is deemed as detrimental to students’ writing performance, specifically in EFL contexts such as the Arab EFL context.

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Model Paragraph 4: Topical Order

An excerpt from

“Multiple Intelligences” by Fred Mednick

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Howard Gardner created a list of seven intelligences. The first two are ones that have been typically valued in schools; the next three are usually associated with the arts; and the final two are what Howard Gardner called “personal intelligences.”

Linguistic intelligence involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals. This intelligence includes the ability to effectively use language to express oneself rhetorically or poetically, and language as a means to remembering information. Writers, poets, lawyers, and speakers are among those that Howard Gardner sees as having high linguistic intelligence.

Logical-mathematical intelligence consists of the capacity to analyze problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically. In Howard Gardner’s words, it entails the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively, and think logically. This intelligence is most often associated with scientific and mathematical thinking.

Musical intelligence involves skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns. It encompasses the capacity to recognize and compose musical pitches, tones, and rhythms. According to Howard Gardner musical intelligence runs in an almost structural parallel to linguistic intelligence.

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Model Paragraph 5: Definition

An excerpt from

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[T]he term anxiety is defined as a learner's experience of feelings of uneasiness, worries, and physiological responses while performing a task for a specific language skill such as speaking, reading, or writing (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). In terms of anxiety in writing, Erkan and Saban (2011) have defined it as "the tendency of a person to avoid the process of writing-particularly when it is to be evaluated in some way" (p. 181). However, writing anxiety is defined in this study as a situational aspect, which refers to the feelings of worries accompanied by reactions as in excessive sweating, pounding of the heart, and negative expectations as well as maladaptive behaviors of a learner's experience while performing a particular writing task at a given time and place. The maladaptive behaviors are described as a lack of confidence whereby individual interpret the errors they make as an indication of inability and feeling of anxiety that could lead them to withdraw effort and avoid challenge, which eventually undermine the quality of the learning process.

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Parallelism / Parallel Structure

1. It is the use of matching words, phrases, clauses, or sentence structures to express similar ideas.

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1. It is the use of matching words, phrases, clauses, or sentence structures to express similar ideas.
2. It creates a sense of rhythm and balance within the sentence.

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Parallelism / Parallel Structure

1. It is the use of matching words, phrases, clauses, or sentence structures to express similar ideas.
2. It creates a sense of rhythm and balance within the sentence.
3. It allows the reader to flow smoothly from one idea, sentence, or paragraph to the next and to understand the relationships and connections between ideas.

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Example 1

The term anxiety is defined as a learner's experience of feelings of uneasiness, worries, and physiological responses while performing a task for a specific language skill such as speaking, reading, or writing (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993).

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Example 2

Linguistic intelligence involves **sensitivity** to spoken and written language, **the ability to** learn languages, and **the capacity to** use language to accomplish certain goals. This intelligence includes the ability to effectively use language to express oneself rhetorically or poetically, and language as a means to remembering information. Writers, poets, lawyers, and speakers are among those that Howard Gardner sees as having high linguistic intelligence.

Logical-mathematical intelligence consists of the capacity to analyze problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically. In Howard Gardner's words, it entails the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively, and think logically. This intelligence is most often associated with scientific and mathematical thinking.

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Exercise 1

Identify the parallel structures in paragraphs 2&3 of example text 2.

Example 2

1. Logical-mathematical intelligence consists of the capacity to analyze problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically. In Howard Gardner's words, it entails the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively, and think logically. This intelligence is most often associated with scientific and mathematical thinking.
2. Musical intelligence involves skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns. It encompasses the capacity to recognize and compose musical pitches, tones, and rhythms. According to Howard Gardner musical intelligence runs in an almost structural parallel to linguistic intelligence.

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Example 2

1. Logical-mathematical intelligence consists of the capacity to analyze problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically. In Howard Gardner's words, it entails the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively, and think logically. This intelligence is most often associated with scientific and mathematical thinking.
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Cohesion

1. It creates links between words and sentences. It also helps to create unity.

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Cohesion

1. It creates links between words and sentences. It also helps to create unity.
2. It uses vocabulary and grammatical structures to make connections between the ideas within a paragraph.

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Cohesion

1. It creates links between words and sentences. It also helps to create unity.
2. It uses vocabulary and grammatical structures to make connections between the ideas within a paragraph.
3. It helps achieve coherence.

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Question:

What strategies can be used to make a text more cohesive?

Cohesive Devices

Transitional/Linking Words

- Coordinating/Subordinating Conjunctions
- Reference Words
- Repetitions/Substitutions/Synonyms

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Coordinating Conjunctions

- Coordinating conjunctions:
  and, but, so, or, nor, for, and yet
- Correlative (paired) conjunctions:
  both... and, not only… but also, neither… nor, either… or, and whether… or

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Coordinating Conjunctions

Examples:

(a) In warm climate zones, water evaporates rapidly, **so** the concentration of salt is greater.

✓ When they connect 2 independent clauses, use a comma.

(b) Children not only need love, **but** they also need discipline.

✓ When they connect 2 words or phrases, do not use a comma.

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Subordinating Conjunctions

Dependent Clause

Although good time management skills are a key indication of higher academic performance, many students find it hard to regulate both their studies and their external lives.

Independent Clause

Independent Clause

Many students find it hard to regulate both their studies and their external lives **although** good time management skills are a key indication of higher academic performance

Dependent Clause

✓ Put a comma after a dependent clause but not in front of one.

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Transitional Expressions

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Purposes	Transitional Expressions
To add or show sequence	also, and, and then, besides, equally important, finally, first, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, last, moreover, next, second
To compare	in the same way, likewise, similarly, in similar fashion, in like manner, by the same token
To contrast	although, and yet, but, despite, even though, however, in contrast, in spite of, nevertheless, notwithstanding, on the contrary, on the other hand, regardless
To give examples or intensify	an illustration of, for example, for instance, to illustrate, that is, after all, in fact, it is true, specifically

Transitional Expressions

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Purposes	Transitional Expressions
To indicate time	after a while, afterward, as long as, as soon as, at last, at length, at that time, before, earlier, formerly, immediately, in the meantime, in the past, lately, meanwhile, presently, shortly, simultaneously, since, so far, soon, subsequently, then, thereafter, until
To repeat, summarize, or conclude	all in all, in brief, in conclusion, in other words, in particular, in short, in simpler terms, in summary, on the whole, to state it differently, to summarize
To show cause and effect	accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, for this purpose, hence, therefore, thus, to this end, with this object in mind

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Exercise 2:

Choose an appropriate linking word in each sentence to establish a good flow of information.

Self-efficacy, which is also examined in this study, is described as a person's beliefs about his capabilities that play a crucial role in motivating human behavior (Bandura, 1997). _____ (**On the other hand/In other words/As a result**), self-efficacy indicates a vaster predictive power over the way an individual behaves. A strong sense of writing self-efficacy denotes a strong sense of confidence for a task of writing. An individual with high self-efficacy in writing may have more interest and make more effort to perform a writing task (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2016; Schunk & Usher, 2012). High self-efficacy can drive an individual to demonstrate vaster perseverance and resilience when facing difficulty during performing a writing task. A study conducted by Pajares and Johnson (1994) reported that self-efficacy is often found to be a stronger predictor among all the motivational constructs. _____ (**However/In addition/Thus**), self-efficacy can play a principal role in predicting writing performance.

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Another study, which was undertaken by Parilah et al. (2011) on 120 Malaysian ESL learners, revealed that learners showed a moderate level of self-efficacy, which paralleled their moderate level of writing performance. It can be said that individuals with low self-efficacy either make a small amount of effort to approach a given task or try to avoid it. _____ (**On the contrary/In addition/Accordingly**), those with high self-efficacy tend to apply rigorous effort, search for new solutions, and persevere when facing difficulties (İnceçay & Genç, 2014). _____ (**However/In short/Therefore**), self-efficacy denotes a strong and positive predictor of individuals' success in performing a task such as a particular writing task.

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Notes on Transitional/Linking Words

1. Overusing transitional/linking words will reduce the clarity and flow.
2. You can use / linking words …
   - To meet the demands of grammar rules
   - To stress (making connections)
   - To signal changes (changes of ideas, positions/ views, or sections/ parts)
   - To better organize your paragraph

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Reference Words

They are usually summary words or nouns that refer to things or ideas mentioned previously within the text in order to avoid repetition and maintain clarity.

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Reference Words

There are four types of reference items:

1. **pronouns**: it, they, this, these, those, that
2. **demonstrative pronouns**: this/that, these/those, the + (nouns)
3. **relative pronouns**: who, whose, which
4. **comparative references**: another, such, other + (nouns)

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Example 1:

The social skills questionnaire by Stone and colleagues (2000) was completed by the parents of the children with ASD as a pre-test assessment. Then, the child's behavior, understanding of language, and reading level were individually assessed in the classroom and the playroom by teachers and researchers. In addition, **other problems** such as screaming, crying, yelling, as reported by the parents and teacher, were assessed. Based on **the results**, necessary information was gathered about the frequency of a given behavior, the place where **the behavior** occurred, and how **it** occurred. Finally, the social stories were written.

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Exercise 3:

Identify the cohesive devices in example text 2.

Example 2:

In this article, we provided a systematic approach that isolates the time management behaviors of undergraduate engineering students that impact their academic performance.

This approach also allowed us to determine the extent to which these behaviors impact such performance, thereby providing us more focused guidance as to what possible interventions may be effective in helping students achieve better academic performance together with a greater sense of well-being in the program. This study adds confirmatory evidence to the existing research literature that how students perceive their control of time correlates positively with academic performance, and finds that this transcends gender, age, entry qualifications, and even the number of semesters already in the degree program.

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Example 2:

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Repetitions/Substitutions/Synonyms

- Repetitions/substitutions/synonyms can be used to link ideas, sentences, and paragraphs, and establish cohesion.
- Repeating key words or phrases helps connect and focus idea(s) throughout the essay.
- Synonyms or substitutions provide alternative word choices that can create variety and eliminate unnecessary repetitions.

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Example 1: Repetition

Anxiety is viewed to be a major factor affecting academic performance by a considerable number of researchers (Horwitz et al., 1986; Jebreil et al., 2015; Zrekat et al., 2016). In particular, **anxiety** has been found to have an adverse effect on the writing outcome of L1 learners (Csizér & Piniel, 2013; Daly & Miller, 1975; Leki, 1990). Sabti et al. (2016), for instance, introduced "anxiety as the major factor in the decline of students' academic achievement in the EFL/ESL contexts" (p. 208). In addition, **anxiety** is related to other elements, such as self-efficacy, motivation, as well as attitudes toward writing. Kırmızı and Kırmızı (2015), for instance, stress that "anxiety gives rise to de-motivation and discouragement on the part of the students and as a result they may develop negative self-efficacy and attitudes towards writing" (p. 57). It can be said that **anxiety** is deemed as detrimental to students' writing performance, specifically in EFL contexts such as the Arab EFL context.

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Example 2: Synonyms

Self-efficacy, which is also examined in this study, is described as a person's beliefs about his capabilities that play a crucial role in motivating human behavior (Bandura, 1997). In other words, self-efficacy indicates a vaster predictive power over the way an individual behaves. A strong sense of writing self-efficacy denotes a strong sense of confidence for a task of writing. An individual with high self-efficacy in writing may have more interest and make more effort to perform a writing task (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2016; Schunk & Usher, 2012). High self-efficacy can drive an individual to demonstrate vaster perseverance and resilience when facing difficulty during performing a writing task. A study conducted by Pajares and Johnson (1994) reported that self-efficacy is often found to be a stronger predictor among all the motivational constructs. Thus, self-efficacy can play a principal role in predicting writing performance.

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Self-efficacy, which is also examined in this study, is described as a person's beliefs about his capabilities that play a crucial role in motivating human behavior (Bandura, 1997). In other words, **self-efficacy** indicates a vaster predictive power over the way an individual behaves. **A strong sense of writing self-efficacy** denotes a strong sense of confidence for a task of writing. An individual with high **self-efficacy in writing** may have more interest and make more effort to perform a writing task (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2016; Schunk & Usher, 2012). **High self-efficacy** can drive an individual to demonstrate vaster **perseverance** and **resilience** when facing difficulty during **performing a writing task**. A study conducted by Pajares and Johnson (1994) reported that **self-efficacy** is often found to be a stronger predictor among all the motivational constructs. Thus, **self-efficacy** can play a principal role in predicting writing performance.

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Paragraph Unity

- Unity in a paragraph should present ONE single idea, supports it with adequate details and completes it with a conclusion.
- The supporting details should explain the main idea, and the concluding sentence should end the paragraph with the same idea.
- A unified paragraph must follow the main idea in the topic sentence and be supported with examples or additional evidence.

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Paragraph Structure

- Opening
- Topic sentence
  I. Controlling Idea/Supporting Idea
     A. Supporting detail
     B. Supporting detail
  II. Controlling Idea/Supporting Idea
     A. Supporting detail
     B. Supporting detail
- Conclusion

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Essay Structure

1. Introduction
   - Thesis Statement
2. Body Paragraph 1
   - Main Point A
     A. Supporting detail
     B. Supporting detail
3. Body Paragraph 2
   A. Supporting detail
   B. Supporting detail
4. Conclusion

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Exercise 4

Which of the following sentences do not belong (or do not support the main idea) in the paragraph?

An excerpt from “Learning, Leading, and Letting Go of Control: Learner-Led Approaches in Education”

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The role of education is among other things to prepare students for an unknown future. This means that learning goals for education must also aim to make students capable of searching for knowledge, of selecting, analyzing, and evaluating findings against criteria and standards; of questioning their findings; and of becoming knowledge producers. This requires independent and critical reflection. As (global) citizens, they may find themselves in unknown contexts having to act according to changing conditions, which may be professionally and emotionally challenging. However, in the world of social media and other virtual communication and information platforms, a majority of young people in technologically developed countries have the ability to gather and produce the information needed to have what we could call “a virtual life.” Consequently, education must cater for the “whole” person and ensure that students develop knowledge, skills, and competences in the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional domains to become strong individuals.

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The role of education is among other things to prepare students for an unknown future. This means that learning goals for education must also aim to make students capable of searching for knowledge, of selecting, analyzing, and evaluating findings against criteria and standards; of questioning their findings; and of becoming knowledge producers. This requires independent and critical reflection. As (global) citizens, they may find themselves in unknown contexts having to act according to changing conditions, which may be professionally and emotionally challenging. **However, in the world of social media and other virtual communication and information platforms, a majority of young people in technologically developed countries have the ability to gather and produce the information needed to have what we could call "a virtual life."** Consequently, education must cater for the "whole" person and ensure that students develop knowledge, skills, and competences in the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional domains to become strong individuals.

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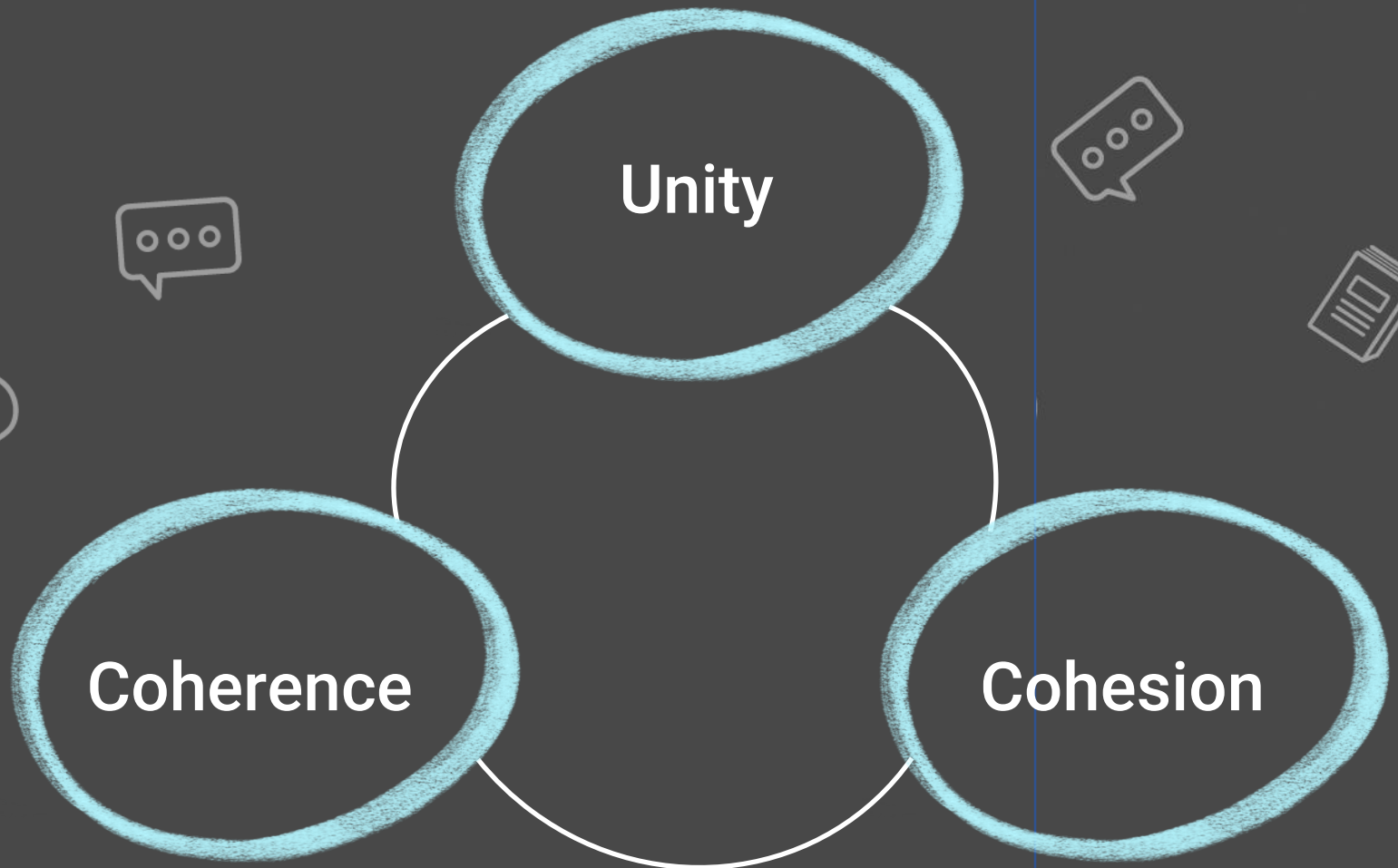
Review



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Key Takeaway

- To maintain a good flow of writing, a paragraph should establish coherence, cohesion and unity.
- Coherence is presentation of ideas in a logical order, which allows readers to follow the readings smoothly.
- Cohesion is bridging the connection between words and sentences, which creates a good flow of information.
- A unified paragraph should discuss one single idea, supported with examples and details.

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