

Make the Connections



Remember all of this from Assignment I?

Make the Connections



Here, for example, are **ARE EFFECTIVELY** connected sentences in a paragraph:

In our first “big seminar,” Professor Mena explained that the freshmen engineering curriculum is very demanding. She let us know that we would have homework every single day. Professor Mena emphasized, that by keeping up with that homework, we would be preparing ourselves to do well on quizzes and exams. Passing quizzes and exams, Professor Mena reminded us, is an important part of mastering what we need to know to become engineers. In other words, if I don’t start, right away, to keep up with the homework, I probably can’t pass the first semester quizzes and exams. If I can’t pass the quizzes and exams, I am not on my way to being an engineer, and, as I explained earlier, I have wanted to be an engineer since the first time I accompanied my mom to her job as a chemical engineer at PPG Industries.



Note how brief, specific “returns” to previous information provide the connections to current information:

Professor Mena explained → Professor Mena emphasized → Professor Mena reminded
homework every single day → keeping up with that homework → start right away keeping up with that homework
do well on quizzes and exams → Passing quizzes and exams → pass the first semester quizzes and exams
mastering what we need to know in order to become engineers → on my way to becoming an engineer → have wanted
to be an engineer

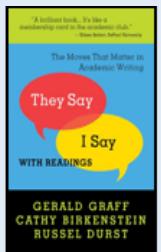
The attention, shown above, to *building in specific connections* promotes clarity and flow of information and shows that this author is **doing the work of** making sure that readers can follow his or her “train of thought;” there is no information that seems to be “off topic” or randomly “dropped into” the paragraph. **Making connections among paragraphs and sections is equally important!** When writing a paragraph, it is your job, as the author, to make the specific connection between that paragraph and the previous paragraph or paragraphs. The same applies to sections.

Read on (and look back at Assg. I) for further essential information and examples about making and maintaining connections/cohesion in Assg. 2

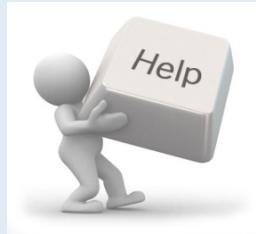
Disconnection, or: Bill Gets a Low Grade

“When Bill talked about his writing habits, he acknowledged that he never went back and read what he had written. Indeed, he told us that, other than using his computer software to check for spelling errors and to make sure that his tenses were all aligned, he never actually reread what he wrote before turning it in. Writing for Bill was just that: something he did while sitting at a computer, and reading, including rereading, was a separate activity generally reserved for an easy chair, book in hand.”

They Say, I Say Gerald Graff & Kathy Birkenstein



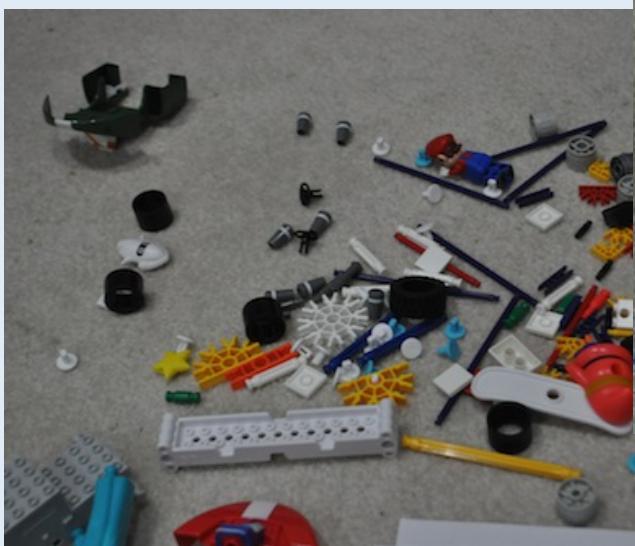
Make the Connections



They Say, I Say
Gerald Graff &
Kathy Birkenstein

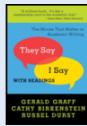


"It may help to think of each sentence [and paragraph] you **write as having arms that reach backward and forward....**[W]hen writing lacks such connections and moves in fits and starts, readers repeatedly have to go back over the sentences and guess at the connections on their own. **To prevent such disconnection and make your writing flow**, we advise following a 'do it yourself' principle, which means that **it is your job as a writer to do the hard work of making the connections** rather than, as Bill did, leaving this work to your readers." *They Say, I Say* Gerald Graff & Kathy Birkenstein



Here is a **VERY** useful explanation of why “making connections” is essential:

They Say, I Say Gerald Graff & Kathy Birkenstein



“The best compositions establish a sense of momentum and direction by making explicit connections among their different parts, **so that what is said in one sentence (or paragraph) not only sets up what is to come but is clearly informed by what has already been said.** When you write a sentence [or paragraph], you create an expectation in the reader's mind that the next sentence [or paragraph] will in some way echo and be an extension of the first, even *if*—especially if--the second one takes your argument [or information] in a new direction.”





“...it is your job as a writer to do the hard work of making the connections”

Make the Connections

An example of the author NOT doing “the hard work of MAKING the connections” between paragraphs or sections.

As Dr. Odlem pointed out, a bioengineer working on an innovation such as 3D “printing” of organs must be able to “think big” but must also be able to notice the most minute biological alterations [3].

(end of paragraph or section)

(start of new paragraph or section)

I like what Dr. Odlem said, because I like this kind of work. Bioengineers also make a good salary. They often have a chance to work with different kinds of engineers and professionals.

In this example, readers cannot immediately “see” or understand the connection among the different areas/types of information—what are the connections between what Dr. Odlem said and what the author’s interests/proficiencies are? How might what Dr. Odlem said and what the author’s interests/proficiencies are “fit into” an understanding of bioengineering that also takes making a living into account?

An example of the author EFFECTIVELY DOING “the hard work of MAKING the connections” between paragraphs or sections:

As Dr. Odlem pointed out, a bioengineer working on an innovation such as 3D “printing” of organs must be able to “think big” but must also be able to understand minute biological alterations [3].

(end of paragraph or section)

(start of new paragraph or section)

Dr. Odem’s information about “thinking big” while also paying attention to precise results or variables reconnects to my enjoyment of my high school recyclable plastics project, described in my “Who I Am” section. As I demonstrated when doing that project, I can stay focused on the small details of a project for long periods of time. I can imagine doing well in the kind of focused research or experiments a bioengineer will do, but I will probably do even better if I also can link my lab work with a great change (Dr. Odlem’s “thinking big”) that will make many people’s lives better. Focused research while playing a part in big changes aren’t the only things appealing to me about bioengineering, though. Several reliable sources state salary ranges for bioengineers, and the numbers appeal to me. For example...



Make the Connections

