

Piggybacking Academic Vocabulary Instruction : Explicit Instruction of Academic Vocabulary Within an Existing Course of Study

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Piggybacking Academic Vocabulary Instruction: Explicit Instruction of Academic Vocabulary Within an Existing Course of Study

Matthew I. Armstrong

Abstract

Despite a widely accepted belief that knowledge of vocabulary is a fundamental building-block of language ability, many language programmes today are still wanting of proactive and practical vocabulary instruction. In an attempt to address this calamitous situation the following paper outlines ongoing action research into the development of a conscientious, reflective and reactive plan for incorporating the instruction of vocabulary acquisition skills within an existing course of study. Identifying lexical features that need to be taught to a particular group of students represents an important cornerstone and starting point when developing second language courses. Using an ongoing process of diagnostic testing and evaluation, teachers can assess the language abilities within individual teaching contexts, and use this knowledge to adjust future instruction in order to better meet the needs of students. Through repurposing approximately 10-15 minutes of classroom time weekly to the instruction of vocabulary, instructors who understand the compounding benefits of a strong lexical base should soon begin to see improvements in student written output.

The Question of Vocabulary

Looking at tertiary level academic writing programmes today we often find extensive focus on the structure and style of basic paragraphs and essays, along with a predictable preoccupation with grammatical structures and accuracy. These aspects of language are seen to be the pillars of learning Academic English Writing. Regrettably, in many cases, vocabulary instruction, if addressed at all, is given little priority in these programmes. Perhaps there is an underlying notion that students will acquire new vocabulary as needed on their own. How-

ever, this passively hopeful approach is wholly inefficient in contrast with learning environments that not only acknowledge the importance of vocabulary but also take explicit and active measures to cultivate it. Many researchers, like Folse (2004), believe that the notion of vocabulary being not as important as other aspects of language knowledge to be a “myth.” Similarly, Nation (2002) states that for most second language learners, language focused vocabulary instruction is an essential part of any language programme. Reading and listening skills come from developing receptive vocabulary knowledge, and writing and speaking skills are the results of improving student productive vocabulary knowledge. It can be argued then that at the very heart of learner language skill development is the question of vocabulary. As acknowledged by Brown and Payne (1994), Hunt and Beglar (2002), and Nation (2001), vocabulary growth needs to be planned for, deliberately controlled, and monitored. However, any deliberate and controlled actions must follow formal assessments of student proficiency and needs. As always, actions taken in the classroom must follow insightful reflection on any particular group of students.

Whose Needs? Analysis

Any language teacher will soon discover that second language writing instruction is a highly variable task. Today, with rapidly changing technology and social norms, teaching contexts are becoming increasingly complex. With trends shifting to smaller class sizes there is a need for language teaching solutions and strategies to become more and more tailored to specific contexts. Teachers are no longer able to use generic or generalized approaches to classroom problem solving and instruction. Many researchers feel that now, more than ever, teachers need to conduct context appropriate needs analysis to address the problems of curriculum design (Brown, 2001; Brown et al, 1994; Hinkel, 2004; Hunt et al, 2002; Nation, 2001; Raimes, 2002; Zimmerman, 1997). Yet seemingly flying in the face of these ideals is the cold reality that in many teaching environments it is still the prescribed requirements of the Institution that take precedence over the *needs* of the students with respect to curriculum design. In many cases these requirements are for the entire institution, which often can amount to be many thousands of students, and are consequentially

sweepingly general, such as being able to *learn the basis of writing research papers required in undergraduate/ graduate schools in ~ University*.

It may be safely argued that concerns over the best approach for individual students or classrooms has been, for the most part, long abandoned in larger Institutions as being wholly impractical. However, even when faced with these scenarios the underlying responsibility of teachers to teach specifically for a group of students still holds true. Even when working within the constraints of institutionally set parameters, teachers must assess the current abilities of students and design a course of study that enables them to be successful in meeting not only institutional goals and agendas, but also their own. Reactive and reflective lexical instruction is one clear path that teachers can take to help meet the needs of individual groups of students while teaching within an institutionally set course syllabus. The author believes that using 10-15 minutes of class time weekly (of a 90 minute class) could be sufficient time to teach and assess vocabulary knowledge while not compromising the ability to reach existing course objectives.

Diagnosing Student Needs

Diagnostic needs analysis involve teachers analyzing initial student output (in this case writing) in order to explore possible instructional directions for their classrooms. This paper will continue to overview the process of analyzing student writing, as undertaken in the author's own past action research, with the purpose of using results as a basis for future academic structure and vocabulary instruction. Using student diagnostic compositions, the initial productive knowledge of students can be assessed, forming the boundaries for developing not only a well-balanced language writing course, but also the development of appropriate vocabulary fluency.

The Diagnostic Composition

In the beginning of the course the students were required to write a paragraph response to a paired-choice or free-response question. Students were directed to use specific details and examples to support a well-written topic sentence. Students were not allowed to use dictionaries and were given a time limit

of 60 minutes. The paragraphs were collected after the class to be used as a diagnostic measure of student ability.

Data Collection Procedure

A pre-analysis of the student writing was undertaken in order to aid in initial vocabulary curriculum planning. Initially all papers were assessed using a generic academic checklist (see Appendix 1.) which was devised based on the findings of Hinkel (2004). However, it needs to be stressed that when diagnosing student ability it is important to devise an instrument that fits the needs of the students as opposed to having students fit the instrument. Otherwise the results found would tend to be more prescriptive than responsive. As such, once each paper was read, the evaluating instrument was refined and the papers were once again thoroughly re-read and diagnosed with the refined guidelines (Appendix 2).

It should be noted that there are also numerous online tools for assessing student vocabulary levels. Compleat Lexical Tutor offers a vocabulary profiler that will instantly assess student writing based on 1000-word family frequency and Academic Headword lists. While being exceedingly fast and convenient this option is only suitable to language environments with easy access to computers. In addition, these online programmes do not allow instructors any freedom in respect to altering or adjusting the tool. As noted before, the results could then tend to be more prescriptive of, rather than responsive to, student needs.

Sample of Preliminary Results from Previous Action Research

Although every composition seemed to show individual strengths and weaknesses, an analysis demonstrated that clear issues of commonality were present. It was deemed that all students could benefit with reactive and reflective instruction that addressed the following:

- Average sentence word-counts in the compositions were consistently perfunctory.
- There seemed to be a lack of micro-organizational devices used throughout to develop student ideas.

- Many of the compositions displayed a lack of lexical variety. Words were frequently repeated throughout compositions, seemingly for a lack of alternatives.
- Common function words were often either overused or altogether absent.
- Students frequently made errors with the placement and use of adverbs and adjectives. Often modifier affixes were omitted or misused.

Lexical Richness Measure

Initial assessments of student compositions found that the overall quality of student writing to be somewhat lamentable. Student sentences relied on straight SVO constructs along with scarce functional vocabulary. Student compositions tended to lack a mature and descriptive quality that is common with comparable native university level production. Based on these initial findings an additional assessment measure was administered. Similar to Laufer and Nation's (1995) measures of lexical richness, a measure of modifier density (MD) was taken to assess to what extent students were using descriptive modifiers.

$$\text{MD} = \frac{\text{\# of lexical modifier tokens} \times 100}{\text{Total \# of lexical tokens}}$$

In the action research endeavour accounted in this paper it was desirable that this measure be used repeatedly throughout the course to determine to what extent students were making productive use of previously introduced materials.

Lexical Instruction

Research on second language learning has made direct connections between vocabulary acquisition and reading (Coady, 1997; Nation, 2001). Vocabulary knowledge however tends to be particularly tenuous and is soon altogether forgotten if not encountered repetitively after the initial exposure. According to Nation (2001), an average word must be met 7 to 20 times before it is "known." Similarly, Laufer and Hulstijn (2001), found that uptake from incidental exposure tends to occur at low rates, if at all, in most reading materials. Therefore relying on reading alone to teach vocabulary can be seen to be largely ineffective. This is to say that it seems unrealistic for students to develop their vocabu-

lary naturally on their own as it is encountered and required. As a result, it seems that improvements to student vocabulary would then have to be made through more overt and explicit instruction and memorization techniques. Early on in the course of study students need to be presented with the most frequent 1000 and 2000 academic word lists and be required to study the vocabulary at home. It should be carefully emphasized to the students that as they are the most frequent words in English they had best learn them without exception.

One of the most effective means for studying vocabulary at home is through the use of Vocabulary Cards. The concept of using vocabulary cards is by no means new. In fact, their widespread use can be seen as a testament to their effectiveness. Recent research has demonstrated that active and overt studying provides not only the best returns for time spent, but it is also an effective means of increasing depth of lexical knowledge (Nation, 2001; Schmitt & Schmitt, 1995).

Vocabulary Cards, or If it is Not Broke...

In order to quickly build and expand student vocabulary, the shadowed course curriculum outlined in this paper calls for the regular use of vocabulary cards. Initial classes should entail explicit instruction on practical and strategic vocabulary card use. From the beginning weeks of study students should be given academic headword lists and assigned 10-15 new words a week to learn. The selection and number of new words ought to be varied from week to week according to student progress. However, students should limit the number of words they study to reduce cognitive strain, and thus improve their chances of acquisition. It is important that students are advised that frequent short sessions with a limited number of words are ideal, as they facilitate the exposure and repetition that is necessary for acquisition. Throughout the semester students should independently choose or be assigned new words as necessary. Teachers should monitor and advise vocabulary selections and subsequent study. On a weekly basis each word chosen ought to start with a different letter of the alphabet, and not contain similar syllables. Synonyms, antonyms, or otherwise related words should likewise not be studied together (i.e. jobs, animals, foods...). In doing so, students will again eliminate confusion, reduce cognitive strain, and

improve their chances of success (Tinkham, 1997).

Vocabulary Card Use

When implementing vocabulary cards to study new words, a number of card sets and tiered levels should be used. Words should be ranked in levels from first exposure new vocabulary, through to ‘known’ words that students can use confidently in speech or writing. Three or four different levels of familiarity and facility should suffice. Within each level the student should again have a number of vocabulary card sets. As students study vocabulary from the first tier (new words), their goal should be only basic understanding: a direct L2-L1 translation of meaning. During the initial stages of lexical acquisition, translation is a necessary and useful approach, and according to Barcroft (2004), and Ross and Ross (2000), anything more can in fact inhibit learning. Once familiar, the words should be moved up to the next level for more comprehensive understanding. Successive levels could involve using the new words in context (spoken or written), describing the word in detail, etc., until the student is confident that they are ‘known’.

Two key elements of using vocabulary cards are self-testing and repetition. Learners must administer their own forms of tests to graduate a word from one level to the next. If a word has been forgotten, or cannot be used with confidence and speed, it should be demoted to the previous tier. The movement of words between these different levels will lead to the repetition of exposure that is necessary for acquisition.

In addition to self-testing, vocabulary knowledge should also be assessed in the classroom. This can be done in a casual and fun way with students taking turns quizzing each other. Students could ask each other very simply- “What does ~ mean?” or “How do you say ~ in (Japanese)?”. Alternatively, teachers could also prepare quick vocabulary tests of their own devising (see Appendix 4). These assessments can be critical in not only assessing student progress but also in helping to inform future instructional decisions.

Again, with the use of vocabulary cards, it would be wise to explicitly explain to students that there is a direct connection between an improvement in their vocabulary base and the quality of their language skills. If students are di-

rectly and sincerely told the rationale behind these study techniques then they will be in a much better position to follow through with their self-study.

Noticing New Words: Student Selected Vocabulary

According to Sokmen (1992), students should not be overlooked as a source of level appropriate vocabulary. To tie in vocabulary building activities with their major course of study, students should be given the task of finding new words for the class to study. Within the textbooks, lectures and course materials from the students' core courses of study should be found the essential academic and field specialized vocabulary that is essential for comprehension. If words are frequent in one book, they are likely to be found in others of a similar topic (Hirsh & Nation, 1992). It would therefore be possible for students to find and teach each other new specialized vocabulary and to provide stylistic examples of authentic uses. This would be particularly desirable in situations where students are studying within a field, medicine or sciences for example, in which the language teacher is similarly unaware of some of the specialized vocabulary.

Independent Strategy Development

The course of vocabulary instruction outlined in this paper also highlights the need to develop student use of learning skills and strategies. Teaching students about using and developing learning strategies is an effective means of empowerment, and as such can provide students with an increased responsibility for their own learning. Nation (2001) and Schmitt et al (1997) stress the need for introducing strategies to students along with providing opportunities to practice both in and outside of the language classroom. Based on suggestions from Nation and Schmitt, in previous courses taught by the author, time each week was set aside for the introduction of vocabulary learning strategies (refer to Appendix 3).

It's all Greek...

An example of a potentially valuable strategy that could be taught to students is the understanding of common Greek and Latin word roots. Particularly within academia and specialized fields, the use of Greek and Latin word roots

is widespread. Often having knowledge of the meaning of one word root could in turn lead students to partial understandings of countless other words. Case in point, the word root ‘tele’ alone is found as a root of approximately 164 other words (television; telescope; telegraph; telephone; telegram; telemarketing; telecast...). The explicit teaching of word roots, and the meta-linguistic awareness that they provide, can give students the skills and confidence they need to accomplish a variety of receptive language goals.

Awareness of Cultural Conventions

Another worthwhile point of potential instruction lies with improving student awareness of English cultural norms. Frequently the phlegmatic nature of student production is attributed to a lack of proficiency. However, another way to approach this problem is by considering the notion of responsibility: reader vs. writer responsibility; and speaker vs. listener responsibility. When teaching second language learners one must consider carefully the social and cultural differences that arise with respect to topic presentation and expansion. Japanese discourse can be frequently *full* of implied omissions, whereas authentic native texts tend to be quite colourful and expressive in contrast (McKay, 1993). While a lack of proficiency does play a contributing part, it is nonetheless common for Japanese language learners to not include details readily apparent to listeners/readers. McKay goes on to state that there is a need to openly discuss cultural differences in communication. Along similar lines, Swales (1990) cites that there is a necessity for students to produce writing that is acceptable to their intended readers. As writing is a social activity, the concepts of audience and genre (discourse community) are fundamental. As such teachers need to take some time to stress to students that in English ‘good’ writing is often overt. This is to say that comprehensibility should not be reliant upon cultural and/or personal background.

Teachers should assist in student understanding of this and other notions with the use of Consciousness Raising (CR) activities. CR tasks are activities that provide students with information about how a particular language form works, and helps them to work out the ‘rules’ for themselves. According to

Brown (2001), students who negotiate meanings and receive instruction that attempts to affect the way in which they intake language input are better able to process, and subsequently use language forms.

Language Focused Instruction

Based on observations from the diagnostic tools, a central goal of past supplementary vocabulary courses involved improving student awareness and use of descriptive modifiers. In the beginning of the course students should engage in activities to improve their awareness of adverbs and adjectives through the study of word parts and common affixes. Along with the explicit instruction of adverbs and adjectives, instructors can also give students consciousness raising before/after (with/without) descriptive passages. By doing so it is hoped that the students will be able to see and understand for themselves the impact of descriptive vocabulary on writing, as well as the stark rapidity of its' absence. As instruction continues the previously introduced measure of Modifier Density should be used to monitor student progress.

In addition to improving student descriptive vocabulary, there is a need to address the use of micro-organizational features in student writing. According to Hinkel (2004), one of the most practical approaches to teaching academic writing involves the explicit study of these transitional devices and connectors, along with a selection of appropriate substitutions (e.g., for example, for instance, in particular). Students need to not only be explicitly introduced this functional vocabulary, but also afforded ample opportunities for extensive practice in classes and assignments (see Appendix 5).

Error Analysis and Feedback

Based on the previous diagnostic essays (in past action research), there is generally a need for error analysis and instruction with common mistakes. Specifically with respect to vocabulary, mistakes with function words and affixes tend to be common. The results of the diagnostic measure support Nation's (2001) belief that learners need feedback on errors in order to develop a deeper understanding of not only form but also constraints on use. Feedback offered to students should be explicit when necessary, but in instances where the entire

class is having difficulties, more time should be spent. Providing there is sufficient time, as an alternative to traditional teacher-centred instruction students could be allowed further opportunities to negotiate on meanings, and gain a deeper understanding through the use of CR instructional techniques.

Ensure Repetition to Develop Lexical Fluency

Along with ensuring initial exposure, teachers have to provide students opportunities to develop fluency with receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge (Melka, 1997; Nation, 2002). In each lesson students need to perform tasks involving previously introduced materials and also encouraged to incrementally produce more and more language in a given amount of class time. Additionally, teachers should ensure that take-home writing assignments involve topics that afford students abundant opportunities to use and recycle vocabulary introduced in previous classes.

Evaluation and Conclusion

Singular Problems with Solitary Diagnostic Samples

An initial apprehension with the diagnostic measure concerns the fact that initially only one sample was used per student. Laufer et al. (1995) state that when assessing student writing it is important to acquire multiple samples written on various topics. They rightly argue that as some themes are sure to be of a more intrinsic interest to individual students, the resulting quantity and quality of the writing would be variable. While a broader sample would provide a more accurate measure of student language needs, it was not a realistic option for this study (as it was desirable to incorporate and maximize vocabulary instruction within a minimal amount of repurposed classroom time). It is hoped that some of the problems inherent with only a sole sample could be mitigated by the open-endedness of the diagnostic assignment. However, ultimately the course curriculum devised from the diagnostic writing should be used as merely a starting point, and developed and altered as more information of student proficiency becomes available. When deciding the final shape of the course, it is worthwhile to stress the cyclical nature of the process, where continual evaluations of student writing leads to further analysis and alterations to the course

curriculum.

When considering second language instruction this piggybacked approach to vocabulary development seems like an encouraging pedagogical choice. Using diagnostic essays to reactively design a codicillary vocabulary course within an existing curriculum represents a shift in language learning pedagogy away from the what students are expected and predetermined to know or be taught, to thoughts about what they actually do know, and how to best narrow this divide. On the forefront of this divide is the question of the instruction of specific lexical knowledge to students. This paper did not purport to account an empirically tested approach to vocabulary acquisition. Rather, the ideas presented were merely a thoughtful account of years of reflective practice and action research on attempts to best prepare students for the academic and specialized English vocabulary that they will encounter in their studies. However, it needs to be stated that this course of action does involve some very clear constraints and disadvantages. Foremost, the process of reactively creating a curriculum based on student writing is a time intensive (but worthy) undertaking. As every teaching context and student has different needs it stands to reason that they will require different approaches. In large classrooms with fixed time constraints it may not be feasible to incorporate all of the stages outlined in this paper. It is therefore up to teachers to use these ideas flexibly, depending on their goals, and according to the needs of their learners. As such, particularly in teaching contexts that are organized from the top-down, this paper should be taken as an example of what can be done, what is possible. As always, the teacher should introduce a reflective and responsive programme that strives to best meet the needs of all.

Appendix 1.

Based on Hinkel's (2004) Academic Checklist

Nothing before or since has come close to Eli Hinkel's writing checklists for the assessment of student writing needs. Any instructor would be wise to use her textbook as a guide to effective teaching of writing and vocabulary.

Preliminary Diagnostic Checklist

_____ # of words

_____ # of sentences

Error Analysis

Noun ending errors

_____ Singular/Plural

_____ Other—suffixation

Verb errors

_____ tense

_____ form (irregular verbs)

_____ active/passive

(form/meaning)

_____ modals

Language Needs

Vocabulary/Written Register

_____ Collocations

_____ Nominalizations

_____ Synonym clusters

_____ Nouns

_____ Verbs

_____ Adjectives/Adverbs

_____ Catch-all nouns

_____ Noun quantifiers

_____ Frequency adverbs

_____ Modal verbs

Other errors

_____ Articles

_____ Prepositions

_____ Conjunctions

_____ Prepositions

Appendix 2.

Based on Hinkel's (2004) Academic Checklist

Example of a Revised Diagnostic Checklist

Student Composition #	*1	2	3...
Approx. # of words			
Vocabulary Error Analysis			
Noun ending errors			
Singular/Plural			
Other--suffixation			
Verb errors			
Tense			
form (irregular verbs)			
active/passive			
Modals			
Other errors			
Articles & Prepositions			
Conjunctions & Transitions			
Vocabulary Needs			
Vocabulary/Written Register			
Collocations			
Synonym clusters			
Nouns			
Verbs			
Adjectives/Adverbs			
Frequency adverbs			
Modal verbs			
Subordinate clauses			
Adverb			
Adjective			

*Columns can be added or removed depending upon the size of the sample. Using one instrument to assess an entire class allows teachers to quickly gauge language needs.

Appendix 3. Framework of a Possible Course of Instruction

(It is important to stress that the following outline is suggested to be used for at the most 15 minutes a week of a 90 minute class. The vocabulary instruction outlined below is intended to compliment and augment the syllabus prescribed by the University.

Week of Semester	Vocabulary Cards	Skill Building & Strategy Use	Details
1	---	---	---
2	Diagnostic Testing	Diagnostic Testing	-students will complete the diagnostic testing that will guide the vocabulary instruction within the following framework.
3	Introducing vocabulary card techniques - The rate of new vocabulary should be adjusted on a weekly basis to best match the needs of students.	Introducing the skill building tasks and the need for strategy use. - As necessary more time can be spent with skill building and independent strategy development.	-it is important for the teacher to explain the overall course of study to students. If students understand the direction of the course and how the instructor intends to meet language goals, then they are better able to take responsibility for their own learning. It is important for students to be updated on learning objectives as the course changes and develops
4	1000-2000 word lists given to students	Cultural Conventions Using descriptive modifiers	-initial vocabulary assignments given to students based on the results of diagnostic testing and the major field of study of the students. -CR task (reading) highlighting the use of descriptive modifiers in writing.
5	New vocabulary assignment, Review & Evaluation	Analysing Word Parts- Adverbs Analysing Word Parts- Adjectives	- time should be taken to practice and review needed skills based on student progress
6	New vocabulary assignment, Review & Evaluation	Conjunctions and Transition words Using conjunctions and transition words	-students should be instructed on the need to use Transitional Devices -students are given explicit practice using Transitional Devices.
7	New vocabulary assignment, Review & Evaluation	Noticing- to be used with vocabulary cards	- students are required to find academic/specialized vocabulary in their core readings to be brought to class and subsequently taught to classmates.
8	New vocabulary assignment, Review & Evaluation	Using Context	-strategy instruction on using context in aiding reading comprehension. This skill is used to introduce the following Noticing activities.
9	New vocabulary assignment, Review & Evaluation	Generative Learner Strategy as needed	- time should be taken to practice and review needed skills based on student progress.
10	New vocabulary assignment, Review & Evaluation	Midcourse Review	Near the end of the course the selection of learner strategies should be more individualized to specific learning styles and needs.
11	New vocabulary assignment, Review & Evaluation	Dictionary Skills	- time should be taken to practice and review needed skills based on student progress.
12	New vocabulary assignment, Review & Evaluation	*Generative Learner Strategy as needed	- time should be taken to practice and review needed skills based on student progress.
13	New vocabulary assignment, Review & Evaluation	*Generative Learner Strategy as needed	- time should be taken to practice and review needed skills based on student progress.
14	Review & Evaluation	Course Review	-conclusion of course. Feedback
15	---	---	-Final Examination

* The tasks should be varied regularly to account for, and maintain, student interest.

Appendix 4. Sample Vocabulary Review Test

This test was administered to students studying environmental economics as follow-up to specialized vocabulary instruction.

Part One

Translate the following words into Japanese.

1. Toiletries _____
2. Sustainable _____
3. Welfare _____
4. Pesticide _____
5. Disposable _____

Part Two

Match the following words to an English definition.

伝統 防腐剤 福利 製造する 電気器具

6. a piece of equipment, usually operated electrically, esp. for use in the home or for performance of domestic chores, as a refrigerator, washing machine, or toaster.
7. the handing down of statements, beliefs, legends, customs, information, etc., from generation to generation, esp. by word of mouth or by practice.
8. the making of goods or wares by manual labor or by machinery, esp. on a large scale.
9. the good fortune, health, happiness, prosperity, etc., of a person, group, or organization; well-being.
10. a chemical substance used to preserve foods or other organic materials from decomposition or fermentation.

Part Three

Write an English Definition for the following words.

11. Sustainable
12. Herbicide
13. Fair-Trade
14. Rural
15. Priority

Part Four

Choose any 5 words from the above test and use them in an appropriate sentence demonstrating meaningful use. Circle the word.

16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

Appendix 5.

Connectors & Transitional Devices

One of the best ways for writers to improve the overall quality and comprehensibility of their writing is to use (more) Transitional Devices. Transitional Device act to connect ideas together- within sentences, from one sentence to another, or from one paragraph to the next. In this way Transitional Devices work as signposts leading the reader, and allowing them to easily follow and understand your message.

Transitional Devices generally have specific functions. It is important to stress that for each of these functions there are numerous interchangeable transitions that can be used.

Function or Purpose	-Optional/Interchangeable Transitions
to Add Information or Expand	-and, as well as, and then, furthermore, in addition, too, next, moreover, besides, equally important, first (second, etc)...
to Give Examples	-for example, for instance, to illustrate, to demonstrate, in this case, on this occasion, in this situation...
to Emphasize	-without a doubt, certainly, definitely, obviously, in fact, indeed, in any case, positively, naturally, emphatically, surprisingly, undeniably...
to Prove	-because, since, for, furthermore, moreover, evidently, obviously, in fact, for the same reason...
to Show a Sequence or Process	-first, second, third, and so on, and so forth, next, then, following this, next, then, before, after, afterwards, finally, subsequently, thus, and then, soon, previously, at the same time, simultaneously...
to Compare or Contrast Ideas	-but, yet, whereas, however, on the contrary, on the other hand, nonetheless, nevertheless, on the contrary, by comparison, in comparison, although, meanwhile, conversely, after all, compared to...
to Show Time	-first, second, next, then, immediately, soon, now, presently, finally, later, before, previously, thereafter...
to Show an Exception	-however, yet, still, all the same, in spite of, nevertheless, despite, of course...
to Repeat	-once more, again, as I have said, in brief, as has been noted, as previously stated...
to Summarize or Conclude	-in conclusion, in summary, in short, all in all, as a result, to conclude, in brief, on the whole, accordingly, hence, thus, consequently, in summation...

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