

“Micro-Discourse” Revisions: Cohesion and Detail Elaboration

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Notes:

Common problem: Struggling writers lack strategies for semantic cohesion.

Solution: Teach and practice the cohesive tie strategy.

Activity 1: Do you recognize a vocabulary problem in this student's writing?

Many bears live inside Yellowstone Park. There are large bears found there. Every year bears cause serious injuries to visitors. Tourists at Yellowstone should stay at least 100 yards from bears. Visitors should admire bears' beauty from afar!

Write down all the synonyms you can for the word *bears*:

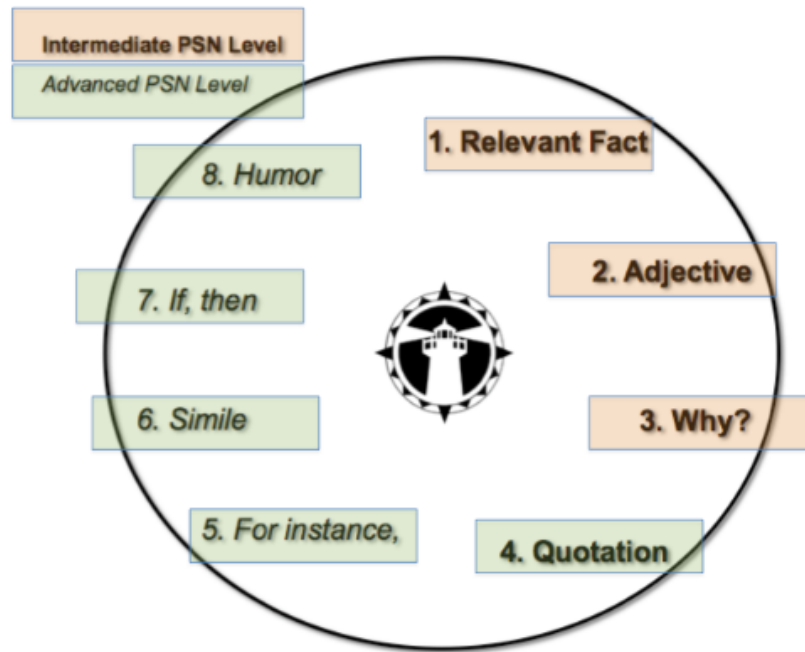
Activity 2: Draw the *Cohesion Circle* from memory and vary the semantic cohesive ties in this piece of micro-discourse.

The fisherman worked strenuously over the entire week off Geroqe's Bank. The fisherman had to work 18-20 hours per day and some days the fisherman fell asleep while standing up. In bad weather, the fisherman could faint and be injured by hooks on other fisherman's haul lines.

Common problem: Struggling writers lack strategies for adding a variety of salient details.

Solution: Combine semantic feature analysis with *Detail Circle* strategy.

Detail Circle



Jennings & Haynes, 2018

Activity 1: Let's practice! Add an elaboration detail to follow up the key idea statement.

Statement: The young sailors packed their lunch carefully.

Why? Detail: _____

Statement: The young sailors packed their lunch carefully.

Simile Detail: _____

Statement: The young sailors packed their lunch carefully.

Humor Detail: _____

Fact Detail: _____

Activity 2: Tracking a Variety of Details – Using the *Detail Circle*, code each detail type by writing the first letter of the label (i.e. rf = relevant fact, q = quotation). The first detail has been coded for you.

I was so excited to go to the fair. ^{rf}We planned to get wristbands so we could go on the rides for twenty dollars. I walked up to the booth and asked for one wristband, please. The evil, older woman just looked at me like I was crazy. She said, "We don't sell those anymore." I was so mad. Now I had to buy twenty tickets which only got me on four rides. I thought that was a rip-off. I asked her, "Why don't you have them anymore?" She just said, "Next!" That made me really mad. She gave me twenty tickets and I left the booth.

Additional Practice: Put it all together! Use the *Cohesion Circle* and the *Detail Circle* to revise this expository TIDE paragraph.

Although there are many marvelous birds, the peregrine falcon is in a class of its own. The peregrine falcon has long, pointed wings, and strong chest muscles, that make this falcon one of the fastest in the world. Peregrine falcons have been found to fly at a maximum of 124 to 242 miles an hour. You may spot a peregrine falcon along the coast. Overall, the peregrine falcon is a unique bird.

Instructional Script: Introduction of Narrative Details

Purpose: To help students add details to their narrative writing

Materials: Detail Circle visuals

Note: This routine introduces adjective details. It can be adapted to teach humor and simile details.

Example Sentence: Maddy never stopped talking.	
Detail Type	Elaborating Detail
Adjective Detail describes one or more nouns from the topic or preceding sentence.	Her high-pitched voice grabbed everyone's attention.
Humor Detail provides an example of a humorous action related to story events.	Instead of sleep walking, Maddy "sleep talked."
Simile Detail uses figurative language to elaborate on an important action or aspect of a noun.	She was as talkative as a parrot.

Teacher provides an example sentence and individual copies of the Detail Circle to students.

Teacher: Today we are going to practice adding some details to our narrative writing. Authors use details to make their writing more interesting and exciting, so we are going to practice adding some details that work really well with the narrative genre. Look at your Detail Circle. These detail types include using adjectives, humor, and similes to make our stories more engaging for our readers. Today we will focus on the first type of detail, which is an **adjective detail**. Who can remind me what the function, or job, of an adjective is?

Students: An adjective is a describing word.

Teacher: That's right! We can use adjectives to describe the nouns we use in our writing. Let's take a look at a sentence from my story.

Teacher displays the sentence: Maddy never stopped talking.

Teacher: Who is my sentence about here?

Students: Maddy

Teacher: That's right! Maddy is my "who." What is Maddy doing?

Students: She's talking.

Teacher: Excellent! Let's think for a minute. Hmm... What do we use to talk?

Students can provide responses. Answers might include: mouth, lips, voice, etc.

Teacher: I really like the word "voice." How could we describe someone's voice? Especially someone who never stops talking?

Students can provide responses. Answers might include: loud, fast, high-pitched, scratchy, etc.

Teacher: Let's describe her voice as high-pitched. What if we wrote: Maddy never stopped talking. Her high-pitched voice grabbed everyone's attention. Does this adjective detail work here? Does it connect logically to the sentence before it?

Students: Yes!

Students and teacher collaborate to form additional adjective details.

Teacher: Wonderful. I hope you will try to include adjective details in your story writing to paint a picture of your characters, setting, or events. We will continue to learn other types of details to make your story writing interesting.

Instructional Script: Introduction of Expository and Opinion Details

Purpose: To help students add elaboration details to support key ideas in their expository and/or opinion writing

Materials: Detail Circle visuals

Note: This routine introduces relevant fact and why details. It can be adapted to teach *for instance*, quotation, and *if, then* details.

Example Sentence: Contrary to popular belief, bats are incredibly helpful creatures.	
Detail Type	Elaborating Detail
Relevant Fact Detail clarifies or expands upon information in the preceding sentence.	Some bats pollinate plants which allows fruit to grow.
For Instance, Detail uses examples or relevant experiences to respond to the preceding sentence.	For instance, they eat insects, like mosquitos, that we might not want around.
Why? Detail provides a reason to support the preceding sentence.	Some species of bats act as pollinators and transfer pollen to help grow some of our favorite foods including bananas, avocados, and peaches.
Quotation Detail provides a quotation that elaborates on the topic or the preceding sentence.	In fact, scientists have concluded that bats save people "billions of dollars in pest-control costs."
If, then Detail establishes a cause and effect relationship between sentences.	If bats didn't eat insects and bugs, then farmers' crops could be damaged.

Adapted from ReadWorks, Bats Need Our Help

Teacher provides an example sentence and individual copies of the Detail Circle to students.

Teacher: Today we are going to practice adding some details to our writing. Remember authors use details to elaborate on key ideas, and make their writing more interesting. The details that we will be learning and practicing can be used in expository or opinion writing. Look at your Detail Circle. These details include using relevant facts, *for instance* statements, and telling why, providing a quotation, or using an *if, then* statement. Let's start today by exploring **relevant fact details**. Who can tell me what a fact is?

Students: A fact is something that is true.

Teacher: That's right! Facts are true statements and we can use facts to clarify or explain something from the previous sentence. Facts work well in informational writing because they can be used to explain and clarify an idea, or as a means to support your stance. Let's take a look at a sentence from my paragraph about bats.

Teacher displays the sentence: Contrary to popular belief, bats are incredibly helpful creatures.

Teacher: My sentence here states that bats are incredibly helpful animals. What facts have we recently learned about bats that show they are helpful to humans?

Students: Some bats pollinate plants which allows fruit to grow.

Instructional Script: Introduction of Expository and Opinion Details

Teacher adds the relevant detail sentence: Contrary to popular belief, bats are incredibly helpful creatures. Some bats pollinate plants which allows fruit to grow.

Teacher: Does this relevant fact compliment, or go with, my preceding sentence?

Students: Yes, it works!

Students and teacher collaborate to form additional examples of relevant fact details.

Teacher: Wonderful! There is one more detail type I want to show you today. It's called the **why detail**. The why detail provides a reason to support the preceding sentence. This detail type is great for expository and opinion writing because it provides a reason to explain your idea or support your stance. Let's go back to my original sentence.

Teacher returns to the original example sentence: Contrary to popular belief, bats are incredibly helpful creatures.

Teacher: I want to provide a reason why bats are helpful creatures. What are some other reasons, other than they eat insects, that bats are helpful to humans?

Students: They help plant seeds! They help pollinate plants!

Teacher: Great! Both of these are reasons why bats are useful to people. Watch me use the pollination example.

Teacher adds the why detail: Contrary to popular belief, bats are incredibly helpful creatures. Some species of bats act as pollinators and transfer pollen to help grow some of our favorite foods including bananas, avocados, and peaches.

Teacher: Does this why detail work with my preceding sentence?

Students: Yes!

Students and teacher collaborate to form additional why details.

Teacher: Great! I hope that you will try to include relevant facts and why details in your writing to elaborate on your key ideas. We will continue to learn additional detail types to keep your writing varied and interesting!

The Detail Circle



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