Revising for transitions exercise

Choose a three-paragraph passage of your own scientific writing (any format, but it should be something written for scientists). Try to find a passage that doesn’t read smoothly—maybe something that you haven’t yet revised in response to reader feedback. Revise the transitions between sentences throughout the passage:

- Delete all of the transitions the passage contains so that you can complete the next step objectively.
- Determine the logical relationship of each sentence to the previous one or to the paragraph as a whole (or, for the first sentence in a paragraph, of the paragraph to the previous paragraph). Come up with the most specific, precise explanation of this relationship as possible; it may help to write it down. (If you have trouble with this step, you may need to revise the organization of the passage.)
- Compare the explanation to the sentence—does the sentence already convey the relationship, but not as a transition? If so, revise so that this phrase or clause introduces the sentence.
- If the sentence doesn’t already explain the relationship, determine what type of transition the sentence needs—how complex/common is the connection? Will a transition word (see list on the “Common transition words and phrases” handout from the Writing Studio, [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/resources](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/resources)) completely express it? If so, choose an appropriate one; if not, revise the sentence so that the explanation you came up with acts as a transition. You may need to try several wordings and structures to find what sounds best.

Reflect on your revision and the lesson:

1) How difficult/easy was it to determine the relationships between sentences? How might this relate to the way you wrote the passage?
2) How might you change your writing process so that it’s easier to determine these relationships or so that you need to do less revision of transitions?
3) What other changes do you plan to make based on the transitions you added? If you don’t plan to make additional changes, why not?
4) How has this lesson and revision affected your understanding of the purpose of transitions and what makes them effective?

Turn in:

- The original draft and the revision (or the revision done using “track changes” in Word), including the breaks in continuity your peer reader noticed
- Your answers to the questions