**Signposting: Strategies for Moving a Reader Through a Text**  
(Creating a Writer-Responsible Text)

In most American/western academic writing, the author is responsible for making the text as clear as possible for the reader. The reader expects to be told the goal/purpose of the essay, to have the overall conclusions clearly stated, and to have each major point stated, followed by the evidence that supports that point. The reader expects to be led through the reasoning/argument of the essay, with language that shows how one point is connected to the next. The strategies for using textual features to guide readers through an essay are called *signposting*.

1. **Major Signposts (guiding the reader through the key points of your essay)**
   - forecasting statements  (In this paper I will . . . .)
   - thesis statements
   - topic or lead sentences to paragraphs

2. **Minor Signposts (guiding the reader through your sentences)**
   - Linking words: conjunctive adverbs, subordinating and coordinating conjunctions
   - Old-to-new sentence pattern
   - demonstrative pronouns

3. **Indications of stance**

   **Stance:** “how interpersonal meanings are managed in discourse”

   “In academic writing, as with other written discourses, stancetaking includes moves to mark one’s level of commitment to assertions, comment on the significance of evidence, build solidarity with imagined readers, clarify anticipated misunderstandings, and other interactional strategies. As Ken Hyland’s research shows (e.g., Hyland, 2005), these subtle interpersonal moves populate even the most formal and "objective" of disciplinary discourses, and they are guided by writers’ (usually tacit) awareness of the specific interpersonal dynamics that are at play in the discoursal context, i.e., dynamics between writers, readers, and other discourse participants.”

Creating coherence at the sentence level: 
Old-to-new sentence patterns

Example #1
Original: Molecules are comprised of covalently bonded atoms. Molecules’ reactions are controlled by the strength of the bonds. Molecules, however, sometimes react slower than bond strength would predict. 
Edited: Molecules are comprised of covalently bonded atoms. Bond strength controls a molecule’s reactions. Sometimes, however, those reactions are slower than bond strength would predict. 
Schimel, J. (2012), Writing Science, p. 125-6

Molecules ... bonded atoms  Molecules ... bonded strength  Molecules ... bonded strength would predict
A → B    A → C      A → D

Example #2
Original: Salvage logging is an increasingly common way of harvesting forests that have been attacked by insect pests. In salvage logging, trees that have been attached are selectively harvested. Cavities in standing dead trees serve as nesting sites for birds. The population biology of cavity-nesting birds is therefore affected by salvage logging.
Edited: Salvage logging is an increasingly common way of harvesting forests that have been attacked by insect pests. In salvage logging, trees that have been attached are selectively harvested. The dead trees that are harvested, however, can provide cavities that serve as nesting sites for birds. The population biology of cavity-nesting birds is therefore affected by salvage logging.
-- Schimel, J. (2012), Writing Science, p. 127

Use this/these (demonstrative pronoun) plus a noun summarizing the preceding idea

In recent years, the number of students applying for PhD programs has increased steadily, while the number of places available has remained fairly constant. This situation has resulted in intense competition for admission.

According to a recent survey, 26% of all American adults, down from 38% 30 years ago, now smoke. This decrease can be partly attributed to the mounting evidence linking smoking to fatal diseases, such as cancer.

--Swales & Feak (2012), Academic Writing for Graduate Students, p. 43