Coherence by Modality

Meaning doesn't live in single words or sentences, but in how they hold together.

Coherence is the connective tissue of language. Pronouns, transitions, and structure bind separate pieces into a single whole. You can understand every part and still **lose the thread** that runs through them.

Reading

A reader tracks how each sentence connects to the last, following pronouns, transitions, and structure. Even if you understand every sentence, you can still lose the thread that ties them into a cohesive whole.

Writing

A writer builds the connective tissue of a piece on purpose, ordering ideas and signaling how they relate to each other so a reader can understand. An assembly of true sentences is not a coherent piece of writing until the writer weaves them together.

Listening

A listener holds the thread of a talk across minutes, linking each new point to what came before to build a mental model. If the message doesn't hold together, it turns to noise. Working memory has to hustle to hold onto ideas that are just in the air, and building a mental model helps, since we don't remember the actual words.

Speaking

A speaker who is considerate of the listener works to keep the meaning thread visible, ordering thoughts and marking the turns in conversation so a listener can stay with them. Ideas that hang together in your head still have to be strung together out loud, in language others can leverage to build a mental model.

Meaning is not in the pieces. It is in how they hold together.

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