**Developing a Paragraph**

**Rhetorical Focus**

A paragrah structure is built up of **a topic sentence**, **supporting sentences**, and **a concluding sentence**.

**Exercise 1**

Identify the topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence

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| **Barefoot Boy**  I had a scary experience when I was a young boy. One evening while my parents were eating dinner, I was playing barefoot in the yard with my toys. Even now, I still remember the perfume of the flowers and the moisture of the grass. While I was sitting on the grass and playing with a truck, I looked up at the sky, and my attention was distracted by the beauty of the stars. Then I felt something cold and smooth slide over my feet. I stayed perfectly still, but I looked down at my feet. Then I saw a snake slowly slithering over my toes. I felt terrible and afraid, so my heart beat very fast. After the snake moved away, I screamed to my parents for help, and they captured the snake and took it away. The experience frightened me, and I never went outside barefoot again. |

A student paragraph (Savage and Shafie, 2007: 5)

**Rhetorical Focus**

**The Topic Sentence** serves the topic and the controlling idea. For example,

*Teenagers usually consumes enormous quantities of junk food*.

Topic controlling idea

**Exercise 2 (Savage and Shafie, 2007: 7)**

In each topic sentence below, circle the topic and underline the controlling idea. For the topic sentences, write what you think the supporting sentences will be about.

1. Hiking is the best way to explore nature closely.
2. My uncle had a frightening experience as a young man.
3. Text messaging has become popular among teenagers.
4. Effective time management requires four easy steps.
5. Young people are too dependent on computers.

**Rhetorical Focus**

**Supporting sentences** give information about topic sentence controlled by controlling idea. On the other hand, **the concluding sentence** usually restates the topic sentence of the paragraph.

**Exercise 3**

Note TS to topic sentence, SS to supporting sentence, and CS to the concluding sentence.

1. I was almost finished writing my paper, and I was checking it for errors.
2. The accident made me lose many hours of work, so I could not turn in my essay on time.
3. Later, I learned that a squirrel got on the power line and disrupted the electricity.
4. My paper is late because something happened to my computer.
5. Suddenly, my computer screen went blank, and the power was gone.

**Rhetorical Focus**

Brainstorming by freewriting

The student was asked to write a paragraph about one major problem at his college. The student did not have any idea of what to write about, so he started freewriting about some of the problems that come to mind.

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| **Problems at Evergreen College**  What is the biggest problem at Evergreen College? Well, I really do not know. In fact, I cannot think of one particular problem although I know there are many problems. For one thing, the classrooms are usually overcrowded. At the beginning of this semester, Science Hall 211 had 45 students although there were only 31 desks. A few of the seats attached to the desks were broken, so about 20 students had to sit on the floor. Besides, the classrooms are poorly maintained. In several of my classes, there are broken chairs and litter on the floor. Students even leave their dirty cups and other garbage on the desks. So the rooms are messy. The library is too small and always crowded with students. Not all students really study in the library. Sometimes they talk a lot and this is really quite distracting to me and other serious students who want and need quiet place to study. So the present library should be expanded or a new library should be built. Oh yes, I think that another problem is parking near the campus. The college has a big parking lot across from the west side of campus, but it is always full. So, many times students have to park their cars in the residential areas, which could be so far away from the campus that they have to run to class to make it. Yes, parking is a big problem that many students face every day. I have a car, and many of my friends have one. We really have a problem. So, I think the biggest problem at Evergreen College is not enough parking spaces near the college campus... |

**Exercise 4**

Write your own paragraph about “your dependency on computer” or “one major problem at your university”.