Mixed Constructions

For students learning to write university essays find it particularly hard to know what the professor expects.

Because different disciplines have different conventions, but students are expected to acquire them all.

Documentation, in particular, because there are three major systems in use.

Mixed constructions result when writers start to cross a river but changes horses mid-stream. It happens most frequently when the introductory part of a sentence is long, or when the writer pauses to think while drafting the idea. The thread may be broken or dropped altogether.

Solution

Take the time to review each sentence, looking for what the words say and not just what you intended to say. Rewrite so the structure works. There is usually more than one way.

- *Students learning to write university essays find it particularly hard to know what the professor expects.*
- *For students learning to write university essays, knowing what the professor expects is particularly hard.*

- *Different disciplines have different conventions, but students are expected to acquire them all.*
- *Because different disciplines have different conventions, students are expected to acquire them all.*

- *Documentation, in particular, because there are three major systems in use, presents challenges.*
- *Documentation, in particular, presents challenges, because there are three major systems in use,.*

Two Special Cases

A mixed construction <u>is where</u> a sentence begins with one structure but changes to another.

The reason mixed constructions occur <u>is because</u> the writer's mind flies ahead of his or her fingers.

These constructions are common in speech, but are best avoided in academic writing. Check a handbook for the explanation.

Solutions

- *In a mixed construction the sentence begins with one structure but changes to another before the end.*
- *Mixed constructions occur because the writer's mind flies ahead of his or her fingers.*
- *The reason mixed constructions occur is that the writer's mind flies ahead of his or her fingers.*