Writing about Literary Devices: The Three C’s Strategy

The FUNCTION discussion is, as you know, the most important part of your literary device. Unfortunately, it is also the most difficult (isn’t that just typical?). However, if you are certain to include the THREE C’s in your function discussion, you will always find success. Sound good? Read on!

Every literary device function discussion needs to include:

1. **Context:** This sets up the text portion you are about to discuss. In other words, you need to BRIEFLY introduce the general circumstances in your example.

2. **Concept:** What is the device that you are addressing? Use it in the present tense and use the active voice (i.e. “This symbolizes the…” or “This quote works as an example of a simile because…”) when referring to the literary device. Make certain you discuss it directly.

3. **Connection:** Discuss in clear specific terms exactly how the literary device contributes to the passage/poem/novel as a whole. In other words, how does the literary device reinforce what is occurring in the larger context.

Remember that merely pointing out a literary device does not mean that you understand its effect on the passage as a whole. You have to be specific about its function. If you are certain to include the Three C’s, then you will be successful.