

Course Topic: Language Assessment**Course Instructor:**

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Course Synopsis:

Written corrective feedback is not only targeted to errors, but also includes commentary on content, form and organization. In this course, we will develop a vocabulary to use when discussing written corrective feedback in an ESL classroom. We will review three methods of written corrective feedback, including direct, indirect, and coded feedback. We will then examine various approaches to written corrective feedback. Finally, we will discuss student errors and the four categories they typically fall into. A central element of this course is to suggest that teachers vary their method of correction based on type of error and proficiency of the student in order to add interest and challenge for themselves and for students.

Course Agenda:

1. Types of Written Corrective Feedback
2. Global Correction vs. Selective Correction
3. Types of Student Errors
4. Suggestions for Providing Written Corrective Feedback

1. Types of Written Corrective Feedback

Direct Feedback

Also referred to as explicit correction, the correct answer is provided directly to the student in written work. Students like this method since they do not have to work out the answer themselves; however, it is time consuming for the teacher.

Indirect Feedback

The teacher identifies the error for the student but does not correct it. The teacher provides a clue as to the location of the error to guide the student through his or her own correction. Students prefer this method less than direct feedback, since they are required to do the cognitive work in order to correct the error.

Coded Feedback

The teacher provides codes that indicate the type of error. The teacher locates the error with insertion of the code. This is a scaffolded approach to error correction. The code provides support for students to identify the error and correct it accordingly. Students must know and understand the codes, which must be taught explicitly in class. Students enjoy this type of corrective feedback.

2. Global Correction vs. Selective Correction

In the global correction approach, the teacher provides correction for every student error. Typically students want this type of correction, however, teachers may object to it because it can be a lot of correction that is time consuming and overwhelming, especially for lower level proficiency students. In selective correction, the teacher decides which errors need to be corrected. Typically they are errors relating to material taught in class, or significant errors that impede comprehension. Only the highest priority errors receive correction.

3. Types of Student Errors

Global Errors

Global errors impede reader comprehensibility. Often these errors are verb tense errors, sentence structure errors, or sentence boundary errors. Teachers address these errors quickly because they impede comprehension so significantly.

Local Errors

Local errors do not impede reader comprehensibility. Local errors typically include article errors that are noted by teachers, but do not change the meaning of a sentence. Similarly, plural noun errors and errors in subject verb agreement in third person present tense singular do not change the meaning of a sentence. Teachers use their judgment about the importance of the error to correct immediately or at a later time.

Idiomatic Errors

Idiomatic expressions are used frequently in English conversation. Idiomatic errors encompass errors in prepositional phrases, expressions and collocations. When the teacher addresses these errors in an indirect way, it is difficult for students to consult grammatical resources to correct the idiomatic error. Teachers are therefore encouraged to provide direct correction for these types of errors.

Rule-Bound Errors

Rule-bound errors are errors in accepted patterns of English usage. The answers are clear and easily located in textbooks and resource books. It is useful for teachers to provide indirect correction in these contexts, since the student should be able to locate the correction easily.

4. Suggestions for Providing Written Corrective Feedback

One of our challenges as teachers is deciding how to respond to student errors. Teachers must consider the type of error and level of student proficiency to adjust their feedback accordingly. When students are at a high proficiency level, global correction may be a relevant and practical method to use. As lower level students gain proficiency, teachers may move from direct to indirect feedback as their knowledge improves. Providing written corrective feedback is a nuanced process depending on the level of student ability, types of errors and the context in which you are working. Your goal as a teacher is to build students' awareness of the types of errors they most commonly make so they can develop strategies to address them. Written corrective feedback is typically not something that teachers enjoy doing. Try to mix things up a little bit to see what works for your students. Teachers can vary their approach by providing oral feedback on a written test via audio recording. Teachers can also number the errors in a student's text and categorize them in a table, or ask students to categorize the errors themselves. Varied corrective feedback makes your job interesting and adds challenge for students.

Thanks for participating!

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