Title

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Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6k52f2d3

Journal

The CATESOL Journal, 8(1)

ISSN

1535-0517

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Publication Date

1995

DOI

10.5070/B5.36549

Peer reviewed

Can Advanced ESL Students Become Effective Self-Editors? [1]

■ Today's ESL writing teachers and students as well as content-area professors and textbook publishers generally agree that systematic attention to accuracy in student writing is both necessary and possible, even in a process-oriented composition classroom. The author has developed an integrated approach to teaching editing skills to advanced ESL writing students. The present study investigates the effectiveness of this approach.

A group of 30 students in two sections of a semester-long ESL freshman composition course were taught systematically to identify, prioritize, and attempt to correct their most serious and frequent errors. Their compositions were collected throughout the semester (3 to 5 papers per student, for a total of 136 essays), and analyzed to see whether they were able, over the course of the semester, to reduce the number of errors they made. The results showed that most students were successful in reducing their overall percentages of error; further, significant differences in their performance on in-class versus out-of-class writing were noted.

Most university-level ESL writing teachers know that the academic discourse community demands a relatively high standard of accuracy in student writing. Thus, our students will not succeed outside of the sheltered world of the ESL class unless they can learn to reduce the frequency and seriousness of their errors. Since we will not always be there to help our students, it is vitally important that they learn to edit their own work successfully.

In response to these observations, I have formulated a systematic approach to help my advanced ESL writing students become more self-sufficient as editors. I have also trained dozens of graduate student interns to

use this approach and have shared the specifics with audiences at several conferences. However, though I had anecdotal evidence that my approach was an effective one–from watching my own students and from the reports of my graduate students–I was unable to present any empirical evidence to this effect.

To address this issue, I undertook a semester-long research project during which the progress of 30 ESL students was observed. The students in this course were systematically taught to identify, prioritize, and correct their most serious and frequent errors. Their compositions were collected throughout the semester and analyzed to see whether the students were able, over the course of the semester, to reduce the number of errors they made in five predefined categories.

Background: The Problem

Attention to grammar in ESL writing classes is an issue that has swung to various extremes over the past 20 years. Early L2 writing researchers (Krashen, 1984; Zamel, 1985) criticized ESL teachers for their obsessive attention to sentence-level error in student writing, claiming that this hindered the development of the students' own ideas. With the widespread acceptance of process approach techniques in both L1 and L2 composition, attention to error went to the opposite extreme–benign neglect. However, it quickly became obvious to some scholars that this view did not lead to the production of student papers that were accurate enough to satisfy the academic community (Eskey, 1983; Horowitz, 1986).

At the same time that teachers were realizing the importance of attention to both ideas and mechanics, fluency and accuracy, three other things were happening. First, research into the area of *error gravity* (e.g., Janopolous, 1992; Santos, 1988; Vann, Lorenz, & Meyer, 1991; Vann, Meyer, & Lorenz, 1984) demonstrated that content-area professors generally find ESL-type errors less tolerable than native-speaker errors and that these errors affect their overall evaluation of the students' papers. Second, researchers who examined ESL student opinions about the written feedback they receive on their papers (Cohen, 1987; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Ferris, 1995a; Foster & Migliacci, 1995; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Leki, 1991; McCurdy, 1992; Radecki & Swales, 1988), learned that ESL students themselves feel that written feedback on their grammar is important (i.e., that they expect it and find it helpful). Third, a number of textbooks concerned specifically with editing student writing have appeared over the past several years (e.g., Ascher, 1993; Fox, 1992; Lane & Lange, 1993; Raimes, 1992). In sum, it seems that the opinions of teachers, content-area professors, students, and textbook publishers have converged: Accuracy is important, and teachers can help their students to improve their editing skills. The question, of course, is how to do so effectively.

Studies of Error Correction in ESL Student Writing

When Should Errors Be Corrected? Studies and discussions of error correction in ESL student writing have addressed the following questions:

1. When should errors be corrected?

2. Which errors should be corrected?

3. By what method(s) should errors be corrected?[2]

With regard to the first question, early discussions of error correction in ESL composition (Hendrickson, 1980; Krashen, 1984), suggested that teachers can most effectively help students to reduce their written errors by intervening *between* drafts of compositions (rather than after a final draft) to point out error location to the student writers. This claim echoed those of L1 researchers (Freedman, 1987; Hillocks, 1986; Knoblauch & Brannon, 1981) and has empirical support from L2 studies (Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Robb, Ross & Shortreed, 1986).

Which Errors Should Be Corrected? Researchers agree that error correction in student writing should be selective (Hendrickson, 1980; Robb, et al., 1986). In particular, they state that error correction in writing will be most effective if teachers focus on errors which are global (interfere with the overall comprehensibility of a text), stigmatizing (offend native speaker audiences) and frequent (Bates, Lane & Lange, 1993; Hendrickson, 1980). Bates et al. suggest that "to be beneficial, feedback on errors must be accurate, clear, consistent, and selective, that is, priority given to those errors that most interfere with communication" (p. 16).

How Should Written Errors Be Corrected? As to how written errors should be corrected, researchers in both L1 and L2 composition have concluded that direct correction of errors in student writing (i.e., correcting the errors for the student) is ineffective in helping students to reduce their frequency of errors in subsequent compositions (Bates et al., 1993; Hillocks, 1986; Knoblauch & Brannon, 1981; Leki, 1990; Robb, et al., 1986). However, indirect correction methods (noting the location and/or type of error and asking students to correct errors themselves) appear to have a more positive effect on long-term student improvement in accuracy and editing skills (Bates et al., 1993; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Hendrickson,

1980; Lalande, 1984; Robb, et al., 1986). Writing researchers also agree that ESL students need to be moved steadily towards independence as editors of their own writing, recognizing that students will eventually face many real-world writing tasks beyond the ESL classroom with which their teachers will not be able to help them (Bates, et al., 1993; Frodesen, 1991; Hendrickson, 1976; Lane & Lange, 1993).

Research Questions

Using these research findings as a springboard, I adopted the action research paradigm to further investigate the issue. I began by identifying the problem and developing a process approach to teaching editing skills. (The term *process approach* is used deliberately. Like the broader application of the term, this view of teaching editing skills assumes that learning editing skills is a recursive discovery process over which the individual student has control and responsibility.) I then sought to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach, using the following research questions to guide the study:

1. Was the editing process students were taught successful in helping individual students to reduce their overall percentages of error?

2. Were the students successful in reducing their percentages of error in specific categories on which they had been instructed to focus?

3. Were the students more successful in reducing errors on in-class or at-home essays?

Method

Subjects. The subjects were 30 university students enrolled in two sections of an ESL freshman composition course at California State University, Sacramento, during the Spring, 1993 semester. The 30 students ranged in class level from freshmen to graduate students. Six were international students; the other 24 were permanent residents of the United States. Their time in the United States ranged from four months to 15 years. The students represented 10 different first language groups (Amharic, Chinese, Estonian, Greek, Hmong, Korean, Laotian, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese), with the largest groups being Vietnamese speakers (9 students), Chinese speakers (8 students), and Spanish speakers (4 students).

All students in the course were at advanced levels of ESL proficiency. They had enrolled in the course after either placing at this level on the university's ESL diagnostic test or passing the previous course. Nearly two-thirds of the students had already taken one or more ESL composition courses at the university. Thus, most of these students were proficient in not only English language skills but English academic writing as well.

The Sample. The student essays analyzed for this study were essays written by the students during the composition class. Although three out-of-class essays and two in-class essays were assigned, some essays were missing from the total sample of 136 essays: 57 written in-class and 79 written out-of-class. The in-class essays averaged 484 words in length; the out-of-class essays were approximately 860 words long.

The essays were written on a variety of topics. They included personal experience, opinion, and comments on and analysis of other authors' texts (see Appendix A). The in-class essays were on assigned topics, but the students had some topical choice for their out-of-class assignments. Thus, students' progress at different points of the semester across a variety of topics and writing situations could be observed. The students wrote a minimum of three drafts of each out-of-class essay. I responded to first drafts, primarily making comments on students' ideas and organization. However, I usually did, in an end note, make a general comment about the student's most pervasive grammar problems, for example, *You have a lot of run-on sentences in this draft. I have marked several examples on the first page of your essay. Watch out for this as you revise.* Students revised their drafts at home and brought in their second drafts, which were edited by peers.[3] They then polished their papers at home and turned in a final (third) draft, on which I provided more comments and corrections and assigned a letter grade. Students were allowed to revise their essays as many times as they liked for a higher grade. Since not all students exercised this option, the third drafts were analyzed for this study.

Instructional Context. The composition class included a variety of activities: discussion of course readings (both teacher and student-led), discussion and practice in writing strategies, and peer revision activities. In addition, students were trained throughout the semester to develop and improve their editing skills. During the first week of the semester, they wrote a diagnostic essay in class. Students then received a diagnostic essay report form (Appendix C) on which their particular areas of weakness were noted, along with an indication of what grade they might receive if still writing at this level at the end of the semester.

Class instruction on editing consisted of the following steps: (a) consciousness-raising about the importance of editing in general and of each particular student's areas of need; (b) training in recognizing major error types; (c) teaching students to find and correct their own errors (Ferris, 1995b).

During the first week of the semester, on a diagnostic essay report form, students were advised that they appeared to have significant problems with certain error types; they were also directed to pay special attention to

these error types during the course. Subsequent classroom activities related to editing included individual and small-group analysis of sample sentences and essays to reinforce the seriousness of the errors and the importance of editing. Such activities were coupled with exercises familiarizing students with the five error categories, peer- and self-editing of students' own essay drafts, and whole-class instruction by the teacher on various discrete grammar points (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Teaching Editing Skills: An Overview

Stage 1: (Weeks 1-3) Focusing Students On Form

Goals:
- Students learn to recognize the importance of improving editing skills
- Students begin to identify their own sources of error

Activities:
- Students write a diagnostic essay; teacher prepares a report of major weaknesses and indicates what sort of grade the student is likely to receive if such problems persist to the end of the term
- Students examine sample sentences and essays for the purpose of noting what comprehensibility problems are rooted in sentence-level errors

Stage 2: (Weeks 4-10) Providing Training In Recognizing Major Error Types

Goals and Activities:
- Students understand and identify major error types in sample essays
- Students peer edit
- Students keep written records (turned in with writing projects) of the major types of errors they make.
- Instruction on major sources of error is given in class, lab, or through independent study, as necessary.

Stage 3: (Weeks 11-15) Students Finding and Correcting Their Own Errors

Goals and Activities
- Students edit their own essays and chart their progress.
- Instruction on major sources of error continues.

Analysis of Sample. Each composition was analyzed for occurrences of error in five major categories (nouns, verbs, sentence structure, punctuation, miscellaneous). (See Figure 2 and Appendix B.) For pedagogical purposes, I had identified the five categories as being representative of the language errors which are most frequent and serious for ESL students in this context and at this level of proficiency.

During the analysis, an error frequency tally sheet was kept for each student (See Appendix C for an example). For each composition, the number of words was counted. Then the essay was read carefully for instances of error of the five major types. Each error was marked, using a color-coding system; after the marking was completed, the number of errors of each type was counted. Finally, for each essay, error percentages were calculated by dividing the number of errors in each category by the number of words in the essay (Kroll, 1990).

In most cases, the errors were easy to identify and classify. For instances which were less clear, a second rater analyzed and categorized the errors as well. Examples of errors for which the second rater was consulted included the following: (a) confusing sentences with multiple layers of errors; (b) lexical errors for which it was not clear whether there was a noun- or verb-form error or whether the writer had simply selected the wrong word; and (c) certain errors in spelling. For such cases, the second rater, who had been socialized previously to the categories of analysis being used, was asked to read the whole essay and then to categorize the particular error(s) in question. About 15% of the essays were read by the second rater. Interrater reliability was high (almost 93%).

Figure 2

Error Categories Used In Analysis

Type 1:	**Noun Errors**
	a. Plural endings
	b. Articles and determiners
Type 2:	**Verb Errors**
	a. Verb tense
	b. Verb form

Type 3:   Sentence Structure Errors
    a. Sentence fragments
    b. Run-ons and comma splices
    c. Extra words
    d. Missing words
    e. Word order

Type 4:   Punctuation Errors
    a. Comma use (not including comma splices)
    b. Semicolon use
    c. Quotation marks
    d. Apostrophes
    e. Capitalization

Type 5:   Miscellaneous Errors
    a. Spelling
    b. Wrong word/word form
    c. Preposition use
    d. Pronoun reference

When all of the essays had been examined, two statistical analyses of the data were completed. First, each individual student's efforts were examined to see whether s/he had decreased percentages of error over the course of the semester. For each of the five error categories, a repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was completed across the five essays (two in class and three at home) that had been collected for the study. Second, the students' percentages of error on in-class versus out-of-class essays were calculated and compared by means of paired tests for each of the five error categories.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: Did Students Decrease Their Overall Percentages of Error? The results indicated that most students were successful in decreasing their overall percentages of error in at least some of the five categories. Of the 30 students, only two showed no improvement whatsoever. Table 1 shows the total number of students who decreased their percentages of error, by each error type. The ANOVA results indicated significant differences in error percentages over the course of the semester in all categories except punctuation.

Table 1

Total Number of Students Who Decreased Their Percentages of Error, by Category

Error Type	Out-of-Class[a]	In-class[b]	ANOVA results		
			F	df	p
1 Nouns	10	22	14.53	4, 68	.000
2 Verbs	18	2	6.97	4, 68	.000
3 Sentence structure	14	11	3.75	4, 68	.008
4 Punctuation	13	12	1.21	4, 68	.315 (ns)
5 Miscellaneous	16	19	6.12	4, 68	.000

Note. [a]$n = 29$; [b]$n = 27$

Research Question 2: Did Students Decrease Their Percentages of Error in Targeted Categories? It is encouraging to note that the overwhelming majority of the students in this study showed at least some improvement in editing their own errors. On the other hand, they were not always successful in reducing their percentages of error in the specific categories on which they had been advised to focus. As Table 2 shows, there was considerable variation in error reduction in the targeted categories across both error category and writing context (in class or at home). For nouns, for example, only 25% of the 20 students who were told to pay special attention to noun errors reduced their error percentages on out-of-class essays, while 90% of these same students made fewer noun errors during in-class writing by the end of the semester.

The results were especially dismal with regard to verb errors, a category of errors given much attention by ESL teachers, students, and content-area professors (Vann et al., 1991): Of 12 students advised to focus on verbs, only six (50%) improved their percentages of error on at-home essays while only one student (8%) decreased his/her number of verb errors on in-class essays.

On the other hand, a lot of improvement was seen in the *sentence structure* and *miscellaneous* categories in both contexts.

Finally, the differences seen in Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate that, in some cases, students improved their error percentages even when they had not been specially instructed by the teacher to work on those types of errors. For instance, 18 of the 30 students in the sample decreased their

error percentages in the verb category on out-of-class writing (Table 1), but only six of the 12 students who had been instructed to focus on verbs improved in this category (Table 2).

Table 2

Students' Success in Reducing Error Percentages in Individual Most Frequent Error Categories

Category	No. of students w/this problem in this category	No. of same students who improved in this category	
		At home	In class
1 Nouns	20	5 (25%)	18 (90%)
2 Verbs	12	6 (50%)	1 (8%)
3 Sentence structure	16	10 (63%)	9 (56%)
4 Punctuation	4	0 (0%)	4 (100%)
5 Miscellaneous	18	10 (56%)	15 (83%)

One explanation for such variation may be the relative difficulty of the morpho-syntactic rules represented in the five categories. For instance, it is not particularly difficult to explain to students when to put appropriate plural endings on nouns or how to avoid sentence fragments or run-on sentences; on the contrary, it is extremely challenging for teachers to present and for students (even native speakers) to grasp the nuances of the English verb tense system. However, it is also likely that these results demonstrate that attention to editing concerns is a highly variable, individualized process, depending on such factors as first language, English language proficiency, learning styles, motivation, and personality. In other words, some students simply may have been more willing and/or more able to attend to these sentence-level problems than others were. If nothing else, this result suggests that an individualized approach to teaching editing, such as the one used in these composition classes, may be the most effective in helping the greatest number of students to improve in their grammatical accuracy.

Another surprising pattern in these data was that many students showed a significant improvement (decline) in their error percentages on their second of three at-home essays, followed by an upswing in error percentages on the third essay. There are two possible explanations for this pattern. One is that the second assignment, which asked students to relate ideas in a reading to their own experiences/opinions, appeared to be less cognitively demanding than the third assignment, which asked the students to analyze an argumentative essay. It has been suggested that the more comfortable student writers are with an essay topic, the more proficient their writing will be on all levels, including the syntactic level; further, argumentative writing has been shown to be especially demanding for second language writers (Ferris, 1994; Leki & Carson, 1995). On the other hand, the explanation may be simply that the third essay was written late in the semester, when the students were burdened with midterms, projects and papers from other classes, and may not have devoted as much time to editing their papers carefully as they had earlier in the term.

Research Question 3: Was There a Difference in Error Percentages Between In-Class and At-Home Essays? Table 3 provides the mean error percentages for the entire group of students in each of the five categories on at-home versus in-class essays, together with the results of the tests which measured differences between the two writing contexts. The results of the second set of statistical analyses were much more consistent, as Table 3 demonstrates: The students as a group made fewer errors in all categories on out-of-class essays. The differences between this finding and those in Tables 1 and 2—which indicated that for some categories, some students made fewer errors on in-class essays than at-home essays (See Table 1 for nouns, for example)—result from the fact that Table 3 looks at the whole group of students, rather than at individual progress (or regression).

Table 3

Error Percentages on At-Home vs. In-Class Essays

Error Type	Home[a]		Class[b]		t test results		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	p
1 Nouns	.007	.00	.011	.01	3.48	29	.002
2 Verbs	.010	.01	.016	.01	4.71	29	.000
3 Sentence structure	.009	.01	.015	.01	2.70	29	.011
4 Punctuation	.009	.01	.011	.01	1.56	29	.129 (ns)
5 Miscellaneous	.013	.01	.024	.01	4.03	29	.000

Note. [a]$n = 79$; [b]$n = 57$

The results shown in Table 3 suggest that students' written production is generally more accurate when they are given adequate time to edit their work. Prior research has indicated that ESL students' writing errors may be judged more harshly by the American academic audience than are native speakers' errors and that ESL students do not in general perform as well as native speakers on timed writing examinations (Ferris, 1994). Thus ESL students may have more opportunities to succeed in university studies if they are allowed to do their written work without the time pressure that characterizes written assignments and examinations in many disciplines. A prime example is the graduation writing examination that is required at many universities, including the one at which this research was conducted. Since students (especially ESL students) may be able to present their writing skills in the best light when they can write out of class (Kroll, 1990), perhaps more universities should adopt the portfolio approach to writing assessment.

Conclusions

The Importance of Personalized Editing Instruction. The somewhat mixed results of this research do not give a clear-cut answer to the original question which inspired the study: Was the system of editing taught to students successful in helping them to reduce their errors? At least modest success was demonstrated, in that only two students showed no improvement at all. The other 28 students made some progress in reducing their error percentages, even if this progress was not consistent across error types, contexts (in- or out-of-class), or assignments. As previously discussed, these mixed results show how individual a process editing really is, and this finding suggests that personalized instruction and guidance in editing may be most effective.

It should also be noted, of course, that this was not experimental research. No control group was used and the effects of natural development over the course of the semester were not measured (even if there were any logical way to measure such effects). In other words, whatever improvement was made by the students was not necessarily the result of the teaching techniques used. Still, the addition of systematic, personalized editing instruction certainly did not appear to have harmed the students. Most of them (28 of 30) showed some improvement over the course of the semester; thus it seems safe to assume that editing instruction helped at least some of them.

The Time Factor. The student writers in this study were far more likely to make errors in the five categories analyzed when writing in class, under time pressure, as shown by the consistent differences seen in Table 3. As discussed above, this result may indicate that out-of-class writing allows ESL students adequate time to monitor their production and thus to present their skills in the best possible light. While there may be practical reasons for continuing to use some sort of in-class evaluation (most notably the prevention of cheating), perhaps such assessment can be more equally balanced with consideration of assignments in which the students have the best opportunity to edit their work for grammatical accuracy.

Directions for Further Research. Since this study was small and had mixed results, it should be replicated before any firm conclusions are drawn. Other aspects of editing that should be further examined are the students' ability to decrease errors in the major categories between preliminary and final drafts (as was analyzed in Fathman & Whalley, 1990) and the effects of teacher and peer feedback on early drafts on grammatical accuracy in later drafts. The effects of students' linguistic proficiency levels and individual learning styles on their ability to edit successfully should also be examined.

Finally, in the last two years, at least four new texts devoted to helping ESL students edit their writing more successfully have been published (Ascher, 1993; Fox, 1992; Lane & Lange, 1993; Raimes, 1992). Future research should evaluate the effectiveness of such texts, used systematically by teachers and students, in helping students to improve their editing skills. These current approaches to error analysis and correction in writing may prove to be more effective in promoting accuracy in student writing than were earlier approaches, which focused on correcting every single error and on teaching students the entire English grammar rather than helping them to prioritize their own areas of need. ■

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Endnotes

1 This research was supported by a grant from the California State University Summer Fellowship Program.

2 This framework of questions was adapted in part from Hendrickson (1980).

3 Students also had access to tutors in the English department writing center and to the learning skills center. Though it is impossible to determine exactly how much help such tutors may have given to particular students, I attempted to ensure that students were doing their own work by requiring them to submit all drafts, peer feedback forms, prewriting notes, and so forth–thus building a fossil record of each essay project.

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Appendix A
Summary Of Essay Topics

In-Class Essays

1. Diagnostic Essay (first week of the semester): Students were given about 45 minutes to write on the following question:

In your opinion, what should be the most important objectives of a university reading/writing class (like this one!)? In your answer, you may wish to consider: (1) the need (in general) for students to take a writing class; (2) specific objectives that a class should meet. You may also wish to call upon your previous experiences with writing instruction, in English or in your native language.

2. Final Examination (end of the semester): Students were given two hours to write on their choice of the two questions below. Prior to the exam, they read "A Mason-Dixon Memory," by Clifton Davis, which appeared in the May, 1993, issue of *Reader's Digest.*

A: Clifton Davis tells of a recent event that triggered a significant childhood memory. Have you had an experience that brought a former incident to mind?

B: Clifton Davis quotes Dondre Green as saying "The kind of love they [his golf teammates] showed me that day will conquer hatred every time." While this is an inspiring and uplifting statement, do you think it is a realistic one? In other words, does the love, support, and kindness of good people outweigh the effects of the bigotry of unkind, narrow-minded people?

Out-of-Class Essays

[Note: All three assignments were taken directly from the student text *Guidelines* (Spack, 1990). For assignments 2 and 3, students were given a choice of readings from *Guidelines* on which to comment. The students wrote three out-of-class drafts on each assignment; only final drafts were used in the error analysis.]

1. Essay 1 (first draft written around week 4 of the semester): Write an essay in which you draw from your own experience to express a personal viewpoint. Describe in detail an event or experience that has led you to learn, believe, or understand something. Your purpose in writing this essay will be to reveal to your classmates and your instructor the significance of what you have experienced. (Spack, 1990, p. 37)

2. **Essay 2 (first draft written around week 8 of the semester):** Write an essay in which you examine the relationship between ideas in the reading and your own experiences and attitudes. Show how the generalizations or theories or experiences of another writer compare to what you have learned from experience or show how they help you make sense of your own world. In writing this essay, your purpose will be to illuminate, evaluate, or test the validity of the ideas contained in the reading. Direct references to the reading—in the form of summary, paraphrase, and quotation—are necessary (Spack, 1990, p. 102).

3. **Essay 3 (first draft written around week 12 of the semester):** Write an essay in which you analyze another author's argumentative essay. Determine what the author says, how well the author's points are made, and what points may have been overlooked. Establish and support your position by either agreeing or disagreeing with—or taking a mixed position toward —some key idea(s) or issue(s) raised in the reading. In writing this essay, your purpose will be to determine the effectiveness of the argument (Spack, 1990, p. 154).

Appendix B

Description Of Error Categories
Used In Analysis

Type 1: Noun Errors

a. Plural endings. This included both nouns which had plural markers (but shouldn't have) and nouns which were missing obligatory plural markers.

    EXAMPLES:
    • The main objectives of this course is to help students to become better writers.
    • All student should learn to write well.

b. Articles/Determiners. Errors were marked if an obligatory article was missing, or if the wrong article or determiner was used.

    EXAMPLES:
    • Good composition teacher should help her students to improve.
    • This problems can only be solved by hard work.

Type 2: Verb Errors

a. Errors in verb tense.

    EXAMPLES:
    • Five years ago, I come to the United States.
    • Five years ago, I had learned English.

b. Errors in verb form.

    EXAMPLE:
    • A teacher have to work very hard.

Type 3: Sentence Structure Errors

a. Sentence fragments.

    EXAMPLE:
    • Teacher that really cares about her students.

b. Run-ons or comma splices.

   EXAMPLE:

   • I didn't know what to do, I had so many problems.

c. Missing words in a sentence.

d. Extra words in a sentence.

e. Word order problems.

Type 4: Punctuation Errors

a. Errors in comma use, both missing and unnecessary commas (excluding comma splices).

b. Errors in semicolon use, both missing and unnecessary semicolons (excluding run-on sentences or comma splices).

c. Missing or misplaced quotation marks.

d. Missing or misplaced apostrophes.

e. Errors in capitalization.

Type 5: Miscellaneous Errors

a. Spelling errors.

b. Errors in word choice or word form.

   EXAMPLES:

   • The tension is at its pick (peak was intended).

   • I am very boring (bored was intended).

c. Errors in preposition use.

d. Errors in pronoun reference.

Appendix C

Forms Used In Analysis With Examples From One Student

1. DIAGNOSTIC ESSAY REPORT

Student #3
Student Name

1. General Comments on Content (Ideas and Organization):

   You have well developed ideas and good insights on the importance of reading and writing skills. You also seem to have a good idea of how to organize an essay.

   I was especially interested in your idea about reading the essay aloud, since most ESL students would not say they wished they could do this.

   I wish that you had touched more on why you think reading and writing skills are important to develop. What are the practical applications of these skills, both in and out of college?

2. General Comments on Editing (Grammar, Spelling, Punctuation):

   You have good control of English sentence structure and a nice vocabulary. You should focus on some of the following problem areas:

   (a) Noun errors. Examples:
   this *three objectives*
   When student *learn*

   (b) Verb errors. Example:
   It encourages me to participation *in class*

   (c) Some sentences are difficult to follow. Example:
   I believe that by having students to read to ourselves
   is necessary in order for a student to practice their
   reading skills.

Grade you would receive if writing at this level at the end of the semester: *B*

[NOTE: This grade has *not* been recorded in my grade book. It is for your information only.]

2. ERROR REPORT FORM

Student Name: Student #3

Essay	Number of Words	Error Types Number of errors \ Error frequency ratio				
		Nouns	Verbs	Sentence structure	Punct.	Misc.
In class						
Diagnostic	357	16\.045	2\.006	4\.011	4\.011	7\.020
Final	695	8\.012	14\.020	10\.014	11\.016	25\.036
At home						
Essay 1	1178	3\.003	11\.009	11\.009	22\.019	18\.015
Essay 2	743	2\.003	5\.007	9\.012	15\.020	15\.020
Essay 3	789	6\.008	12\.015	13\.017	13\.017	20\.025