

Student Error and Reflection Logs in Intermediate and Advanced Academic Writing Classes

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Student instruction 1: Put every coded error into your log, with a separate chart for each error category, except for errors in the Paragraph Structure category. (They are too long). Remember to list the essay number and the error type.

Student instruction 2: Write the original error, then correct it. In the left column, write the original sentence. Highlight the error. In the right column, write a corrected sentence. Highlight the correction.

ERROR CATEGORY: WORD FORM & AGREEMENT			
Essay #	Error Type	ORIGINAL SENTENCE WITH ERROR	NEW SENTENCE WITH CORRECTION(S)
E2b	VF	Therefore, raising the article legal smoking age to 21 helps decreasing the number of health problems in non-smokers.	Therefore, raising the article legal smoking age to 21 helps to decrease the number of health problems in non-smokers.
E2b	VF	...many people argue that adolescents who are 18 years old are considering adults.	...many people argue that adolescents who are 18 years old are considered adults.
E1c	SV	the unemployed in the rural areas creates a burden to the government	the unemployed in the rural areas create a burden to the government
E1c	s/pl	...new college students or new graduates who are about to start their own lifenew college students or new graduates who are about to start their own lives .
E1c	s/pl	People living in the country usually suffer from shortage of fresh water.	People living in the country usually suffer from shortages of fresh water.
E2c	s/pl	In addition, there is no doubt that increasing the smoking age can keep tobacco out of high school .	In addition, there is no doubt that increasing the smoking age can keep tobacco out of high schools .
E2b	s/pl	Although people say that 18-year-olds are old enough to be responsible for their life .	Although people say that 18-year-olds are old enough to be responsible for their lives .
E1c	art	Most people take into consider the three main criteria...	Most people take into consider three main criteria...

Student instruction 3: Reflect on what you have learned.

Try to notice which types of errors you keep making and describe it. Be specific! How will you help yourself correct this problem in the future?

REFLECTION #2 (Essay E2b and E2c)

By doing this second error log, I find that I still make some mistakes about the singular and plural noun. That is:

- When I use plural subject, I should consider about its possession should be plural too.
 - "People say that 18-year-olds are old enough to be responsible for their **lives**."
 - "There is no doubt that increasing the smoking age can keep tobacco out of **high schools**."
- There are some nouns that are non-count and don't need "a/an" such as: research, tobacco..
- Besides, I also have some problems with the article, I need to add "the" to nouns which are specific such as:
 - An organizations: **The** American Lung Association
 - Specific things: raising **the** minimum legal smoking age

In short, I keep making some mistakes like the previous essay. Therefore, I know what problem I have and what grammar I need to focus on.

Student instruction 4: Keep adding to your log.

All of your essays should be on one log this term. You can put similar errors together. This will help you see your progress.

Benefits & Rationale

Put your error feedback back to work

Help your students understand how to correct their own errors. Don't let your feedback go unread.

Break fossilized habits

Raise student awareness of their recurring errors in order to help them break habits.

Help students self-identify their errors and monitor their own progress

Having students write reflections on what they have learned through recording and correcting their own errors helps make this activity personally relevant and applicable to future writing. Regular self-reflection has been shown to improve student progress towards goals (McCarthy, 2011).

Preparing Students to Self-Correct with Error Logs (Adapted from Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005)

Pre-test

Find out which errors students cannot correct on their own

Grammar minilessons

20-30 minutes on a specific point

Editing practice activities

Focus on 1-2 error types; help students identify and correct errors on their own

References

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- McCarthy, T. (2011). Achieving your GOAL: A case study of three learners. In Bruce Morrison (Ed.), *Independent language learning: Building on experience, seeking new perspectives* (pp. 103-118). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Teacher Preparation for Implementing Error and Reflection Logs

1. Create a handout of your error correction codes, organized by category

Error Correction Codes		
Word Form & Agreement	WF	incorrect word form
	VF	incorrect verb form
	VT	verb tense error
	SV	subject-verb disagreement
	s/pl	singular or plural noun error
	poss	possessive noun error
	art	article error
Word Choice	WC	incorrect or awkward word choice
	coll	collocation error
Clause Structure	adj cl	adjective clause error
	n cl	noun clause error
	adv cl	adverb clause error
Sentence Structure (SS)	frag	sentence fragment (incomplete sentence)
	RO	run-on
	CS	comma splice error
	prep	missing, unnecessary, or incorrect preposition
	not //	not parallel
	WO	incorrect or awkward word order
	trans	needs a transition
	conj	needs a conjunction
	?	not clear
	RW	Rewrite this.
Paragraph Structure	choppy ○	choppy: There are too many short, simple sentences. Try combining some to create complex sentences.
	NFS	needs further support: This statement requires examples, facts, or quotations to support it.
	hedge	Use "hedging" words to soften this strong statement.
	rep-or-highlighted in pink	repetitive: Look at the words that are highlighted in pink. You can either take out the repetitive passages or use different words to avoid excessive repetition.
Mechanics & Formatting	p	punctuation error
	cap	capitalization error
	sp	spelling error
	#	Add a space.

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2. Mark student essays using error codes at the location of each error

WHEN: 1st draft: Comment on content only (focus on content)

2nd or 3rd draft: Mark errors (focus on form)

WHAT: For small classes, I would mark all errors (comprehensive approach).

For large classes, I would choose an error category on which to focus for each essay (selective approach).

3. Have students create error and reflection logs throughout the term

A cumulative log containing all errors and reflections throughout the term can help students visualize their progress.