Global Writing Functions and Grammar in ESL Writing Classes

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Outline:

1a. Error gravity
1b. English grammar is *complicated*.

2a. As writing/comp teachers, what should we prioritize?
2b. Global writing functions, higher-order concerns, and global writing concerns

3. Dynamic Written Corrective Feedback

1a. **Error gravity**

How significant/problematic are the grammar errors that we find in students’ written work? Do the errors impede meaning?

- *In / At UC Davis*, most professors give a lot of homework.
- Sam, unfortunately, is in *hospital / the hospital*.
- Janet couldn’t attend the meeting because she had *fever / a fever*.
- Jim stayed home because he had *flu / the flu*.
- We took *bus / a bus* to the mall yesterday.
- I ate *too much food / too many foods* at the party.
- She had *three cups of coffee / three coffees* this morning.
- *The sky was / The skies were* cloudy yesterday.
- They listened to *the wind / the winds*.
- Look up to *heaven / the heavens*.
- *Sisi lived / had lived* in China for 10 years before she came here.
- *Who / Whom* are you talking to?

If you identified any of the underlined words as errors, would you say the errors interfere with meaning?

→ No. Well, then, how significant are they?
→ Yes. Okay. Next question: What are the best ways to help students avoid making those mistakes when they write?
1b. Let’s face it: English grammar is complicated.

Prepositions, determiners, and nouns (singular, plural, uncountable, concrete, abstract) are especially tricky. It takes years and years -- perhaps decades -- to fully acquire the rules.

Regarding determiners and nouns, I often direct students to the Longman Dictionary (http://www.ldoceonline.com/) because I think it provides useful information about countability. However, students sometimes end up feeling more confused -- and can we blame them?

emission → “Why is this word both countable usually plural and uncountable?”

research → “Is it okay to use two/several/many researches in formal writing?”

statistics → “How can this word be both plural and uncountable?”
2a. As writing/comp teachers, what should we prioritize?

I suggest that we keep in mind:

*error gravity
→ Paul Matsuda: “an error-gravity study by Terry Santos...showed that faculty members across the disciplines are ‘willing to look beyond the deficiencies of language to the content’ in texts written by second language writers.”

*the complexity of English grammar

*the amount of time required for language acquisition
→ Michelle Cox: “second language acquisition is a long process and...native-like writing cannot, and should not, be the goal.”
→ CCCC Position Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers¹: “most second language writers are still acquiring syntactic and lexical competence -- a process that will take a lifetime.”

*the fact that each student needs help with the specific types of errors she/he usually has trouble with while writing

*the fact that, in university-level ESL writing classes, we’re not trying to prepare students for grammar tests; we’re trying to facilitate grammatical accuracy (esp. as it relates to meaning) in their written work

*and last but not least: the fact that most multilingual undergrads need help with global writing functions

¹http://www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/secondlangwriting
2b. Global writing functions, higher-order concerns, and global writing concerns

→ Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) stated that “the primary needs of ESL writers consist of extensive and directed practice with global writing functions, as opposed to more extensive language instruction.”

The authors explained that global writing functions include “discourse-level concerns such as audience, purpose, rhetorical structure, coherence, cohesion, and clarity.”

As writing instructors, we should endeavor to help our students *mainly* with:

1. global writing functions
   → “discourse-level concerns such as audience, purpose, rhetorical structure, coherence, cohesion, and clarity”

2. higher-order concerns (HOCs) -- Michelle Cox (Cornell):
   → “In early drafts, students can [and should] be advised to pay attention to higher-order concerns (HOCs), such as idea development, focus, and overall organization, and only [focus] on grammatical issues that get in the way of comprehension. In later drafts, students can be advised to pay attention to lower-order concerns (LOCs), but to focus on only the two or three types of errors that are most disruptive to the reading process.”

3. global writing concerns (GLOCs) -- Brad Hughes (UW-Madison):
   → “Research shows that students are often confused by what we -- their instructors -- want them to concentrate on in their writing and in their revisions. They may think...that correcting semicolon mistakes is as important as anticipating and addressing counterarguments or clarifying or strengthening the main point of their paper....

   “We can help signal priorities if we clearly differentiate between global and local writing concerns. In our assignments, comments, conferences, and evaluation criteria, we can help students by focusing first on conceptual- and structural-level planning and revisions before grammatical- and lexical-level revisions. By no means am I advocating that we ignore language problems in our students’ writing. Rather, I’m urging us to *start* our assignments, comments, and conferences by focusing on global writing concerns *particular to that assignment* -- so that we and our students don’t overlook those; so that students get clear guidance from us about how to strengthen their ideas, their analyses, and their arguments; and so that students have papers worth editing and polishing. *Then* we can turn our attention -- and our students’ -- to improving sentences, words, and punctuation.

   “In the assignment, in comments, in discussions with students, and in evaluation criteria, focus first on whole-text issues such as ideas or content, focus, genre, argument, thesis, development, organization, clarity of purpose, awareness of audience....”
This is an overview of the work students are expected to do in one of the classes I teach at UC Davis -- UWP 22: Intermediate Reading & Writing for Multilingual Students:

During a 10-week quarter, students have to write at least 4,000 words.

- A diagnostic essay (timed, in class). The teacher marks, returns, and discusses these essays with the class. Students may or may not be asked to revise/rewrite them.
- **Paper 1:** a multi-draft, out-of-class narrative essay that requires information (quote or paraphrase) from at least one of several articles provided by the teacher.
  - D1 = in-class peer review (focus on content, organization, etc. -- not grammar)
  - D2 = in-class peer editing (focus on grammar/language control)
  - D3 = teacher provides feedback on content and language control
  - Students submit final drafts for grades.
- **Paper 1 reflection memo**
- **Paper 2:** a multi-draft, out-of-class summary/response essay. The teacher provides the article(s).
  - D1 = in-class peer review (focus on content, organization, etc. -- not grammar)
  - D2 = in-class peer editing (focus on grammar/language control)
  - D3 = teacher provides feedback on content and language control
  - Students submit final drafts in their portfolio folders.
- **Paper 3/Midterm:** an argumentative essay (timed, in class). The teacher provides several articles approximately one week before the midterm. Students are required to cite at least two of them.
- **Midterm reflection memo**
- **Paper 4:** a multi-draft, out-of-class research paper (either thesis-driven or exploratory). Students must cite at least three credible sources – one provided by the teacher and two that they find online. Preliminary assignments include: evaluations of sources, text analyses, etc.
  - D1 = in-class peer review (focus on content, organization, etc. - not grammar)
  - D2 = in-class peer editing (focus on grammar/language control)
  - D3 = teacher provides feedback on content and language control
  - Students submit final drafts in their portfolio folders.
- **Reflective cover letter:** this is a multi-draft, out-of-class assignment that requires students to write about what they have learned, how they have improved their reading/writing skills, and why they believe they are ready to move up to the next level.
  - Students have opportunities to get feedback from classmates, but the teacher doesn’t collect their drafts. After peer review/peer editing, students have a few days to edit and revise on their own before they submit final drafts in their portfolio folders.
- **Paper 5/Final:** an argumentative essay (timed, in class). The teacher provides several articles approximately one week before the final. Students are required to cite at least three of them. Also, students are strongly encouraged to include a counterargument.
- **Timed Writing Paragraphs (TWPs):** students do this at least five times throughout the quarter, and then they write a reflective essay about their error patterns, what they learned from TWPs, etc.

Italicized = the final draft goes into a portfolio folder, which is evaluated at the end of the quarter by two teachers. The four papers in the portfolio folder (P2, P4, Reflective cover letter, and Final) are worth 50% of each student’s grade.
So...along with global writing functions/higher-order concerns/global writing concerns, most of my students need help with:

- reading articles/texts thoroughly
- annotating articles
- thinking critically
- summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting
- identifying and introducing sources
- integrating source material into their writing
- avoiding plagiarism
- arguing and persuading
- making logical conclusions
- using counterarguments
- understanding how to give feedback to peers and how to use feedback from both peers and instructors
- reading and understanding prompts

I have found that if I devote a lot of class time to grammar, some of my students might show improvements in linguistic accuracy. However, they may not be able to pass and/or may not be fully prepared for the next course in our sequence (UWP 21 -> 22 -> 23) because they will be lacking in these areas:

1. global writing functions
2. higher-order concerns (HOCs)
3. global writing concerns (GLOCs)
4. everything else that I listed above -- and we could probably add more, couldn't we?

One the other hand, if I devote a lot of class time to 1, 2, 3 & 4, I cannot expect students to learn/acquire grammar knowledge incidentally.

→ Paul Matsuda: “Both from research and experience, we know that the development of grammatical competence in a second language is a slow and incremental process, and even though the process can be sped up somewhat by instruction, there is no guarantee that students will be able to learn what is being taught.

“That second language writers need to acquire the grammar of the target language goes without saying. Yet, the efficacy of grammar instruction has been challenged in the field of second language acquisition….”

“In the writing classroom, the best way to address language issues that are...relevant to individual students is to address them through feedback on student writing.”

The million-dollar question, then, is:

★ How is it possible to spend most of my class time on 1-4 and help my students with grammatical accuracy?
3. Dynamic Written Corrective Feedback (DWCF)

Recommendations:

- Do grammar mini-lessons occasionally and give short explanations of grammar rules when necessary; the grammar points should be related to errors that all or most of your students are making in their written work.
- Direct your students to websites, etc. where they can study and practice grammar on their own (e.g., http://success.ucdavis.edu/services/aggie-grammar-guide/index.html); perhaps let them know that they can ask you questions about grammar during your office hours or by email.
- Utilize dynamic written corrective feedback.

The following is from Dynamic Written Corrective Feedback in Developmental Multilingual Writing Classes by Kendon Kurzer (TESOL Quarterly, 2017):

“dynamic written corrective feedback…, a mode of providing specific, targeted, and individualized grammar feedback in developmental English as a second language (ESL) writing classes…” (p. 1).

What exactly is dynamic written corrective feedback (DWCF)?

“DWCF is an individualized feedback method in which students write for approximately 10 minutes on a given topic at regular intervals (daily or weekly). The teacher returns the student writing with coded error feedback. Students then self-edit their texts and return them to the teacher for additional feedback, and the process is repeated until the draft is error free or reaches an established level of accuracy. Students also keep records of their errors to help them see, study, and correct personal patterns of error and thus move toward autonomy as independent self-editors…” (p. 2).

“DWCF was ‘designed to help L2 learners improve the accuracy of writing by ensuring that instruction, practice, and feedback are manageable, meaningful, timely, and constant’ (Hartshorn & Evans, 2012, p. 30), both for students and for instructors, and matches pedagogical best practices espoused by research into written corrective feedback in a number of areas” (p. 3).

“Rather than focusing on only a single or a few error types, DWCF can be implemented using a comprehensive coding system that addresses all major error categories, and thus may effectively target each student’s specific needs” (p. 4).
“from DWCF, students gain practice in [editing and] revision using their own authentic texts” -- which can lead to “increased accuracy, despite lacking formal rule-based instruction” (p. 4).

“students who experience DWCF are capable of effectively self-editing, reinforcing the conclusion that DWCF may contribute to learners’ autonomy as accurate writers” (p. 15).

“multilingual students who experience DWCF in developmental ESL writing classes are better at self-editing than students who do not,...suggesting that DWCF may be helpful at building student autonomy as independent editors of their own writing” (p. 16).

“The results of this study help confirm that DWCF aligns with best practices and theories regarding second language acquisition” (p. 20).

“multilingual students at a variety of levels benefit from instruction supplemented with DWCF” (p. 21).

“Although more research is necessary for us to gain a solid understanding of the possible role DWCF may play in the field of L2 writing, this study supports its role as an effective method of providing specific, targeted, and individual feedback to multilingual students…” (p. 22).

“Specifically, students who participate in a developmental writing program that offers grammar instruction supplemented by DWCF appear better able to produce more accurate texts regarding global, local, and mechanical traits (Bates et al., 1993) than their counterparts, at a wide range of language proficiencies. **DWCF is an extremely manageable method of providing targeted feedback in a manner that doesn't require extensive time in or out of class because the paragraphs are [typically] short and the coding system is relatively simple.** DWCF may thus be an appropriate grammar supplement in a writing course. Research on DWCF has shown that it is effective in both intensive English programs and developmental writing programs for matriculated multilingual students…” (pp. 22-23).

**DWCF is “a systematic approach to focused corrective feedback...that still manages to employ a comprehensive coding system...to target a wide range of student errors.... As an indirect feedback approach that places the bulk of the responsibility for learning the target features on the learners themselves...** DWCF may be a pedagogical tool that enables teachers to...provide feedback that focuses on individual student needs and may result in increased automatization of accurate language production.... By building a foundation of accuracy, multilingual students may be more prepared for challenging writing assignments later on in their university careers; DWCF may be an effective pedagogical approach to help students develop such a foundation” (p. 23).

Steps:
1. Provide students with a chart that shows the codes/symbols and types of errors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Error Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VF</td>
<td>Verb Form</td>
<td>I can’t talk now because I am play a game. (am playing) Psychology expose you to human behavior. (exposes or will expose)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT</td>
<td>Verb Tense</td>
<td>It happen yesterday. (happened)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>Sentence Structure</td>
<td>Because they thought it was good. (They thought…..) Although relationships are important, but they are time-consuming. (Use either “Although” or “but” -- not both.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WO</td>
<td>Word Order</td>
<td>We cannot draw clear a conclusion. (a clear conclusion)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WC</td>
<td>Word Choice</td>
<td>She always says that raising a pet needs a lot of responsibility. (requires)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Prepositions</td>
<td>I had to be responsible of everything. (for)</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Determiners</td>
<td>His trip to U.S. was harder than he expected. (the U.S.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NF</td>
<td>Noun Form</td>
<td>All family member are supposed to get along. (members) She received too much informations. (information)</td>
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<td>WF</td>
<td>Word Form</td>
<td>They felt boring during the lecture. (bored)</td>
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<td>SP</td>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>I never worried about my teeth getting bad. (teeth)</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>According to studies it is true. (According to studies, it)</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Capitalization</td>
<td>Some students love to stay up late. they also love to eat pizza and junk food. (They)</td>
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<td>^</td>
<td>Insert</td>
<td>A good major helps you earn a lot money. (a lot of money)</td>
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<td>abc</td>
<td>Omit</td>
<td>I chose that class was because it seemed interesting to me.</td>
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<td>?</td>
<td>Meaning is not clear</td>
<td>He borrowed some smoke.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AWK</td>
<td>Awkward wording</td>
<td>Candies make children feel a sweet taste and a happy life.</td>
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</table>
2. Provide students with an error log.
Kurzer: “Students...keep records of their errors to help them see, study, and correct personal patterns of error and thus move toward autonomy as independent self-editors.”

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<tr>
<th>Error Log</th>
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3. Give students a prompt/topic/question and have them spend 10-15 minutes writing. Kurzer: “students write for approximately 10 minutes on a given topic at regular intervals (daily or weekly).”

You can allow your students to type, but I usually ask my students to write on paper because I want to see what they are capable of doing when they don't have access to spell-checking tools, dictionaries, etc.

Some examples of prompts/questions:

1. What do you like to do when you have free time? Describe an activity you enjoy and explain why you enjoy it.
2. In your opinion, what is an important discovery or invention that has improved people’s lives?
3. What are the characteristics of a successful college student?

Here are the actual prompts that I’ve used this quarter: {Incidentally, I call these exercises Timed Writing Paragraphs (TWPs) rather than DWCF.}

Instructions: You have 10-15 minutes to do this on paper with a pencil or a pen.
- Do not use your phones or electronic devices.
- Write clearly.
- Skip lines = make your paragraph double-spaced.

(TWP 0)
Write a well-organized paragraph about your strengths and weaknesses and your academic goals. Try to answer the following questions:
- What are your strengths and weaknesses in vocabulary, specifically?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses in grammar, specifically?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses in English writing, generally?
- What are your academic goals (e.g., for improving your vocabulary, grammar, and writing), and how are you planning to accomplish your goals?
(TWP 1)
Compare your life and schedule in high school with your life and schedule here at UC Davis. What are two or three differences that you have experienced/noticed/faced so far?

Why are these differences significant – perhaps for your academic success or for your well-being?

If these differences are difficult or challenging, explain how you are going to deal with them.

(TWP 2)
The paragraph below includes quotes and information from an article in the New York Times. The author, Jane Brody, claims that positive thoughts lead to healthier bodies.

According to Jane Brody in *A Positive Outlook May Be Good for Your Health*, positive emotions and thoughts “can do far more than raise one’s spirits. They may actually improve health and extend life. There is no longer any doubt that what happens in the brain influences what happens in the body.” Brody added that “Studies have shown an indisputable link between having a positive outlook and health benefits like lower blood pressure, less heart disease, better weight control and healthier blood sugar levels.”

Do you believe that positive thoughts can lead to healthier bodies? State and explain your opinion.

Please include a quote or some paraphrased information from the above paragraph by Jane Brody.

{TWP 2 was preparation for the upcoming Midterm. *A Positive Outlook May Be Good for Your Health* is one of the required readings.}

(TWP 3)
One of your friends here at UC Davis doesn’t feel well. She or he has a cold and a fever. What do you think your friend should do in order to recover and feel better?

Imagine that you’re writing a letter/email/message to your friend.

- Give your friend some useful suggestions.
- Let your friend know that you care about her/him.
- Maybe offer to do something nice for your friend.
Be sure to write at least one paragraph.

Before you submit your paper, spend a few minutes proofreading and editing. If you find mistakes (grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.), try to fix them.

4. Kurzer: “The teacher returns the student writing with coded error feedback. Students then self-edit their texts and return them to the teacher….”

“Students also keep records of their errors [with the Error Logs] to help them see, study, and correct personal patterns of error and thus move toward autonomy as independent self-editors…”

TWP 1 D1 (page 1) by Z.J.

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Compare to the life in high school, my new life in UC Davis is more challenging.

The first difference I face so far is that the assignments will not directly tell you. We need to check the Canvas many times a day to make sure the homework will not be missed. The homework also have many ways to upload (like Google drive, OWL, Webwork...). It is hard to remember all that. So it really difficult for me to get used to it.

The second difference is the large amount of reading. I study 18 years in Chinese. It is a little
Error Log
VF (Verb Form) 1
VT (Verb Tense) 1
SS (Sentence Structure) 1
WC / AWK (Word Choice / Awkward) 1
PP (Preposition) 1
WF (Word Form) 1
SP (Spelling) 1
Insert 1
Omit 1
*SV (Subject-Verb Agreement) 1
*WW (Wrong Word) 1

*I recently added SV & WW.

TWP1 D2
Comparing to the life in high school, my new life at UC Davis is more challenging.

The first difference that I face so far is that the assignments are always put on the system and would not address on classes. We need to check the Canvas system many time a day to make sure we will not miss any assignment. The homework also has many ways to upload (like Google Drive, OWL and WebWork). It is a little difficult for me to get used to every system, and hard to remember what we should do to upload our homework on them.

The second difference is the large amount of readings. I studied 18 years in Chinese, it is a little

This student lost one point for the SS mistake, one point for the ?/AWK mistake, half a point for -ing instead of -ed, half a point for time/times, and half a point for the P/SS mistake. I encouraged him to ask me, a friend, a tutor, or a writing specialist for help before submitting future TWP D2s.
I strongly believe that positive thoughts can lead to healthier bodies. This is because humans' mental health links with our physical ability to be active and vice versa. Whenever I feel demotivated or tired, and have no energy to be productive, I would force myself to go for a run or do some sort of outdoor activities, e.g., playing tennis. And almost every time, I will have so much more energy as adrenaline rushes through my nervous system. So because of this, I feel like I want to be more proactive, which really benefits my brain as it is being trained and uses more to think critically when...
TWP2 D2 10/16/17

I strongly believe that “positive thoughts can lead to healthier bodies.” This is because humans’ mental health links with our physical ability to be active and vice versa. Whenever I feel unmotivated or tired, and have no energy to be productive, I force myself to go for a run or do some sort of outdoor activities, e.g. playing tennis. And almost every time, I will have so much more energy as the adrenaline rushes through my nervous system. So because of this, I feel like I want to be more proactive, which will benefit my brain as it is being trained and used more to think critically when

*This student lost only half a point for the punctuation mistake.*

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Do students benefit from dynamic written corrective feedback -- a.k.a. timed writing paragraphs (TWPs)? At the end of the quarter, I have my students reflect on the TWP exercises.

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**Timed Writing Paragraphs (TWP) -- Reflection Memo**

Type a paragraph or a few paragraphs about the TWP exercises that you did in this class. Look at your Error Log and your old TWP papers. Think about the progress you have made in grammar and language control over the past two months.

Answer at least a few of the following questions:

- In your TWP papers, what were your most common errors/problems?
- Before this quarter, were you aware of these errors/problems?
- Over the past 7-8 weeks, while you were writing Paper 1, Paper 2, and other assignments (not only for UWP 22 but also for other classes), did you keep in mind your most common errors? Did you try to avoid making them and/or did you try to fix them? Why or why not?
- In the future, how will you avoid making these errors in your writing?

Be sure to type 1-3 paragraphs, not just a list of answers. Please check your paper for mistakes (grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.) before you submit it. Required length: 200-300 words.
This is a reflection memo from one of my former students:

Anonymous

TWP Reflection Memo

Word count: 225

In this class, I have learned a lot from TWP and found it very helpful. By doing the timed writings in class, I developed my writing speed and fluency, and practiced the grammar. Through the TWP which we did this quarter, the most common mistakes I made were word form and word choice. When doing timed writings, we were supposed to write as much as we could in the limited time. As a result, I made many grammar mistakes that I might not make when writing an essay out of class. I sometimes forget to use the proper form or tense of a word. Before taking this course, I was aware of that problem but since I was worse at particles and sentence structures, I did not pay much attention on it. In the past 7-8 weeks, I have always kept my common errors in mind and tried my best to avoid them. Fortunately, the effects started to show. My error log was able to show that the number of WF and WC mistakes is gradually decreasing. In the future, I will continuously work on avoiding these types of mistakes by looking up words I do not know how to use and trying to memorize them. I believe the difficulty will be overcome and these mistakes will eventually disappear in my writing if I do so.
Are you ready to practice using the codes on page 9?

My dear friend,

You haven't go to yesterday's lecture, right? I heard that you have a cold and a fever. Do you feel better now? You really need more exercise, bro.

I hope you can go to ARC with me next time. Of course, after you become health again.

Byw, don't forget to drink more hot water! Hot water and good naps can help you fight with illness.

I have some medicine brought from China. They are very effective. This afternoon I will go to your dorm and give you some, if you don't need them this time they may help you in future.

All my best for you.
Dear Mark:

I heard that you had a cold. I am sorry to hear about that. The weather is getting cold. You should wear more warm. I have some suggestions for you. Do you feel tired and sleepy? Get some orange juice then go to sleep. I always do this when I’m not feeling well. And after you get up, you can go to take a shower. Don’t eat food which are spicy and salty, because it will make you thirsty. Remember to drink a lot of water. My mom always tell me to drink more water when I had cold. Another important thing, do not stay up at night! You need to get rest. If those suggestions are not working,
According to the most current research findings, error feedback and other classroom support can help students improve their written accuracy and develop self-editing strategies under several important conditions:

- Feedback on student papers should generally be **selective** rather than comprehensive so that students can focus on a few errors at a time.
- Feedback should be **focused** (on specific patterns of error) rather than unfocused (simply marking whatever error/problem the teacher notices).
- Feedback should include **explicit metalinguistic information** about the error so that the student writer learns more about the L2 from the feedback. (This can take a variety of forms, such as explanations in the margins or in an endnote, links to handbook explanations, etc.).
- Feedback should primarily focus on **“treatable” patterns of error** (i.e., issues about which students can study/learn rules) rather than idiosyncratic issues (e.g., preposition errors).
- Feedback should be **followed up** with opportunities for students to ask questions about their errors (in class or in a conference with a teacher or tutor), to revise or rewrite their texts based upon the corrections, and to reflect upon or analyze what they have learned about their own error patterns.
- In addition to receiving error feedback from the teacher, students should receive **explicit strategy training** on finding and correcting their own errors so that they can move towards greater autonomy and control in this area. …
- **Students may also benefit from a procedure known as dynamic written corrective feedback (DWCF)**, in which they write short texts frequently (even daily), receive immediate correction, revise the texts until they are error-free, and chart their progress. DWCF allows students to focus consistently on a smaller piece of text (a paragraph or two) so that they can attend to and analyze their own language errors more effectively.
- Teachers can provide classroom **mini-lessons** targeted to the students’ needs (common errors that the teacher has noticed and/or language forms that students may need for a particular writing task). These lessons should not only present rules but also give students focused opportunities to apply new language knowledge to in-progress or completed texts of their own. Such lessons can be a useful complement to individualized error feedback…. 
- **In-class peer- and self-editing workshops** can be useful for students to practice self-editing strategies that they can use in the future. …

Addressing accuracy and facilitating ongoing second language acquisition in student writing is a challenging endeavor that requires thoughtful planning to do well. Haphazard, decontextualized grammar exercises will not bear much fruit, nor will excessive but unfocused correction/line-editing of student texts. However, it can be done, and student success in academic literacy development depends, in part, upon programs’ and teachers’ effective implementation of strategies to foster accuracy in students’ writing.
Part One: General Statement

Some students may have difficulty adapting to or adopting North American discursive strategies because the nature and functions of discourse, audience, and rhetorical appeals often differ across cultural, national, linguistic, and educational contexts. …

Furthermore, most second language writers are still in the process of acquiring syntactic and lexical competence – a process that will take a lifetime. …

Additionally, students who grew up using languages other than English may retain features of those languages in their English writing long after they leave their first-year writing courses. So, while students emerge as members of their fields through upper-division and graduate courses, they also continue to emerge as writers – often in ways unique to their cultural and linguistic backgrounds and educational and other social experiences.

Part Two: Guidelines for Writing and Writing-Intensive Courses

Assessment – The evaluation of second language texts should take into consideration various aspects of writing (e.g., topic development, organization, grammar, word choice). Writing instructors should look for evidence of a text’s rhetorically effective features, rather than focus only on one or two of these features that stand out as problematic. …

Part Four: Guidelines for Teacher Preparation and Preparedness

Writing programs should encourage instructors to perceive their institutional roles as guides that will help all students develop their academic literacy by identifying the strengths and the issues that need the student’s attention. …

Response – It may take more time for an instructor to “hear” what a second language writer is attempting to communicate through a piece of writing. Second language students may require more conferencing time with their teachers, so that teachers can discuss global issues first, and then attend to local issues. Teacher preparation should include discussion on how the prose second language writers produce can violate their aesthetic expectations for academic English; instructors…should look for the textual features that are rhetorically effective, and prioritize two or three mechanical or stylistic issues that individual second language writers should focus on throughout the duration of the course.

Part Five: Considering L2 Writing Concerns in Local Contexts

Recent statistics collected by the US Census Bureau indicate that almost 20% of the US population speaks a language other than English at home…. Writing programs should consider that students enrolled in US college composition courses – “ESL” or “mainstream” – as well as in writing and writing-intensive courses across the curriculum may vary in their linguistic backgrounds and their experiences with academic English. We recommend writing programs develop a better awareness of the language experiences of their students, including understanding the evolution of English – its fluidity and its global variation (i.e., World Englishes).
References/Bibliography


