

Teaching Reading and Writing

Responding to writing

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Learning outcomes

This module of teaching reading and writing focuses on responding to writing. It considers who feeds back, how do they feed back and what do they feed back on. By the end of the module you will be able to:

- identify a range of techniques for giving feedback on written work
- explain the benefits of these techniques
- explore the concept of peer feedback and how it can be used in class.

1 Before you watch

a. What is the difference between correcting written work and giving feedback on it?

b. Do you agree (✓) or disagree (✗) with the following statements?

You must always grade learners' writing. For example, 63%, 7/10, B+.	
Sometimes you should just comment on learners' writing.	
You must never use red ink for marking.	
You should correct all the mistakes in a piece of written work.	
Sometimes you shouldn't correct any mistakes or comment on performance. Instead you should respond to what they have written and focus on writing fluency.	

Try to compare your answers with a partner.

2 Watch one

2.1 Giving feedback and marking

Watch and listen to the commentary at the beginning of **Responding to writing: Part 1** (00:00 to 00:58). Then pause the video.

a. Why is it important to give feedback?

b. The trainer says:

"You need to have a plan for feedback. Who gives it? ... How is it given? ... And what is the focus?"

Complete the table with information on who, how and what

Who	How	What
•	•	•
•	•	•
	•	
	•	

Watch the next sequence of **Responding to writing: Part 1** (01:29 to 04:45). Then pause the video.

c. You will hear five teachers giving tips on marking and giving feedback. Put these tips in the order that you hear them.

Order	Tip	Benefit
	Ask learners to check each other's work (peer review).	
	Use a correction code with symbols.	
	Focus on specific points only for feedback.	
	Tell learners the marking criteria. (How the marks are awarded and why.)	
	Give tasks that are easy to mark. (A numbered paragraph ordering exercise).	

d. For each tip how do you think the learners will benefit from the approach?

2.2 Using a correction code

Correction codes are symbols the teacher uses when correcting written work. The code tells learners what type of error they have made, and learners can then attempt to correct their error themselves, using the symbols to guide them.

Watch the final sequence of **Responding to writing: Part 1** (04:58 to 09:15) and listen to a teacher talking about using correction codes.

- a. Read the statements below as you watch and listen to the teacher. Are the statements true or false? Correct any false statements.

1. The teacher always develops the correction code on her own..	T / F
2. The correction code is always displayed on the classroom wall.	T / F
3. The teacher marks the first draft of the learners' scripts.	T / F
4. The teacher marks the second or third drafts.	T / F
5. The correction code is not used in formal assessment tasks.	T / F
6. The teacher uses this method with adult learners.	T / F
7. If the method is used with young learners, the teacher suggests using all the symbols.	T / F

- b. Could you use a correction code with your learners? When would you use it?

2.3 Feedback focus

- a. Remember that when you plan for feedback you also need to decide on the focus. Look at the following extracts from an adult learner's writing task. Feedback is given in four different ways. What is the focus of each? Language accuracy, content or process?

i.	ii.	iii.	iv.
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i.

Meanwhile we are expecting^{WW} the end of the term, the coming of the Spring Festival, ^ the getting-together^{WF} with my whole family. You know I work in Wenzhou in East China but my hometown is in central China, where my parents, uncles, my^X sisters and brothers live and work. I am eager to see them. We might drive home, depending on the weather. We may choose^{RW} a sunny day without rain, snow, ice or frost. My husband and I will take turns to drive.

Correction code

WW = wrong word

X = extra word in this sentence

^ = missing word

RW = rewrite

WF = wrong form

ii.

Meanwhile we are expecting the end of the term, the coming of the Spring Festival, the getting-together with my whole family. You know I work in Wenzhou in East China but my hometown is in central China, where my parents, uncles, my sisters and brothers live and work. I am eager to see them. We might drive home, depending on the weather. We may choose a sunny day without rain, snow, ice or frost. My husband and I will take turns to drive.

Eva,

Well done. You have sequenced the information in a logical order. It could be improved with more detail for example:

- What does your family do when it has a get-together?
- When was the last time you saw your family?
- Why does the weather affect your drive?

This will also give you more opportunity to demonstrate what you know.

iii.

Meanwhile we are **expecting** the end of the term, the coming of the Spring Festival, the getting-together with my whole family. You know I work in Wenzhou in East China but my hometown is in central China, where my parents, uncles, **my** sisters and brothers live and work. **I** am eager to see them. We might drive home, depending on the weather. **We** may choose a sunny day without rain, snow, ice or frost. My husband and I will **take turns** to drive.

Comment [1]: This is not quite the right word. I think 'looking forward to' is better

Comment [2]: You don't need 'my' here.

Comment [3]: Good sentences

Comment [4]: What do you mean exactly here? 'It would have to be a sunny day...'

Comment [5]: Good phrasal verb

iv.

Meanwhile we are expecting the end of the term, the coming of the Spring Festival, the getting-together with my whole family. You know I work in Wenzhou in East China but my hometown is in central China, where my parents, uncles, my sisters and brothers live and work. I am eager to see them. We might drive home, depending on the weather. We may choose a sunny day without rain, snow, ice or frost. My husband and I will take turns to drive.

Eva,

This uses very good language and is very accurate. I noticed that you spent some time editing the draft, looking back on previous mistakes and trying to avoid them this time round. This was successful – well done. Next time, in the edit stage, you can also think about paragraphing. Paragraph 2 for example, is a bit too long. Where could you break it up?

b. What is the difference between i. and iii.?

c. Which techniques do you like? Could you use them with your classes?

2.4 Feedback and correction in class

- a. Watch and listen to the first sequence of **Responding to writing: Part 2** (00:00 to 07:15). It shows three different ways of giving feedback. Complete the table for each example.

Feedback method	Feedback form: written / spoken	Feedback focus
Peer to peer correction		
Teacher feedback to pairs of learners		
Peer to peer evaluation		

2.5 Peer feedback

Watch the rest of **Responding to writing: Part 2** (07:33 to 09:26) and answer the questions.

- a. What comments do the teacher and learners make about the process of peer feedback?

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-
-
-
-
-

- b. Do you agree with their comments?

3 Reflection

- a. Look back over the module and choose two feedback or correction techniques which are new to you and which you like. How could you use these techniques with one of your classes? Make some notes below.

- b. Make notes on how your learners would benefit from these two techniques.

- c. Try out the techniques and come back to this page in two or three weeks and complete the table.

What did you try	How did it go?	Learner benefits

Transcripts and answers

Transcripts of trainer's talk

2.1 Giving feedback and marking

Giving feedback to your students is really important. Feedback on what they've done well as well as guidance on how to get better.

You need to have a plan for feedback. Who gives it? You or the students themselves? How is it given? To the class as a whole or individually? Is it spoken or written? And what is the focus? Is it on the content of the writing? Or perhaps it's on the language used or the process of writing itself.

Let's listen now to some tips on marking and giving feedback. Which of these methods have you tried in your classes? Which ones could work well with your students? Watch the interviews and make notes to answer the questions in the viewing task. The answers will appear at the end of the section.

2.2 Using a correction code

Here are some ideas for getting students to really think about the errors they are making and to learn by correcting themselves.

2.4 Feedback and correction in class

Now let's have a look at some examples of teachers and students giving feedback in a range of ways. Watch the films and make notes to answer the questions in the viewing task. The answers will appear at the end of the sequence.

2.5 Peer feedback

This class have really benefitted from working together to correct each other's work. Listen to some handy tips from the teacher on how to set up peer correction and how his students have found the experience.

Answers

1 Before you watch

- a. To **correct** something is to change it in order to make it right or to improve it
 To give **feedback** is to tell someone how well they are doing. This could be at a certain point in the course, or after an exercise that learners have just completed.

2.1 Giving feedback and marking

- a. It is important to give feedback so learners can know what they have done well and have guidance on how to get better
- b. *"You need to have a plan for feedback. Who gives it?... How is it given?... And what is the focus?"*

Who	How	What
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teacher • learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to the class as a whole • to learners individually • spoken • written 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • content • language • process

- c. Order, tips and benefits

Order	Tip	Benefit
3.	Ask learners to check each other's work (peer review).	Learners learn both from the mistakes and good points of their peers' work. It also helps them to edit their own writing.
2.	Use a correction code with symbols.	Helps learners to identify and correct their own mistakes.
1.	Focus on specific points only for feedback.	Learners focus on points one at a time so they can clear up any problems.
5.	Tell learners the marking criteria. (How the marks are awarded and why.)	Clear assessment criteria helps learners to understand the important aspects of the task and what is expected of their work.
4.	Give tasks that are easy to mark. (A numbered paragraph ordering exercise).	So that even in big classes learners can get their work marked by the teacher.

2.2 Using a correction code

a.

1. The teacher always develops the correction code on her own. The teacher often develops the correction code with learners.	false
2. The correction code is always displayed on the classroom wall.	true
3. The teacher marks the first draft of the learners' scripts. The learners mark each other's first drafts (peer correction).	false
4. The teacher marks the second or third drafts.	true
5. The correction code is not used in formal assessment tasks.	true
6. The teacher uses this method with adult learners.	true
7. If the method is used with young learners, the teacher suggests using all the symbols. The teacher suggests using only three or four symbols with young learners.	false

2.3 Feedback focus

a.

i. language accuracy	ii. content	iii. language accuracy	iv. process
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b. The difference between the language accuracy examples.

In iii. the teacher has corrected the mistakes for the learner whereas in i. the teacher uses a correction code. Correction codes encourage learners to identify and correct the mistake themselves which enhances learning.

In iii. the learners have used word processors for the task and the teacher is able to mark the learner's work using the same word processing package and a feature called 'track changes'. This can save time, makes the task more authentic and will motivate learners. Of course, it may not be possible in all contexts.

2.4 Feedback and correction in class

a Types of feedback

Method	Form: written / spoken	Focus
Peer to peer correction	Written and spoken	Grammar, vocabulary, cohesion and linking, organisation of ideas
Teacher feedback to pairs of learners	Spoken	Use of language and word choices
Peer to peer evaluation	Written	Positive comments about essay structure, vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, ideas and support.

2.5 Peer feedback

a. The process of peer feedback?

- Give guidance. Tell c to look for specific points when correcting each other's work.
- Don't expect them to correct all errors.
- If learners have done the activity themselves, they can often offer feedback quite easily.
- One learner's writing is seen from another point of view.
- Another person can add something new.
- Learners can learn new techniques from each other

Acknowledgements

Session notes developed by Marianne Tudor-Craig

Video produced by Jane Boylan

With thanks to the following ELT practitioners and learners, for their contribution to the video footage.

Christopher Lewis (UK)

Akhter Jahan (Bangladesh)

Nadeem Al-Murshedi (Yemen)

Getachew Melaku Yitbarek (Ethiopia)

Bimali Indrarathne (Sri Lanka)

IELTS students, INTO Manchester, UK