

Error correction

By Wynand Meyer



Lewis vs. Scrivener

- Lewis suggests that, teachers feel they are **obligated to correct errors** and it does not, or only marginally benefit students' progress.
- Scrivener asks whether:
- Errors show evidence that learning is taking place or,
- Errors show that learning hasn't taken place.
- **Errors show the students are using what they have learnt, are taking risks and experimenting. It indicates to the teacher to which level students have progressed and which strategies to put in place for future studies.**



What types of errors do students make?

- Pronunciation- incorrect phonemes, stress or intonation.
- Grammar- incorrect tense, word order, verb-noun agreement.
- Lexis- Wrong word, wrong collocation, rude word or incorrect register.



Teachers' Dilemma

- Teachers should consider these questions before attempting corrections:
- Does the error affect communication?
- Are we concentrating on accuracy at the moment?
- Why was the mistake made? L1, lexical deficiency, partial mastery.
- When should I deal with it? Immediately, later, not at all.
- Who will correct? Teacher, students, self-correction.
- Will the error offend or construe inappropriate meaning?



“What you tell me, I forget, what I discover myself, I remember.”

- Indicate the error and where the error is, or highlight it on the board.
- Facial expressions and gestures- hold hands up to indicate you are waiting for something.
- Finger correction- Show how many words you are looking for or which word is the one with the error.
- Echo- with intonation or stress on the error.
- Ask: Which tense, is this the right word?
- Point to the phonemic chart, posters, board, etc.



How would you go about correcting any of these errors?

I go to Spain yesterday.

I like eating “gali”.



Note: one student identified the past tense, the other was misled by T still asking if it could be the future tense.



Conclusion

- Encourage fluency and accuracy.
- Build confidence.
- Encourage peer corrections and self-corrections.
- Develop learner autonomy by using reference books and online resources.



Acknowledgments

- Reference to Jim Scrivener- Learning Teaching.
- Further reading:
Correction- by Mark Bartram, Richard Walton.

Thank you!

