

Debra JONES and Tim WALLIS

Error correction with Chinese students: perception and reality

Abstract:

Feedback is considered to be a key element of teaching and learning in academic writing and teachers spend a great deal of time providing formative feedback with the aim of improving students' writing skills. While a considerable body research exists on the importance of feedback, particularly in the field of ESL, there is little consensus on the most effective feedback techniques. This is particularly true in the area of grammar correction, or written corrective feedback (WCF). In addition, there is an increasing interest in discovering teacher and student perceptions of the feedback process.

This paper presents the findings of a research project on WCF conducted at Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University, a Sino-British university in Suzhou, China. Stage 1 of the project was a qualitative study investigating teacher and student perceptions of writing feedback through questionnaires and focus groups. Stage 2 compared four different error correction techniques using an error density analysis to establish which method was more effective in (a) helping students revise a text and (b) achieving improvements in accuracy over a semester. The researchers will report on the findings of stage 2 and describe how closely these reflected the perceptions of teachers and students in Stage 1.

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John CORBETT

Beyond the script: designing intercultural curricula and tasks for ESP professionals

Abstract:

This workshop reviews the principles and goals of ESP curricula from the perspective of intercultural language education, and considers the design of tasks that encourage learners to move beyond the scripts laid down in ESP textbooks. The workshop will act as a forum for debate on the whys and hows of ESP curriculum and task design, and, as an illustration, it will look at ways in which textbook material on English for Tourism might be supplemented by language-learning activities that prompt reflection on professionalism and professional values.

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Jon S. Y. HUI

English in the engineering discipline: Challenges and opportunities

Abstract:

Designing English courses for the engineering discipline faces many challenges. One of these is the language demands of a wide range of sub-disciplines as the field of engineering has expanded from the more conventional civil, mechanical, and electrical/electronic domains to more innovative ones such as medical, logistic management and computer science in the last few decades. Engineering courses require students to produce, for instance, business and management reports, project proposals, independent experimental reports, research project reports, and joint project reports with members of the industry in the form of both oral presentation and written documents. English courses designed to meet students' academic and professional language needs are required to accommodate this wide range.

This paper presents the challenges in designing course material and outlines the opportunities for introducing academic literacy in a realistic manner. Taking report summary writing as an illustration, I demonstrate the ways in which students' awareness of the targeted genre can be raised and then applied to their project reports. A pilot study was conducted as part of a quality assurance process. Data from student questionnaires and teacher interviews will be summarized and presented.