INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WRITING

ANGELA M DADAK

WELCOME

International students' writing can exhibit characteristics that challenge faculty expectations—from argument to arrangement, from coherence to correctness, from format to fluency—and these writing issues complicate our response routines.

Take Aways:

1) specific strategies for giving language feedback,

2) information about different cultural and educational writing traditions, and

3) principles to put into practice when choosing how to respond to international students' writing.

4) practices shared from the group

TECHNIQUES FOR LANGUAGE-FOCUSED FEEDBACK

ANGELA M DADAK

Image from https://slll.cass.anu.edu.au/news/bachelor-languages-anu

TYPES OF FEEBACK

Direct

- the instructor provides the correct form for the student

Thus, I had to home.
^
go

Indirect

- the instructor indicates there is an error, but the student must supply the correct form

Two types →

TYPES OF INDIRECT FEEDBACK

Coded

- the instructor indicates the location of errors and provides a code that indicates what kind of mistake has been made

Thus, I had to home.

^

verb

Uncoded

- the instructor indicates the location of an error, but not what kind of error it is.

Thus, I had to home.

TYPES OF LANGUAGE ISSUES

Teachable
are rule-governed and students can study the topic then make corrections

- verb tense; subject-verb agreement
- plural and possessive noun endings
- some article errors
- sentence fragments; run-ons and comma splices
- some errors in word form
- some errors in prepositions
- most punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Unteachable
are idiosyncratic/idiomatic and rely on students' general expertise with the language.

- most article errors
- most preposition errors
- word choice
- unidiomatic sentence structure
- (word order, missing or unnecessary word forms)

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Generally, indirect feedback is more appropriate for teachable errors and direct feedback is appropriate for unteachable errors.
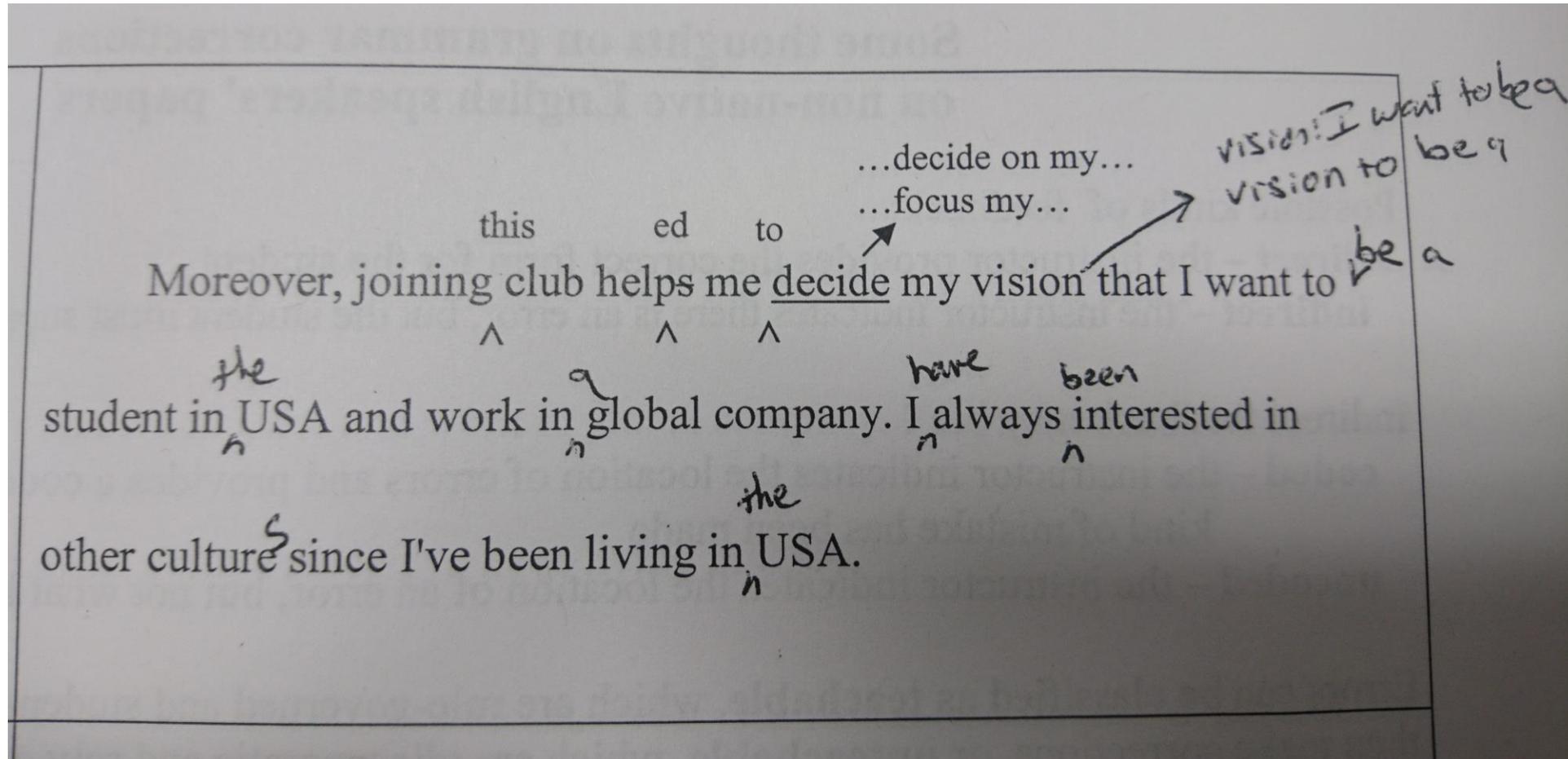
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DIRECT

Moreover, joining club helps me decide my vision that I want to

(handwritten annotations above the line:) this · ed · to · …decide on my… …focus my… → vision: I want to be a / vision to be a / be a

student in USA and work in global company. I always interested in

(handwritten annotations:) the · a · have been

other culture since I've been living in USA.

(handwritten annotations:) the

INDIRECT UNCODED

the instructor indicates the location of an error, but not what kind of error it is.

Moreover, joining club helps me decide my vision that I want to student in USA and work in global company. I always interested in other culture since I've been living in USA.
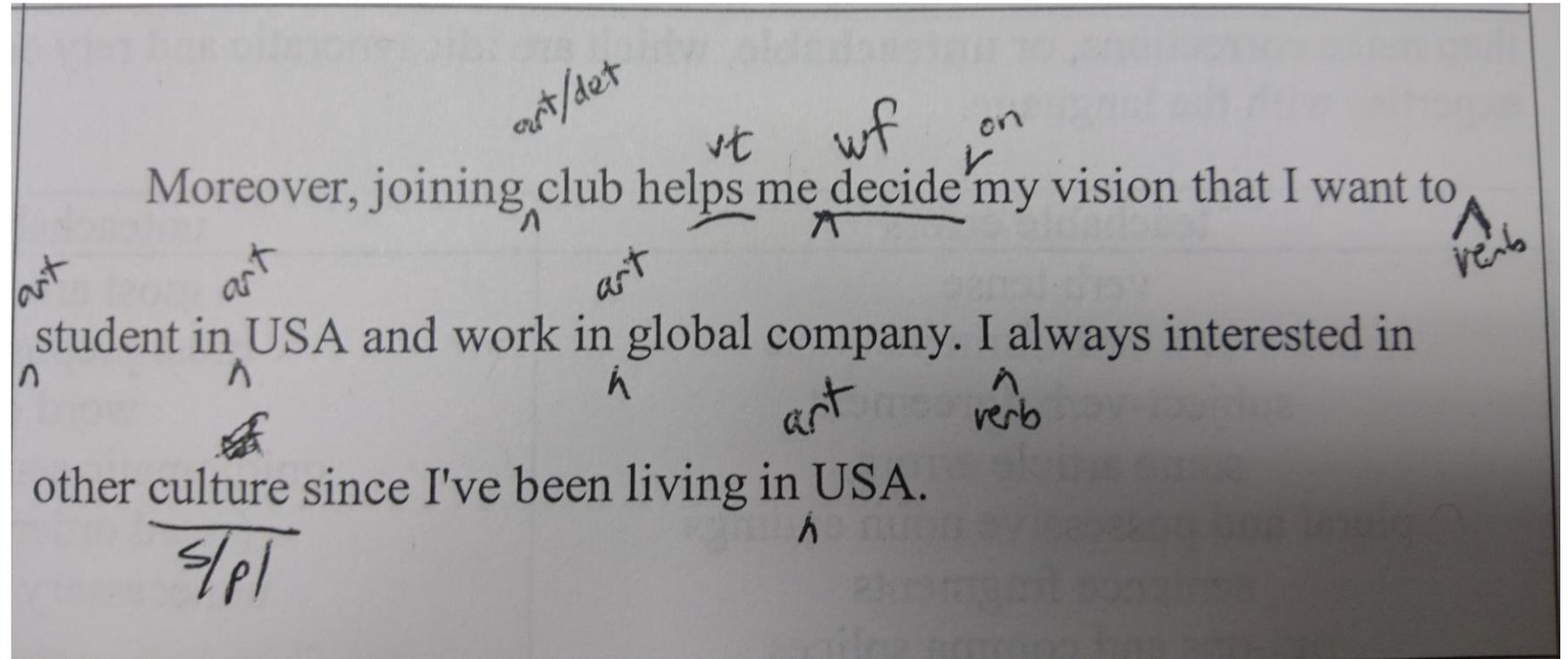
INDIRECT CODED

^ = insert here
art = article
s/pl = singular / plural
ss = sentence structure
vt = verb tense
wc = word choice
wf = word form

MIXED

Moreover, joining this club helps me decide my vision that I want to
~a~ student in USA and work in ~a~ global company. I always interested in
art other culture since I've been living in USA.

(handwritten annotations:)
this
to decide on my...
to focus my...
...vision to...
...vision: I want to
^ verb
in art
^ verb
^ s/fl

If possible – particularly when the error does not interfere with meaning – separate grammar (punctuation, spelling, etc.) feedback from content feedback

- Make a second copy of the paper for grammar
- Use different colored pens on the same copy
- Have different drafts for content (revision) and grammar (editing)
- *Others…*

Thoughts and questions

International students' writing can exhibit characteristics that challenge faculty expectations—from argument to arrangement, from coherence to correctness, from format to fluency—and these writing issues complicate our response routines.

Thesis statement not directly stated or only stated at the end.

No transitions or other explicit connections between themes/paragraphs.

Mostly reporting of sources but little or no analysis or coherent argument.

Attribution of sources does not follow formal academic citation.

Unnecessary repetition (huge and large)

Lots of coordination and little subordination

I like chocolate ice cream and my spouse likes strawberry. While I like chocolate ice cream, my spouse likes strawberry.

PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONDING

- focus on your course goals and the assignment objectives.

"For example, if your goals are to further students' critical thinking skills in your field or to help students develop compelling ideas about the subject matter, insofar as students' surface errors don't impede those goals, you might worry less about surface-level mistakes in language (though this in no way means you should ignore language development entirely)."
Ohio State University

PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONDING

- Support access to the goals through
    - Assignment guidelines
    - Rubrics
    - Models (annotated, if possible)
      Example annotated works available in *Easy Writer*

"Make sure the assignment sheets spell out organizational expectations and guidelines. Non-native speakers often depend on printed materials instead of their listening skills."

University of Minnesota

in years.

Harlem has changed rapidly over the past several decades. As problems with crime and drug abuse in the storied New York neighborhood decreased in the 1980s and 1990s, new government-sponsored and privately funded economic initiatives like the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone (UMEZ) pushed for outside investment and economic development (Hoffman 288; Zukin et al.). In a recent interview, Carolyn Johnson, owner of "Welcome to Harlem," a boutique tour company, recalled that "[Harlem] went from 0 to 100 in a short period of time," to the point that even Harlem residents themselves weren't aware of new businesses in their neighborhood. Tourism in Harlem clearly played a central role in this process, both responding to and creating social and economic change. By 2000, more than 800,000 people were visiting Harlem each year (Hoffman 288).

It's clear that Harlem's surge in tourism is good for the city. But an equally important and more complex question is whether tourism benefits Harlem residents or sells them short. Close examination of current policy and tour business in Harlem reveals problems that come with tourism, such as cultural commodification and commercial gentrification, which are made worse by an Empowerment Zone program that favors only the most socioeconomically advantaged residents and outsiders. Although there is no simple solution for tourism in Harlem, small, minority and resident-owned tour businesses have the potential to more directly and widely benefit the community while causing fewer social and economic problems.

Economic development policy, particularly the UMEZ, has played a major role in shaping tourism's growth. Founded in 1994, the organization operates programs targeting business investment, loans to small businesses, grants for arts and culture, and employment and business training for residents (UMEZ). But promoting tourism is one of its most important aims.

The UMEZ especially focuses on cultural initiatives as a means of drawing tourism, sponsoring a "Catalyst Fund" specifically to "build cultural tourism," funding marketing and publicity for "UMEZ-eligible cultural organizations" (UMEZ). This cultural marketing approach to Harlem tourism is not unique to the UMEZ. Recent scholarship on tourism in Harlem concludes that marketing black and Latino culture is Harlem's golden ticket to escape economic

PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONDING

"Read the paper in full before commenting, to see how it is organized on its own terms. Different cultures value different rhetorical strategies." *Denver University*

From there, decide - in light of the goals and rubrics - what to focus on.

PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONDING

- Focus on ideas and development

When students--international or domestic--are grappling with new, challenging ideas, their normally competent command of language may break down. Mechanical mistakes, in this case, can be a sign that the students are thinking. In fact, correcting their language could be counter-productive, since the students might correct the sentence-level errors, rather than work on developing their ideas *Ohio State University*

- **Contextualize written feedback**
  - **Frame in terms of audience and expectations**

"Put direct, instructive and extensive comments on papers, for example, "You need a thesis statement at the beginning of this paper." The instructor might even find such a statement later in the paper and tell the student where the American audience would expect to find it."
University of Minnesota

"Rather than treating issues of usage and style as a set of fixed rules, frame them as appropriate choices in specific contexts. …. Help students understand how context determines the choices writers may make in your field, as well as some of the reasons behind these contextual preferences."
Ohio State University

PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONDING

- Feedback on language:
  - Determine to what degree language and correctness fits with your course goals and assignments.
  - Focus on teachable errors, focus on a few for development

See separate set of slides called "Language Feedback on Writing" for techniques to comment on language.

Group breakout questions

How might you learn about your students' writing backgrounds, their experiences and knowledge? How might that information affect your feedback practices (or not)?

What ways do (can) you design writing assignments with international students in mind?

What formative feedback practices help international student writers improve their final papers?

How do you use (or could use) summative feedback practices for international students?

How does online delivery of feedback affect your practices when giving feedback on writing to international students?

Thoughts and questions

RESOURCES

"Responding to International Student Writing" from the Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing at Ohio State University https://cstw.osu.edu/responding-international-student-writing

"Working with International Student Writers" in which Denver University writing scholar Doug Hesse's gives five overarching principles for considering international student writing
https://www.du.edu/writing/eventsnews/newsletters/14second-language-writers.html

Hesse's piece above is an introduction to this document, which has more details about working with international student writers https://www.du.edu/writing/eventsnews/newsletters/14second-language-writers.html

Writing Across Borders is a 39-minute video from Oregon State University. AU has a DVD copy of the film; you can also find it on YouTube. The website for the video has related material at http://writingcenter.oregonstate.edu/writing-across-borders
  Part 1: Cultural differences in writing – students describe their own writing attitudes, ideas, and adaptations
  Part 2: Assessing International Student Writing – second language writing scholars give advice
  Part 3: Teaching and Testing Practices – general principles that hurt and that help international student writers

RESORCES

Advice for working with international students online by Michelle Cox at Cornell University, including advice about internet access, considerations about 'written accents,' and focus on inclusive teaching. Cox provides useful specifics such as

- links to websites for checking accessibility in different countries

- language for expectations on discussion boards

As Cox notes at the end, the article focuses on Chinese students, but the advice applies to other international students as well.

https://knight.as.cornell.edu/guidance-faculty-getting-staying-connected-intl-students

RESESOURCES

This short, recent piece in *Science Mag*, titled "Reviewers, don't be rude to nonnative English speakers," connects to the way, the tone, in which we give feedback to linguistically diverse students https://www.du.edu/writing/eventsnews/newsletters/guidelines-for-responding-to-nns.html

Easy Writer by Andrea Lunsford is the writing reference used at AU's Writing Studies Program for W1 courses.

Language Power: Tutorials for Writers by Dana Ferris has chapters that can be used for self-study or guided study on topics from self-editing strategies to comma rules, from cohesion to sentence boundaries.

Language Transfer errors list
http://college.cengage.com/english/raimes/keys_writers/2e/students/eslcentr/transfer_errors.html