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1.   Error Correction Recap

Activity 1.1

Work in groups and decide if you agree with the views expressed in the speech bubbles below:

a.

I don't like my students to make any mistakes. I correct every one so they don't pick up bad habits.

b.

I try to correct my students as little as possible. They will lose motivation if I dwell on their mistakes.

c.

Errors are a natural part of the learning process. And I can use their errors as teaching material for future lessons.

Notes: …………………………………………………………………………………………………

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Activity 1.2

Work with your group to unjumble the sentence your trainer gives you. Write the correct sentence below. Do you agree with what is expressed in the sentence?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

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2. Why Learners Make Errors/Mistakes

There are a number of factors involved in learner errors. Your group has the explanation for one of these factors. Study the explanation and if anything is unclear, check with your trainer. Next move around the other groups and find out the meanings of the other factors that cause learners to make errors. Make sure to explain the meaning of the one you have.

Now list at least 4 reasons why learners make errors:

....

....

....

....

....

3. Types of Errors

Activity 3.1
Your trainer will give you a strip of paper either with an example of a type of error a learner might make (in black) OR a word identifying a type of error (in red). Read what is on your strip of paper, then find the person in the room carrying the word or sentence that matches it.

Activity 3.2
Now work with your group to match the example error with its error type.

Error	Type of Error
1. Let me know if you w'll be able to join me.	stress
2. I'm sorry I did a mistake.	spelling
3. He left the shop very quikly.	tense
4. I couldn't believe my dream come true.	subject/verb agreement
5. Every day I go for jogging.	punctuation
6. 'Hi', she said as she came in for her interview.	wrong word order
7. I lock my house. Because I want to be safe.	wrong word choice
8. John go shopping every evening.	plural
9. She is better as Jane.	contraction
10. They always eat biscuit with their coffee.	register
11. Where is standing the teacher?	comparative
12. The sofa is very comFORTable.	collocation

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4.   When to Correct

Activity 4.1 – When to Correct

Part 1:

To decide about correction, we must take into account the *kind* of activity we are doing and the aim of it: ie. whether we are focusing on *accuracy* or whether we are focusing on freer expression to encourage *fluency.*

Look at the two example tasks below and decide whether their respective focus is on fluency or accuracy.

Example A:	The teacher has just given a presentation on the form of the present continuous tense and you want the students to put in the appropriate verb form.
	....
Example B:	The teacher has given the students a topic in which they have to discuss how to spend the money they have made from collecting and selling aluminium cans to the recyclers.
	....

Part 2:

Read the lesson transcripts below then work with a partner to decide what the teacher should do about the learner errors in each transcript. Choosing the best answer from three following given options:

> a. The teacher should not correct the error.
> b. The teacher should delay correction – and provide feedback at the end of the activity.
> c. The teacher should correct the error immediately.

Lesson 1

The students are working in different groups. The teacher is walking around the classroom monitoring. He/she hears these utterances from speakers in the different groups:

S1:   Technology is such important for all of us.

S2:   In Palau and around the world, so many people use computers.

S3:   Yeah, I am agree with Ossi.

S4:   I prefer to text friends than email them.

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Lesson 2

Teacher: And what job would you like Franson?

Student: I want work in Palau Hotel. My job be to make the guests.

Lesson 3

Teacher: We have a new student today. Veronica, can you introduce yourself?

Student: I am coming from Ngerkesoaol. I am absolutely happy to join this class.

Lesson 4

The students have just listened to a recorded interview.

Teacher: OK – What instrument does he play?

Student: He is play saxophone.

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Activity 4.2 – Dos and Don'ts of Error Correction

Your trainer will give you a set of cards on which are written reasons for doing something or not doing something related to error correction. Look at the table below then:

    i.   work with your group and decide if the suggestion is something you agree with (a **do**) or something you disagree with (a **don't**).

    ii.   match each suggestion in the table with one of the cards from the set of reasons given to you by your trainer.

Do or don't?	Suggestion	Why/Why not?
	Tell learners what they got right as well as what was wrong	
	Judge learners by the errors they make	
	Correct all mistakes during a fluency activity	
	Encourage learners to correct themselves	
	Discourage learners from correcting each other	
	Treat all learners as the same and always use the same method of correction	
	Create a classroom atmosphere where learners feel free to ask for help	
	See errors as useful	
	Anticipate the errors that might occur when planning a lesson	

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5. Techniques for Correcting Errors

Activity 5.1

Your trainer will give you a set of cards on which are written a particular technique for correcting errors. Read through the cards.

Now read through the example student error above the table below then work with your group to match each correction technique cut-up with the appropriate teacher dialogue in the table.

Student error: '*We go to the beach yesterday.'*

a. Teacher:	Yesterday – so, grammar?
b. Teacher:	Yesterday, you . . . .
c. Teacher:	Not quite, look: We go to the beach yesterday. [Holds up hand and indicates second finger from the left from the learner's point of view].
d. Teacher:	Sorry, do you mean you go every day?
e. Teacher:	You went to the beach – that's nice. Who did you go with?
f. Teacher:	makes no comment. The activity continues until, at the end, the teacher says, '*I heard someone say, "We go to the beach yesterday". Can anyone correct that?.'*

Activity 5.2

Read Course Book Additional Materials – Activity 5: Techniques for Correcting Errors - Additional Notes. Refer also to the symbols teachers can use when correcting written work.

Now work with your group and brainstorm any other language correction techniques and/or symbols used to correct written work that you have found to be helpful in your classroom either as a teacher or student? List them below and be prepared to explain and/or demonstrate them to the class.

....

....

....

....

....

....

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Glossary

Concept	Definition
accuracy	The extent to which a learner's use of a second language conforms to the standard form of that language. It is contrasted with *fluency.*
fluency	The capacity to effectively communicate meaning. It is contrasted with *accuracy.*
error	A non-standard language form produced by learners due to incomplete or faulty learning. Errors cannot be self-corrected.
mistake	A non-standard language form produced by learners as a result of the pressures of performance. Mistakes can be self-corrected.
global error/mistake	A major error/mistake that impedes communication
local error/mistake	A minor error/mistake that does not impede communication

Recommended Reading

- **Learner-based Teaching**, Colin Campbell & Hanna Kryszewska; Oxford University Press, 1992

- **How to Teach English,** Jeremy Harmer, Pearson Longman, 2007

- **How to Teach Grammar,** Scott Thornbury, Pearson Longman, 1999

- **How to Teach Pronunciation,** Gerald Kelly, Pearson Longman, 2000

- **How to Teach Speaking,** Scott Thornbury, Pearson Longman, 2005

- **How to Teach Writing,** Jeremy Harmer, Pearson Longman, 2004

- **The Practice of English Language Teaching,** Jeremy Harmer, Longman, 2001

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Additional Material

Activity 2 – Why Learners Make Errors/Mistakes – Answer Sheet

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Why Learners Make Errors/Mistakes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Interference:</td><td>This is where learners transfer features of their mother tongue (L1) to the language they are learning (L2). For example, Italian learners tend to drop the subject of the sentence, which is perfectly acceptable in Italian, but wrong in English e.g., 'Is nice' instead of 'It's nice'.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Developmental Error:</td><td>These are similar to those made by children learning their first language where knowledge or understanding is incomplete. For example, overgeneralization errors occur where learners learn a grammar rule and then apply it indiscriminately, e.g., using the –ed suffix form of irregular past tense verbs such as 'go' and 'see' (goed, seed).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Mislearning:</td><td>Language is complex and it is quite possible to mislearn, or only partly learn, new rules, forms, pronunciation, etc. Of course misteaching also plays a part here – e.g. if a teacher does not present new language clearly and concisely, then it is more likely that learners will learn only partially.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Fossilization:</td><td>This is where faulty rules and forms, etc. become permanent fixtures in learners' language use, i.e., they keep repeating the same mistake and seem unable / unwilling to learn the correct version. Failure to use third person 's' is often a fossilized error among many learners.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Other Factors:</td><td>Mood, tiredness, distractions (noise, sick mother, trouble at home etc.), intelligence</td></tr>
</table>

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Activity 3.2: Types of Errors – Answer Sheet

1.	Let me know if you w'll be able to join me.	contraction
2.	I'm sorry I did a mistake.	wrong word choice
3.	He left the shop very quikly.	spelling
4.	I couldn't believe my dream come true.	tense
5.	Every day I go for jogging.	collocation
6.	'Hi', she said as she came in for her interview.	register
7.	I lock my house. Because I want to be safe.	punctuation
8.	John go shopping every evening.	subject/verb agreement
9.	She is better as Jane.	comparative
10.	They always eat biscuit with their coffee.	plural
11.	Where is standing the teacher.	wrong word order
12.	This sofa is very comFORTable.	Stress

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Activity 4.2: Dos and Don'ts of Error Correction – Answer Sheet

Do or don't?	Suggestion	Why/Why not?
Do	Tell learners what they got right as well as what was wrong	*Praise is very important for motivation and engendering self-confidence. Whilst learners need feedback on where they went wrong, it should be done as positively and sensitively as possible. Negative feedback can be embarrassing and demotivating.*
Don't	Judge learners by the errors they make	*Errors are an inevitable and integral part of learning, so there's no point in deciding that learners are 'good' or 'bad' etc.*
Don't	Correct all mistakes during a fluency activity	*If you do this you will interrupt the flow of the activity. Only correct them if the error causes a breakdown in communication.*
Do	Encourage learners to correct themselves	*This is a good habit – the more they can do this the less dependent on the teacher they will be and will help them to analyze and understand why they make errors.*
Don't	Discourage learners from correcting each other	*Learners can learn a lot from each other. Learners are often able to explain things to each other in a way that they understand better than when teacher explains.*
Don't	Correct all learners in the same way	*Learners may be at different levels, have different learning styles and work at different paces. Teachers need to consider when learners would benefit from correction and when not.*
Do	Create a classroom atmosphere where learners feel free to ask for help	*This helps self-confidence and encourages learners to try things out for themselves.*
Do	See errors as useful	*Teachers can learn about their learners through the kinds of errors they make. Errors also provide feedback on the teacher's work, and may help him/her to plan or adjust activities in future lessons.*
Do	Anticipate the errors that might occur when planning a lesson	*A good teacher tries to predict the types of errors a particular activity may throw up and then work out strategies for dealing with them. For example, pre-teaching the vocabulary required for an activity will help reduce lexical errors.*

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Activity 5.1: Techniques for Correcting Errors – Answer Sheet

Student error: '*We go to the beach yesterday.*'

a. Teacher: Yesterday – so, grammar?   **The teacher tries to prompt the learner to self-correct.**
b. Teacher: Yesterday, you . . . .   **The teacher repeats the learner's utterance up to the point of the error, in order to elicit a self-correction.**
c. Teacher: Not quite, look: We go to the beach yesterday. [Holds up hand and indicates second finger from the left from the learner's point of view].   **Using fingers (called finger correction), to focus on exactly where the error occurred. Used as a prompt for self-correction**
d. Teacher: Sorry, do you mean you go every day?   **The teacher asks a question to establish the learner's intended meaning. By implying that the message was not clear, the teacher may be encouraging the learner to re-think the way the message was formulated (A further way of encouraging self-correction).**
e. Teacher: You went to the beach – that's nice. Who did you go with?   **The teacher reformulates the learner's utterance. However the learner may not realize she is being corrected (Reformulations often go unnoticed by learners. But it allows the flow of the lesson to continue.**
f. Teacher: Makes no comment. The activity continues until, at the end, the teacher says, '*I heard someone say, "We go to the beach yesterday". Can anyone correct that?.*'   **The teacher has decided not to interrupt the activity flow, but to note errors as they occur, and then go back to them at the end of the activity.**

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Activity 5.2: Techniques for Correcting Errors - Additional Notes

1.   SPEAKING

Remember to:

- Be lighthearted
- Be encouraging
- Give time for thinking
- LISTEN carefully
- Use expressions like "Good, but…" and "What's a better way of saying that?"
- Always give some kind of feedback

Error Correction Techniques:

- Indicate that there has been an error and ask the student to try again
- Using fingers (for wrong word, word omissions, word order)
- Using gestures and hand movements (eg. for stress, intonation)
- Verbal prompts. Indicate the type of error and ask the student to self correct

  (Eg. '*There's a word missing.*'). Isolate the wrong element (repeat what the student said, stressing the mistake)
- Use the whiteboard
- Model the correct form
- Allow student-to-student correction
- Use concept/checking questions
- Sounds:
    - Use the phonemic script to help teach the words.
    - Use your mouth to show where the sounds are made.

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2.   WRITING

Red marks all over a piece of writing can be disheartening and confusing. Also for the teacher it is very time consuming.

To correct some writing tasks (eg. gap fill, re-ordering etc) you can:
- get the students to go over them in pairs or groups and then write their answers on the board.
- go over them around the class orally (unless the spelling is a focus).
- ask students to correct each other's work and go round and monitor them, making notes of the most common errors.

Some techniques to help you:

With more advanced classes and sometimes with lower levels you will want to mark the writing yourself. Again, try to be positive and encouraging.

- only focus on what structure/function you have presented and wish them to practice eg. If you want them to practice the *...ing* form, what would you correct in this sentence?
            my muther injoy to play badmintun

    You notice, despite the errors, the sentence is understandable so communication is taking place. The *injoy to play* needs to be corrected as this is the focus and the *s* on the verb is important to this. Correcting the spelling at this stage will only distract from the point and make it seem as though the student has got very little right.

- to make the corrections clear, write them in the margin. It doesn't clutter the page.

- encourage students to self-correct by using a marking scheme with symbols (eg. *sp = spelling mistake, wo = word order, ww = wrong word etc.*) so the student knows the *type* of error, but has to think in order to correct it, rather than just look at yours (see example marking scheme below).

- make a note of common errors across the class and then go over these with the whole class, re-teaching if necessary.

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Example Marking Symbols for Students' Writing

subject/verb agreement	s/v
wrong word	w/w
word order	w/o
verb forms/tense	T
appropriate register	reg
articles (a, an, the)	art
plagiarism	cop
punctuation	p
paragraphing	//
cohesive features (joining words etc.)	disc
preposition	prep
objective writing	bias
spelling	sp
contraction (don't, she'll etc.)	cont
omission	^
plural	pl
failure to reference/identify source	ref