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Correction Efficiency

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Correction Efficiency

Abstract

Correction efficiency looks at how a teacher can make his/her correction time more efficient, how one can actually reduce correction time. Different actions have been tried out and evaluated: from designing attractive writing tasks or even differentiated tasks to the role of interesting topics and authentic situations, from time management and keeping strict deadlines to mutual agreements between students and teachers about assessing and finally from proofreading to delegating correction tasks to students (peer correction).

All eight actions are described in recurring circles: writing task – correction time – reflection and reaction. Furthermore an initial memo and a final questionnaire show the results of the project being carried out for almost two school years. Three final interviews give some deeper insight into the method of peer correction and their possibilities of improvement.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Starting Point

A pile of home exercises - 35 neatly or not so neatly written letters, articles, essays or whatever I ask my students to write. A pot of green tea or a mug of coffee, and something sweet to keep my spirits high for the hours to follow. This is what my desk looks like every time I tackle written home exercises. As I take my job seriously I mark every writing task that I demand from my students. - If they spend time on writing them, I have to spend time on marking them. But it takes a lot of time, 35 essays, that's about 5 hours, - and it is the most unsatisfying time for me as a teacher: The students always make the same stupid mistakes, they write about something but not about what they should have written about, they write without structure and paragraphs, they write German words (because they are too lazy to look them up), etc. I am exaggerating of course, but basically that is what I experience. So the question arises, how can I make the whole process of marking and correcting more efficient? How can I reduce my correction time, and my chocolate intake? How can I get my students to spend their time on writing more efficiently as well?

1.2. What next?

The first thought I have is, that I must tell my students how time consuming marking their writing tasks is and how unsatisfying it is, when they do not use my feedback to correct their home exercises to improve their writing. I need to make them aware that if they spend time on writing it is better to do it well, otherwise it is a waste of their time and mine. If they do their part properly, I will do mine. Thus, the study will look at both sides, the students' and the teacher's: What needs to be done and communicated from the teacher and what can be demanded from the students. I hope that a year of work will show that the whole process of writing-marking-correcting-learning will have become more efficient and satisfactory for both sides.

1.3. Context

The classes being used as guinea pigs for this study are 7A and 7C in 2009/10 and consequently 8A and 8C in 2010/11 of the BORG Bad Leonfelden.

There are 23 students (7 boys, 16 girls) in 7A/8A and 12 students (1 boy, 11 girls) in 7C/8C, that is a total of 35 students. I am also the class teacher in the C-class.

They have 3 lessons of English per week, all single lessons.

Time frame: November 2009 to March 2011.

2. Implementation and Methods

The case study took place from November 2009 to March 2010. Not all the time the focus was on writing and correction, as there are other important skills to develop as well. In total, eight writing assignments and their correction processes will be described in recurring circles: action – reflection – reaction.

Methods being used to collect data and to get feedback are memo, questionnaire, interview, but also discussion rounds with my students.

2.1. First Inquiry/Survey

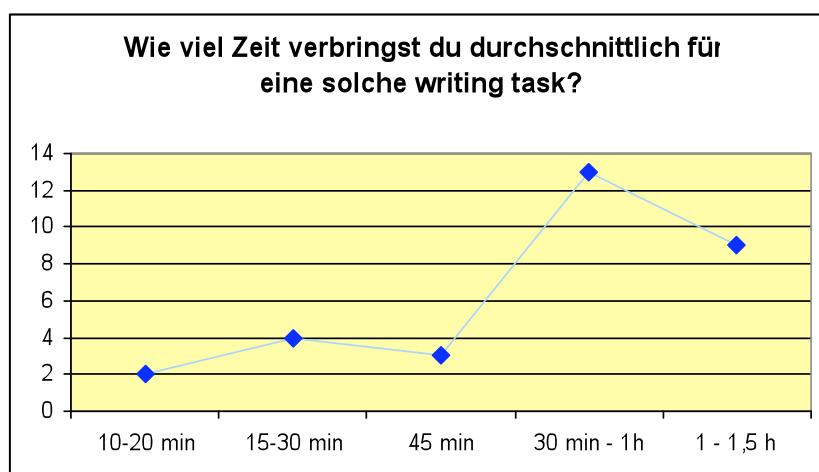
2.1.1. Memo

After telling the students how unsatisfying in general marking their home-exercises is and how much time I usually spend on this and how disappointing it is to see what they do or not do with my feedback, they were rather quiet and seemed quite affected. Maybe they were really not aware that it is a lot of work for a teacher. I further explained to them that I would like to improve the situation for me, but also for them. As the students spend quite some time on the writing tasks as well, it seems essential that they do not waste their time either. In order to improve the situation I need to find out some basic facts about their process of writing and about the quality of my feedback. So I asked them to fill in a short questionnaire/memo (annex 1) with the following questions:

- How important are writing tasks?
- How much time do you spend on average on such tasks?
- How do you find my marking/corrections?
- Do you correct your writing tasks?
- Suggestions, wishes (concerning writing tasks)

2.1.2. Results and Interpretation

The analysis of the data (annex 2) shows that most of the students spend at least half an hour to an hour on average for a writing task, quite a few even spend more than an hour. So it shows clearly that they do spend quite some time. The result, namely what I get to read, is not satisfactory. Something needs to be improved here.



My marking, my correction they do find constructive and generally good. Comments range from clear over fair, helpful to good or even very good. My students seem to understand my feedback. Why are they not learning as much as I hope they would?

A clear majority corrects their writing tasks. Again, if they do so, why does it seem to me that they always make the same mistakes?

The suggestions my students made were: longer stretch of time, one home-exercise per text type, not always the same. Furthermore some wish to have a correction/suggestion from my part if I mark an “expression” mistake.

2.1.3. Reflections

I have to ask myself what exactly frustrates me when reading my students' home-exercises. Clearly I cannot blame them for making mistakes, because that is normal, otherwise they need not come to my lessons anyway. So I made a list of things that are really irritating me:

- wrong text type
- partly or even completely off-topic
- no paragraphs
- awful handwriting
- too short or far too long
- change of tenses, basic use of tenses neglected
- really simple sentence structures (*to be* and *have* being the main verbs)
- *and, but* and *because* as only linking words
- use of German words

Looking at the list, I would say these are things that a teacher of 17 to 18-year old students at B1+/B2 level in English can expect. Especially when the students are familiar with the text types are and the tasks are very clear. We are working with *New Opportunities*, which has so-called writing helps that even tell the students step by step what to do. Besides they are familiar with our school assessment scale (annex 3) and therefore know that a writing task needs to fulfill the task, does have to have a certain structure, should be coherent, should use a certain range of vocabulary and grammar (at their level) and should be as accurate as possible. Of course that is a lot to fulfill, nevertheless I think that if a student spends already one hour sitting down to write, he/she should be aware of these things and try to fulfill them to the best of his/her knowledge. The point is some of them are obviously not completely aware and some just do not take the home-exercise seriously enough. Consequently some action has to be taken to make them more aware.

Browsing and reading thorough some websites that deal with writing I have found nothing revolutionarily new, just the things you know anyway, but maybe have not communicated well enough to the students or have neglected a bit:

- “*Give writing assignment in written form*
- *Get your students to write weekly in some form, whether it's a draft, informal response, or free write.*
- *In class, write when your students are writing.*
- *Only grade finished products, not drafts or informal writing.*
- *Give students' writing back within 1 week. Adjust level of feedback to time available.*
- *The first time you read a batch of student work, do so without a pencil in hand. Just read to get a sense of it; make no comments. Second time, read closely and make comments.*

- *Retire the red pen; stop copy-editing your students' work. Point out no more than 2 patterns of error, and leave it to the student to find a way to resolve the errors.*
- *Commenting on the first draft of a full-fledged paper is your best opportunity to bring about learning. On the draft, make no more than 3 major suggestions.*^{“1}

Thus the first action I will take is to concentrate on creating an attractive task and communicating it to the students, providing the criteria that have to be fulfilled before handing it in. Secondly I will concentrate on my marking and feedback, taking some of the suggestions mentioned above into consideration. Finally I will make sure that they use my feedback and correct their major mistakes properly.

2.2. First Action

2.2.1. Communication/Reminder

First of all I told my students that the assessment scale is the base for assessing their writing tasks and therefore also helpful if not essential as a guideline for their writing. So we went through the different categories of our scale again and I tried to make them aware of the fact that half of the writing is task fulfillment, organization and structure, something that could be rather easily accomplished if one takes some time and effort in reading the task carefully and planning before writing.

Secondly, I informed my students that I would apply different marking/correction modes, depending on their amount and types of mistakes:

- mistake marked and corrected, e.g. correct answer given
- mistake marked, category given
- mistake marked, category not given
- mistake not marked, but category given

Furthermore, I would comment on task fulfillment and organization. The longer and more extensive their writing task, the longer and more extensive my feedback will be.

Finally I made clear that I would not accept any home-exercise that does not fulfill the following criteria:

- clear handwriting or typing
- word count must be written at the bottom
- must fulfill task (text type and topic)
- must have paragraphs
- must be handed in within deadline

2.2.2. Developing an Attractive Task

After having told my students what they need to do, I started doing my part. As task fulfillment and organization usually are not satisfactory for me, I thought of a variety of tasks to choose from including various activities to help them structure their writing task. We were reading *Cold Mountain* as a class reading, so instead of asking them to hand in a classic book report I demanded to write a portfolio (annex 4). The students had to choose one task per category and could also work in pairs or groups for certain categories.

- Vocabulary - graphic organizers
- Content/story – graphic organizers (pre-writing prompts)

¹ Jane Kokernak. *Eleven Things You Could Start Doing Today.*

- Writing – “guided”
- Writing – “free”
- Creative activities

As it was a quite extensive writing assignment, they could also work in class. One lesson per week was reserved for this task. The whole project had a time frame of four weeks.

When working in class I tried to already give feedback on their drafts, - their graphic organizers. I was monitoring and helping where necessary or asked. All in all it seemed worth spending so much time on designing this task. My students were working intensively and most of them handed in their portfolios on time and in really appealing form.

2.2.3. Correction Time

All portfolios handed in were a pleasure to read compared to what I was used to. It took a lot of time though, because some portfolios were 10 pages and longer (times 35!) But all in all it was worth the effort, because I prefer reading through 10 pages of interesting and coherent written productions than reading through half a page, where you do not know where to start marking.

I was not able to return them within a week, because of the Christmas holidays, but I told my students right after the holidays that I was very satisfied with the results and that I had not needed kilos of chocolate to get through their portfolios.

I only marked serious mistakes and tried to group them, like (relative pronouns or adjective/adverb or linking or spelling etc.) Task fulfillment was generally good to excellent and coherence was also at least sufficient. My students could now decide which three major mistakes/mistake groups they wanted to correct. I demanded: mistake – correction – reason why it is wrong – rule. The corrections had to be handed in within the following two weeks. Return was around 90%.

2.2.4. Reflections

The results show that it is worth spending time and effort in creating attractive writing tasks. Clear and attractive input leads to better output. However, such extensive writing assignments cannot be done on a regular basis. It would be too time consuming for the students and for the teacher. My students told me that they really enjoyed working on the portfolio, but that it was a lot of work and they would not like to do that more than twice a year, maximum.

Another aspect that occurred to me while marking their assignments was that my students clearly used information from the internet, which is absolutely ok, but it should not be copy-paste. Characterizations and plot summary were options and you can find them easily on the internet, especially when the story was also made into a blockbuster film. So probably some or even a lot was not my students' work but some conglomeration of Wikipedia and International Movie Database. But on the other hand some students had chosen writing tasks that could not be copied from the net. All in all, the outcome was satisfactory for me, but there is room for improvement.

2.3. Second Action

2.3.1. Next Writing Assignment

The next writing assignment was the last activity of a two-week project on *Harvey Milk* (annex 5) and gay rights, and civil rights and human rights in general. We were watching the movie and were discussing the theme(s) of the film. So the students were well prepared to tackle their writing assignment. I wanted them to write about the film, but from a personal point of view. First I thought of a film review, but then it came to my mind that again they would most likely copy a lot from the internet. So in the end, I decided to write down some questions that they had to answer in about 500 words.

- Who is your favorite character and why?
- Who is your least favorite character and why?
- Describe three scenes in the film that really moved/impressed you and give reasons.
- Describe one scene that you disliked and say why.
- Learning experience: What have you learned from the film?

The students could decide where they wanted to write more and where less. Structuring was quite easy as well, because they just had to write a paragraph for each question and did not have to worry about linking the paragraphs. Most important in this writing task was of course the content.

2.3.2. Correction Time

Reading through their assignments was tough again. Some students described just two scenes, instead of three or did not really give reasons for their choice, etc. This really made me angry, because reading the questions and answering them precisely should not be too difficult, especially after the talk we had. Some also made so many basic grammar mistakes impairing coherence. Again, you would assume, that most of these mistakes you would find yourself, if you read your written production maybe once or twice to check for mistakes. On the other hand there were some well written texts as well. But all in all, it was taking me too long again (500 words is a lot) and I was annoyed by some home-exercises (needed lots of chocolate).

2.3.3. Reflections and Reaction

How do I get my students to clearly fulfill the task and how can I reduce the amount of “stupid” mistakes they make? If I could only improve on that, it would make my life a lot easier.

Asking my students, if they proofread their writing tasks, they say yes. So I was asking them, how exactly they are proofreading. They looked at me puzzled and said “Well, we just read it once or twice and see if we find a mistake.” To my question, if they did, some said, “yes, every now and then”, which did not surprise me.

Checking and editing needs to be practiced. So we went through the “*Checking and editing: advice for students*” (annex 6) together. It is a long checklist and checking is work! We agreed on checking for:

- task fulfillment – tick off tasks demanded
- organization – are there paragraphs? introduction-main part-conclusion
- tenses – coherent use
- personal mistake checklist (from recent writing tasks)

2.4. Third Action

2.4.1. Next writing task

First of all the next writing task was shorter, only 350 words, and was this time a book review. My students had already written book or film reviews, so they were familiar with the text type. They had a choice of three books to choose from, which they had to read at home and partly in class. To help them with time management I handed out a work plan for three weeks and gave them additional three weeks to hand in the book review (annex 7). So they knew well in advance and had plenty of time to read the book and write their review. There was no other home-exercise given in this period. One week was reserved for individual reading and/or preparing for the review in class. So there was also time to get feedback from me, before writing.

The task clearly stated that I would not accept copy-paste and that they had to name the sources they used to write their reviews. Further a couple of writing helps and exercises were given as an option to prepare for the writing task. Learner autonomy and good time management were demanded! (Only one year to go for the Matura!)

2.4.2. Correction Time – Peer Correction

This time I wanted to make sure that they did their checking and editing as agreed upon before handing it in. I decided for peer correction as a “back up”. So in case, there were some serious mistakes in task fulfillment, organization, etc. the peers would certainly find out. In addition it would make them more conscious of what they maybe should have done when reading other students’ text productions.

I compiled a peer correction worksheet (annex 8) that they first had to complete and then use as a checklist to go through a partner’s text. With the partner’s feedback sheet and some more ideas, how to find mistakes in their own text, they had to revise their review and write a second version. This version had to be handed in with the original version and the peer correction feedback a week later.

In class 7C this peer correction lesson was observed by my “critical friends” from the regional group. I asked them to observe students’ activity, as my activity this lesson was towards zero. I was just monitoring the activity, which was basically filling in a worksheet and proofreading a partner’s text production. Normally I would never spend an hour on a task like that, as it is quite one sided, but as my colleagues wanted to see “peer correction”, that was the best I could offer.

Almost all students were working intensively for 45 minutes and were therefore quite productive. (Well, a class with 12 students and 5 people observing, I guess that adds some pressure.) It turned out, that some students made important “aha-discoveries” when filling in the check list. Others had difficulties to fill in the gaps, although it was the exact wording of the writing help given in their course books, which I mentioned on their initial task sheet! Result: Not all students read carefully what you suggest them to read. They have to be “forced” or more “guided”. It seems if you do not tell them it is a must and it has consequences - namely a negative entry for the assessment - if not done, the majority of students would not do it.

In 7A the peer correction sheet was done partly in class, partly as a home-exercise. They also had to hand in their second versions with the peer correction worksheet and their first version.

After all this effort of going through several checks, would marking for me be shorter, easier, more relaxing, less annoying?

It was worth the effort. I was much faster. There were no significant errors in task fulfillment and organization, coherence was ok, register was fine as well. Only comments on expressions, word order, functions, etc. That was only half the work!

2.4.3. Reflections

I told the students that I had to spend less time on their second versions, and that I was therefore pretty happy with the results. The students though were not so content with the peer correction. They told me, it was a lot of work and partly difficult, because they did not know, what to mark, especially when the text was not coherent. Alas! I told them that it is basically the same for me, with the only difference that I have to read through 35 papers. Of course, this is my job, but I simply expect that they read the task and fulfill it to the best of their knowledge!

Learning is work. It can be fun, but it is not fun per se. So peer correction is a method that I will continue, even if it is hard work for the students. I am convinced that it helps them learning: Learning from other people's strengths and weaknesses and learning by doing a task twice. If I can get them checking the first two criteria of the assessment scale with peer correction, I would only have to do the last two, namely range and accuracy. I would be delegating work to my students. It would help me and it would help them on their way to a more independent learner.

2.4.4. End of School Year

At the end of this school year we were working on a longer project that concentrated on South Africa (see my Study Paper for PFL). Writing was not an issue in this project.

At the end of the year I handed out a questionnaire "*How content are you with your teacher*", it is a questionnaire that we get from our headmaster in order to reflect upon our performance. I will not go into detail, but would only like to quote a statement about home-exercises, that puzzled me quite a bit.

The statement "*Bevor Sie Hausübungen oder etwas zu lernen aufgibt, erkundigt sie sich, ob wir schon andere Hausübungen erhalten haben oder Prüfungen bevorstehen*" was answered the following way:

- 1 student – completely right
- 10 students – quite right
- 12 students – rather wrong
- 8 students – completely wrong

The result was puzzling for me, because I thought of giving them enough time anyway (between one week and one month) to write their home-exercise, so I never thought of asking them about other home-exercises and tests. I just simply assumed they can handle time management, - something to be talked over at the beginning of 8th grade.

2.5. Fourth Action

2.5.1. Agreement – Getting started

In the first lessons of our last school year together I told them about the results of the general questionnaire and about things I would therefore like to discuss with them. (I know I can expect honest feedback, because one of the questions was, if they can openly tell me if something worries them, and it was positively answered.)

The first topic on the list was home-exercises and their feedback concerning me not asking about other home-exercises and tests. I told them my point of view, namely that I thought of giving them enough time anyway. Reactions were, yes but in the end everything comes together and then I am so strict with the deadlines, no one else is so strict. So I asked for suggestions, like what time frame would be working for them, if four weeks are too long. We agreed on two weeks. But I would not give in on the deadline. I told them that at university nobody would accept excuses, like printer does not work, or computer crashed, or so much other stuff to do, etc. A deadline is a deadline and as long as someone is not ill and asks for extension in advance, I will not accept papers handed in after the deadline. The only possibility they have, is to send it to me per email the same day until midnight. But this is only an emergency option that they can use once.

The next issue that was discussed was the value of the home-exercises for their final grade. How much do written home-exercises and other writing tasks count at the end of the day? And how much does each writing assignment count? I told them that I would continue using peer correction and therefore each home-exercise needs to be peer corrected before being handed in with the initial version. I explained them, why I think peer correction is so important. Then I asked them to think of a point system that would be fair, and how many points one would need for a “Genügend” in total. Furthermore I also asked them to think about the total value of the writing assignments. Fifteen minutes of group brainstorming we discussed the group results and finally agreed upon the following:

- There will be 6 texts to write this year.
- Each text handed in (peer corrected version plus original version) is worth two points.
- Texts that are not peer corrected will not be accepted.
- Each correction (final version after my feedback) handed in gets another point.
- A total of 18 and 17 points would be very good and 9 points are the pass mark.
- The final version can be handed in anytime, but preferably with the next home-exercise.
- Writing tasks will count 15% for the final grade.

2.5.2. Writing Task

Technology was a theme in our course book that was covered quite extensively, so the students had enough vocabulary and background information to write their next text. It was an article, a text type that of course in the 8th grade was not new. Nevertheless I compiled some tasks from *Successful Writing* (pp. 102,125, 126).

- exercises on improving word power (adjectives, collocations)
- exercises on structure (topic sentence)
- sample text
- information on text type
- task - Where would we be without technology?

As I have concentrated a lot on task fulfillment and structure last school year, I thought it was time to move on to work on improving their range.

2.5.3. Correction Time

I was quite anxious of how many students would actually hand in their tasks as agreed, namely the peer corrected version together with the first version, on time. They almost all did. 32 students out of 35! That is a really satisfying return!

All students were commenting more or less on task and organization of their partner's text. They basically copied "my system": They used smileys, for all the good things, ticked off what was ok, made question marks, when something was not clear and made a sad smiley when something was bad. Not all the students used all signs, but in general all signs were used. Although we agreed that they would only look at task fulfillment and organization, most also corrected the classic mistakes. Unfortunately, sometimes the mistakes or suggestions became worse. All in all, they did a satisfactory job on their peer correction.

My correction time was not necessarily shorter, as I had to check the quality of peer correction as well, but it was interesting. And time passes much quicker, when you do an interesting job! Furthermore, the second versions I was finally marking were quite good, I really only had to mark accuracy! And I did not get a single home-exercise that was not fulfilling the task criteria, or had no paragraphs! That is already a big step. Summing up, the results of the students were better and my time marking was more enjoyable.

2.5.4. Reflections

Peer correction definitely helps to get better results. Is it only because the students rewrite their texts a bit after the peer correction or is it also the fact that they pay more attention when they sit down to write their first version? Probably it is a combination of both. The fact that they have to find partners who peer correct their texts makes them more conscious of the whole writing process. They probably figured out that firstly, if they do not write "properly" they will not find someone for peer correction and secondly, if they write it properly and to the best of their knowledge right away, they do not have to rewrite a lot for the second version. Isn't that what efficiency is about?

2.6. Fifth Action

2.6.1. Writing Task

Brave New World was the topic to write about next. We were reading the *Penguin Readers, simplified edition* in class for about a month. We discussed the themes of the book, talked about the characters and did the activities offered at the end of the book. As there is also one section called "writing" (p.122), I did not have to think of suitable writing tasks myself.

My students could choose from 10 different tasks. I liked the idea of different text types and different themes. In addition there were some creative tasks as well, some that are not on the text type list for the Matura anymore. A welcome change to standards as writing should not only be about completing "templates" and practicing for the standard writing tasks. Besides articles, letters, reviews they could also write a story, a diary entry or an advertisement.

2.6.2. Correction Time

As there was a variety of tasks given, reading through my students assignments was quite diverting, which made the time spent on marking more enjoyable. I read letters from Lenina to Fanny, letters from Bernard to Helmholtz, diary entries from Lenina, stories (different ending) and articles. Furthermore, the tasks were again generally well written, no significant errors on task fulfillment and organization.

The peer correction turned more towards checking for accuracy, not really commenting on the first two categories.

30 students out of 35 handed in their assignments properly on time, which again is quite satisfying for an 8th grade.

19 students handed in their final versions of their last writing assignment, leaving 16 students who had not yet taken the time and effort to correct their text with the help of my feed back.

2.6.3. Reflections

The great variety of tasks definitely is a plus, when reading and marking text productions. It makes a big difference for the reader, if you read 35 times an article about the same topic or a variety of tasks and topics. It did not surprise me that the students would rather choose the more informal text types, like letters, diary entries and stories. These text types are more open, allow more creativity and do not have to follow a rigid structure. I am glad they like writing creative tasks, because they could have chosen the easy way out in writing a book review (lots of information on the net), which was also an option, but nobody wrote a review. It shows to me that we as teachers - in spite of all the standard testing, standard text types, etc. - must not forget to create room for creative writing as well.

The fact that the peer correction was more shifting towards looking for accuracy, might be rooted in the fact that task fulfillment and structure are not such big issues in creative writing tasks, and therefore my students did not find anything to mark, so they switched towards looking for linguistic mistakes. I need to tell them that it is ok, if they just mark: "task and organization accomplished".

All in all, the 30 text productions handed in were a pleasure to read, they partly made me think, some made me smile or even laugh, not a single one made me angry. They truly managed to keep me interested. Isn't that the purpose of good writing?

2.7. Sixth Action

2.7.1. Class Writing Task

As I have some students, namely five boys who hardly ever or rarely hand in writing tasks, I decided to have one task to be written in class and in pair work. It was a letter of inquiry about a holiday offer (*New Opportunities* p. 84, 85). They had one lesson to study, write and check their task. This time I did not ask for peer correction, as they were working in pairs anyway. I told them though to check their texts themselves with the help of the usual checklist, which was written on the blackboard and should be written at the end of their task being ticked off.

- layout/register
- content (see bullet points in task)
- word count
- paragraphs
- linking (underline linkers)

2.7.2. Correction Time

This task was quickly marked. First of all, I only had to mark 17 texts, because of the pair work, and secondly it was a short, very structured text. Standard phrases could be easily copied from the sample text and completed with what they had to write about. Therefore the results were very satisfying, but as mentioned before, it was basically filling in a template.

However, in their life after school, that is probably a text type they might even write in English, so it is important to know how to fill in templates.

2.7.3. Reflections

Paired writing activities are helpful for efficiency. Firstly, half the amount of texts is half the time for marking. Secondly, writing in pairs helps the students to concentrate more on the task in general, because they discuss what needs to be said, how it should be structured, which standard phrases should be used, etc. While monitoring the activity in class, I could hear my students saying things like “That doesn’t make sense!” “We haven’t answered this bullet point yet.” “This is an irregular verb.” But they would also ask for my advice or help, if one can say this or that. The lesson itself was quite productive and it made me see how they approach writing, which is something I usually do not see, because most of the writing tasks are home-exercises. It was good to see that they knew what they had to do, - they knew the steps. Another advantage of writing in class is that they have no chance to “escape”, to get seriously side tracked, which probably is the case more often at home. Mobile phone on the desk, computer on, music on and no partner telling you that the task should be finished by the end of the lesson. Unfortunately class writing is not an option that can be applied on a regular basis, if you consider the total amount of English lessons per week. It would be a perfect option for guided afternoon activities though.

2.8. Seventh Action

2.8.1. Writing task

This time I wanted to create some kind of authentic writing task and prepare them for life after the Matura. As I was revising more or less all text types for the Matura, it was time for a report. So what seems authentic to report, and especially reporting to me?

We were working on global and social issues. Our course book had a chapter about poverty with some pictures and graphs as a lead in and a listening comprehension as a follow-up. It was a lecture about poverty and the task was note taking (*New Opportunities* p. 92). Therefore I asked them to listen to the lecture and report to me, what they thought was essential in the lecture. I only played the recording once. Then they had time to compare their notes with a partner. The written report was to be sent per email within the next week. (Exception to usual two-weeks time frame). We did a quick oral revision on layout and register criteria for a report.

Of course the task is not truly authentic, but it comes close to real life reports. I explained to them that in their future professional career it is quite likely that they have to write a report to their boss about a meeting or a lecture, giving the most important facts in a well-organized and clearly structured way. The fact that they were sending their home-exercises (final versions) per email made it a bit more authentic.

2.8.2. Correction Time

The return was up to 32 students again. I wanted to mark the tasks on the computer, but I had difficulties doing that. So in the end I printed them out. I really need to have paper to scribble my remarks and draw my smileys. The students though seemed to have no problem checking on layout, content and coherence when peer correcting the tasks on the computer, but they

only had to do one. Peer correction in general was good, they concentrated on what was agreed upon.

Marking the reports was quickly done, although quite boring (always the same content). Again there were no significant errors in task fulfillment and structure. They all had the most important information in their report. Some exaggerated with sub-headlines and bullet points, but all in all I was well informed what the lecture had been about. As the sentences were quite short and precise, there were fewer mistakes in sentence structure. Most mistakes were spelling or expression mistakes.

19 students handed in their final versions of their Brave New World writing task.

Nobody handed in the final versions of the paired writing activity (letter of inquiry).

2.8.3. Reflections

I am very content with the development that I never get home-exercises anymore (in the 8th grade), where I have the impression that the students were writing them just for the sake of handing in something. This is a great improvement for me, because I prefer marking texts, where I can see the writer had put some effort in it. It is a matter of mutual appreciation. It is wonderful to experience that as a teacher.

2.9. Eighth Action

2.9.1. Essay Writing

The last and most difficult task is the essay. It is the supreme discipline. Essay writing needs good preparation. So before attacking the writing process, I made them work on: linking, especially on contrasting and sequencing.

- mind mapping
- topic sentence
- supporting arguments
- thesis sentence

I gave them a sample essay, where they could clearly identify the introduction with the thesis sentence, the main body with the topic sentence and the supporting arguments for each paragraph, and the conclusion.

The writing task was simply to write an essay about a topic they consider important. Something that affects them, worries them, annoys them, something worth writing an essay about. The month before we had open learning on “Society”, where they could choose from different activities about the following themes: consumerism and/or crime and punishment. So they had already thought about and discussed certain topics, some already had written notes or mind maps.

The task was as follows:

- Read through the text about essay writing again
- Choose a topic you want to write about (from last lessons)
- Prepare your essay – mind map
- Use “knowledge” and topic related vocabulary
- Write your essay in about 350 words
- Hand in your plan, your draft/first version and your peer corrected version.
- (Peer correction about thesis sentence, topic sentence, and structure in general)

2.9.2. Correction Time

26 students handed in their essays on time. Peer correction was generally done fairly well. Although some found thesis sentences where I could not really find them and others were marking more linguistic mistakes again.

Marking essays is a challenge and it takes more time than marking letters or reports. The arguments given have to be coherent and conclusive and that seems difficult for most of my students. Very often they use overgeneralization or give personal examples. Sometimes they mention issues in the first paragraph a bit and then again in the fourth, etc. The German teacher confirmed me in my observations. Well, if they have problems in their mother tongue, clearly that would apply for their 1st foreign language as well.

This time my feedback was extended to coherence as well, in a lot of cases I made suggestions, where they could improve. But I also gave a lot of smileys for good argumentation. Furthermore, I returned the writing tasks personally and explained my suggestions and I highly recommended to them to write a final version this time!

14 students handed in their final version within the next week.

2.9.3. Reflections

Although we had prepared quite well for this essay and they could write about something they wanted, the results were not as satisfying as I had hoped for. There were of course excellent essays, but on average I simply had expected more, considering the preparation.

On the other hand the final versions handed in were very satisfying. They obviously needed my feedback for this text type.

Next time I teach essay writing I will already collect their mind maps/drafts and see if they seem coherent. Furthermore, I will ask them to underline their thesis statement and all topic sentences with supporting arguments and examples all in different colors.

2.10. Last Action

2.10.1. Last writing task

The end of the 8th grade had come close and I wanted to finish this year with something enjoyable, so they would have pleasant memories about their last English lessons. The last four weeks of English were spent on reading "*The Perks of Being a Wallflower*" and corresponding tasks for each part of the book, the book has four parts. The idea was to do one part per week. One task per part was obligatory, other tasks were optional. They could either read in class and/or read at home. The activities had to be handed in when finished.

One compulsory writing task was writing three letters to Charlie. (annex 9)

2.10.2. Correction Time and Reflections

27 students handed in their letters, peer corrected, on time. Marking was a piece of cake. I really enjoyed reading them. Some were funny, some quite thoughtful, and really all were fluent to read. One of my weakest students handed in an almost flawless home-exercise. Asking him cautiously if he had written this really on his own, he said yes. He was beaming when I told him that it was excellent! All students who handed in their letters received some

chocolate - I did not need any to get me through marking their home-exercises! And that was exactly what I told them.

2.10.3. Feedback - Final Questionnaire and Interviews

For more than a year I had been trying to make correction more efficient for me. From my personal impression I can only say, it worked. As mentioned several times before, the time I was spending on marking became less annoying, partly even enjoyable and for most text types also shorter. Of course, I am not utterly looking forward to reading through a pile of 35 writing tasks, - that would be a lie, but it is not nerve-wracking and completely unsatisfying for me anymore.

The question now is how the students experienced their development. Has anything changed for them as well? Has writing home-exercises become more efficient for them, because they sit down to write more aware of what is demanded?

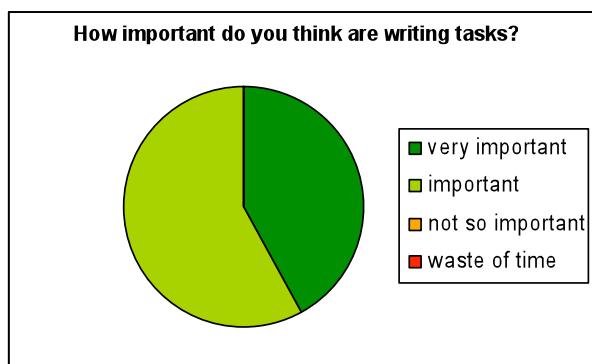
The questionnaire (annex 10) was handed out after their last writing task in April 2011. The interviews were carried out by a colleague the same day (annex 11).

3. Results

3.1. Questionnaire

All of my students consider writing tasks as important or very important.

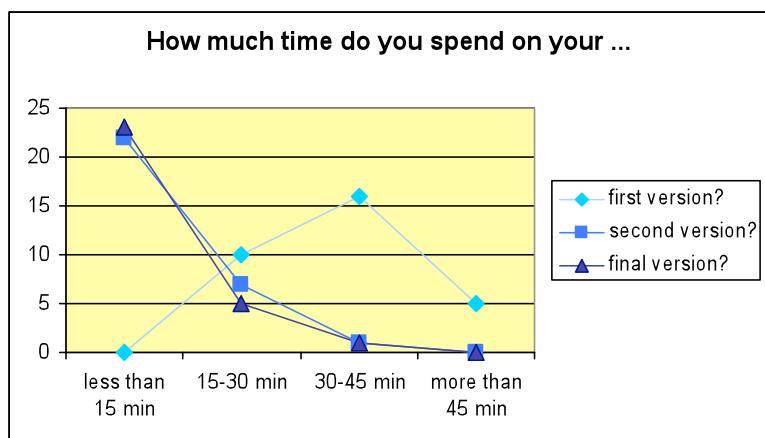
In the first memo/questionnaire there were four students who considered writing as not so important.



Most of them spend between 30 and 45 minutes for their first version. Some spend more than that.

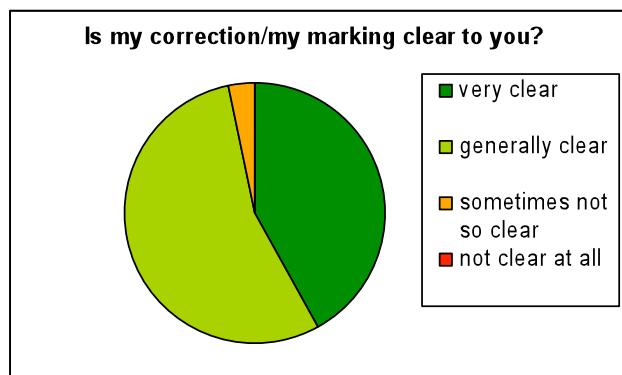
For their second and final versions they spend between 15 and 30 minutes each.

The results of the memo were similar. The majority said they would spend between half an hour and an hour for their writing task (only one version).



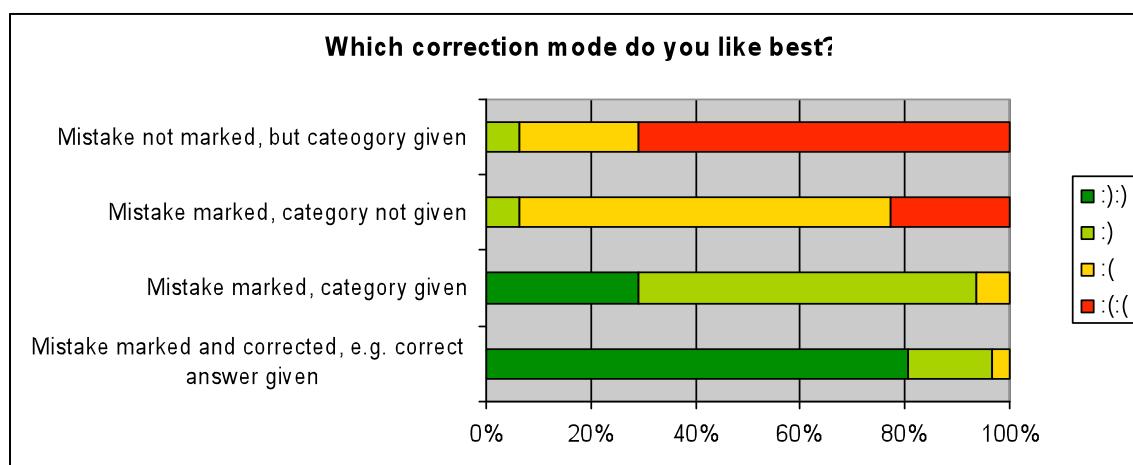
My correction seems to be clear to very clear to most of my students. Only a few find them sometimes not so clear.

The results in the memo were similar.

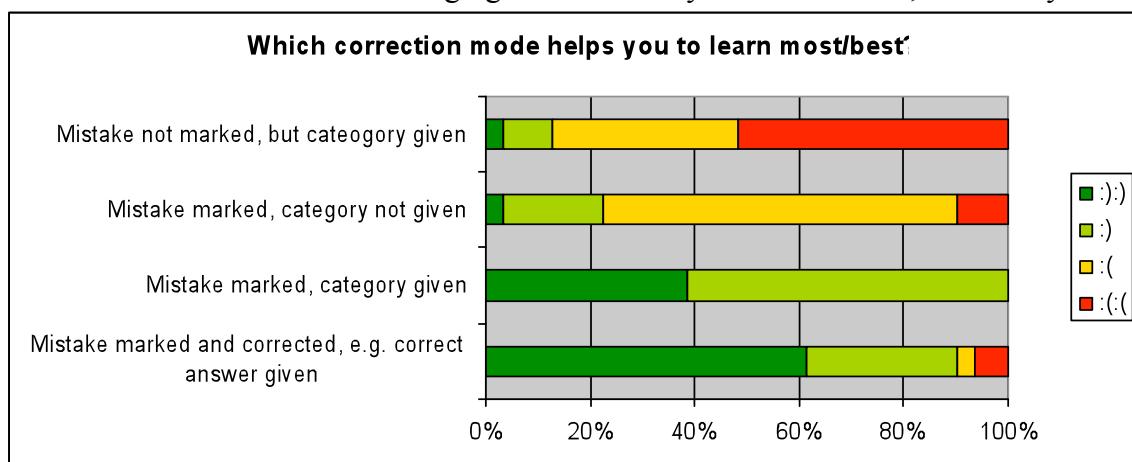


A big majority of my students like it best, when the mistake is marked and the correct answer is given. They also like, when the mistake is marked and the category is given.

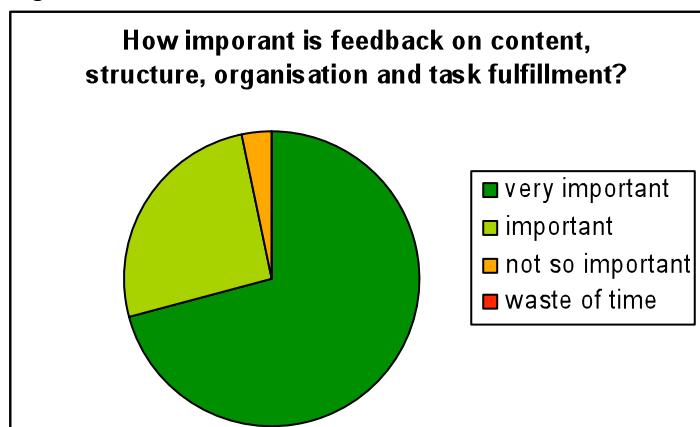
They do not really like, when the mistake is marked, but the category is not given. And they detest it more or less, if just the category is given.



When it comes to what helps them to learn best, the same questions are answered more or less the same with a shift to acknowledging that the more you have to think, the more you learn.

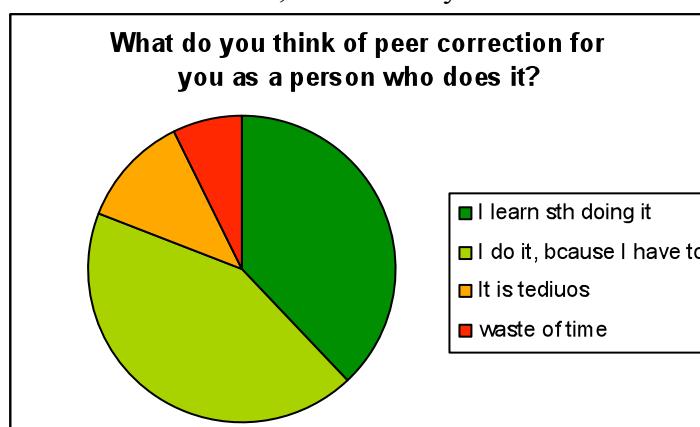


Almost 75% of the students think that feedback on task, content and structure is very important.

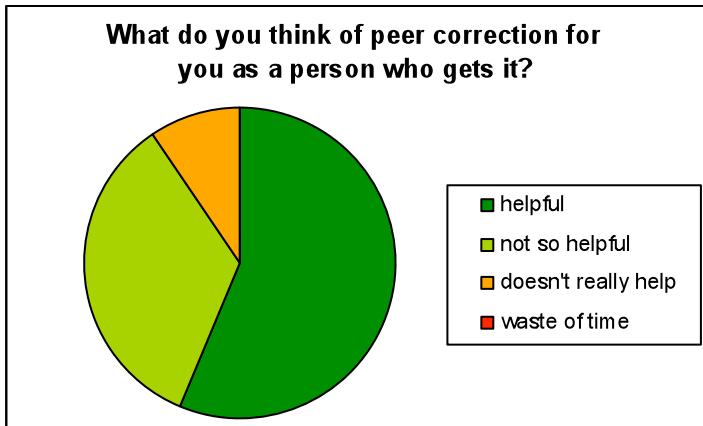


Peer-correction is partly seen as helpful for learning, but also as tedious and a waste of time (if you do it).

A lot of students do it, because they have to.



More than half of the students think that it is helpful to get a peer feedback.



3.2. Interviews

Three students from 8A were interviewed: a female A-student, a male C-student and a male B/C-student who hardly ever hands in written assignments. (A-C refers to their level in writing.)

The first question -about how long it takes them to write their tasks- confirms the results from the questionnaire, as does the second question about my marking which is considered generally clear.

The third set of questions about the peer correction process is the most interesting one and will therefore be partly quoted:

Female A-student: “... peer correction ist mühsam und schwierig.... Fehler (accuracy) stechen ins Auge, man ist versucht alles auszubessern oder umzuschreiben... besonders wenn etwas chaotisch ist. ... es ist nicht leicht, nur Struktur und Inhalt anzuschauen, wenn so viele Fehler sind.“

„Für mich selbst hat es nicht wirklich etwas gebracht ... für die anderen schon.“

Male C-student: „...Inhalt und Struktur anzuschauen ist ok, das geht. ... Das bringt schon was, man schreibt selber schon bewusster. ... wenn andere Fehler sind, kann man das schon auch anstreichen, aber eigentlich sollen wir nur auf Inhalt und Struktur schauen .“

Male B/C-student: „... warum ich keine Hausübungen schreibe ... ich brauche das nicht, weil ich kann eh schreiben. Ich habe in der Hauptschule eine Super-Lehrerin gehabt, bei der haben wir das gelernt.“

„...von der peer correction halte ich nicht viel, man weiß ja nicht was falsch und richtig ist, die Frau Professor weiß das viel besser.“

As the interviewer mentioned that the purpose of peer correction is not looking for mistakes, but for content and structure, he said: “... ach so, vielleicht habe ich das dann falsch verstanden.”

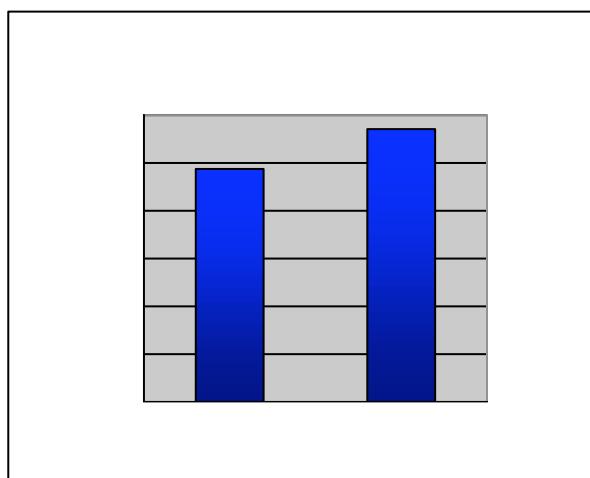
4. Interpretation

4.1. Questionnaire

4.1.1. Duration of Writing Tasks

The importance of writing seems to be clear for my students. Nobody considers it a waste of time. Personally I am quite content that four students, who said it was not really important a year ago, changed their view. Maybe they were just in a different mood, - or the fact that writing was done more consciously this year, really has changed their opinion. On the other hand I have three students, who only occasionally or never hand in their writing tasks. They might think it important, but they still do not produce writing tasks.
(One of those students was interviewed).

The total amount of time spent on average for writing has only increased 10 minutes. I find it quite interesting that the writing procedure of producing three versions does not take longer. The 10 minutes are definitely worth it, as the results in the end are really satisfactory.
I will keep this system of having students write two or three versions of one text instead of asking them to write always a new text. One text every five weeks, I think that is sufficient.



4.1.2. Correction Modes

Having tried different correction modes, I am not surprised that the students prefer the easy way out. They like it best, when I give them the right answer. It is less work for them, - no looking up in the dictionary or grammar review. On the other hand they know quite well that they learn more, if they have to do so. I guess I will still use the different modes in the future, but in specific cases:

The first two modes I will use only occasionally:

- Mistake not marked, category given: if it is a really obvious and bad mistake they should not make anymore.
- Mistake marked, category not given: only for obvious mistakes also.

The last two I will use on a regular basis:

- Mistake marked, category given: for all mistakes, where I think they should know the answer.

- Mistake marked and correction given: for all mistakes, where I think, they would not find the correct answer themselves.

These modes can be applied differently with different students. Better students would have to find out more themselves, weaker students would get more help and guidance.

4.1.3. Peer Correction

Although a third of the students only do peer-correction because they have to do it, I will continue “forcing” them. Reality shows that only a minority of students will do extra work voluntarily and reluctantly. Peer correction is also tedious, it is hard work, but a third also said it helps them learning. As we know, learning is not always fun! They do not like doing it but they appreciate the feedback they get from their peers, they consider it mostly helpful.

I am convinced that reading other people's texts and finding obvious mistakes that impede coherence, help students learning. Especially looking at task fulfillment makes them more conscious themselves what they need to write about. In addition, they might get new ideas about the topic. Finally, editing is a test type for the centralized Matura and can also be practiced, when doing peer correction.

4.2. Interviews

The results of the interviews show again that peer correction is work and not necessarily easy for students, especially if stronger students look at texts from weaker students. I understand that it is difficult to not mark classic mistakes and to concentrate on task fulfillment and structure. Marking somebody's text who is at the same level would maybe help in this situation. The second student seems to be alright with peer correcting only structure and content. I know that he always marked the text of somebody at the same level. The third student being interviewed is a special case anyway. He might be right in the assumption that he does not need practice. He can write at a mediocre level and considering that writing is worth 25% - that is enough for him to pass easily. He is not the ambitious type who wants to improve. A fact to accept.

One thing that puzzled me though with the third student is that he was not aware at all about what peer correction is about. It seems that whenever writing comes up in the lessons, he switches off, as -according to him- he does not need to improve in writing. He knows how to write anyway. I just wonder how many more were not really aware of what peer correction is about, how many more were drifting off ...

All in all, I will reconsider myself what peer correction should be about. Maybe it would be better to change tasks from text to text, like one time only structure and paragraphs and linking words, another time just content points and another time maybe even accuracy?

5. Outlook – Consequences

As mentioned before, correction has become more efficient for me. Peer correction and making students aware of what criteria a good text should fulfill are the key issues, being consequent in what is acceptable is another. What I have also learned is that setting an agreement at the beginning of the school year saves a lot of discussions about deadlines and broken computers, etc. later on.

As the students I have been working with on this project are taking their Matura exams and therefore (hopefully) will not be in school anymore in September, I will have to find another class to continue this project. I am currently teaching a 5th and 6th grade, so I will redo my project with my 6th - then 7th graders. I would really like to do more or less the same with another class and see how it works. Of course I have used the experience I have gained carrying out the project already with my other classes, but not consequently and consistently. I really believe in “forcing” the students to proofread and peer correct every written assignment and in writing final versions. I will make some alterations on the peer correction procedure though. Each peer correction will be a specific task, like underlining linking words, or ticking off content points, or looking at coherence, or looking for specific tense mistakes, etc. I might also work on proofreading, as I think it is also necessary to know how to read one’s own text. Finally, I might spend more time on writing in class, especially in pair work, as it is quite interesting to see how the students actually proceed when they write: Do they draw mind maps? Do they make lists? Do they translate their ideas from German into English? How long can they concentrate? How long does it actually take them to write their task? Monitoring the students and helping them or even interfering when necessary might be important for the more difficult writing tasks, like essays and stories. And working in pairs might actually force them to really think about what they are going to write and why, - this will definitely help them to structure their text. All in all, the procedure will stay the same, but some tasks and activities will be changed and improved.

Of course I will also integrate some of the experiences I have gained with my other classes, especially the fact of being strict about what is acceptable as a home exercise and what is not. I worked on that with my 5th graders quite a bit at the beginning of the school year. The result is that I do get only acceptable home exercises, but unfortunately the return rate is around 75%. That does not satisfy me. Was I too strict? I guess we have to work on a new agreement at the beginning of the 6th grade.

To conclude, I have to say that I very much enjoyed doing this project. I am glad I did something that helped me, something that improved my situation and not in the first place my students’. Of course it helped my students as well, because correction efficiency and how to improve writing are intertwined. The better your students write the fewer mistakes you have to mark. The better you teach them to find obvious mistakes themselves the more time you have for something else. ... If you could teach them how to avoid mistakes in the first place, they would have more time for themselves as well, - but that is a different story!

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Annex

A1 Memo

MEMO

Wie wichtig findest du schriftliche Hausübungen (writing tasks)?

Wie viel Zeit verbringst du durchschnittlich für eine solche writing task?

Wie findest du meine Korrektur?

Verbesserst du die Arbeiten?

Anregungen, Wünsche (die writing task und deren Korrektur betreffend):

A2 Analysis Memo

MEMO

7AC

Wie wichtig findest du schriftliche Hausübungen (writing tasks)?

Nicht besonders wichtig	4
Wichtig	15
Sehr wichtig	8

Wie viel Zeit verbringst du durchschnittlich für eine solche writing task?

10-20 min.	2
15-30 min.	4
45 min	3
30 min – 1h	13
1-1,5h	9

Wie findest du meine Korrektur?

Übersichtlich	2
Hilfreich	2
i.O.	6
Verständlich/klar	4
Fair	1
Gut	11
Sehr gut	8
Ausführlich	1

Verbesserst du die Arbeiten?

Sehr selten	3
Selten	2
Teilweise	2
Nicht schriftlich, aber mündlich	2
Ja, meistens	22

Anregungen, Wünsche (die writing task und deren Korrektur betreffend):

Etwas längerer Zeitraum	2
1 HÜ pro Textsorte	1
nicht immer dasselbe	1
das Richtige drüberschreiben	1
Verbesserungsvorschläge	5 (bei Ausdrucksfehlern)
Nachbesprechung wünschenswert	1

A3 Assessment Scale (Borg Bad Leonfelden)

	Task fulfillment * Content and variety Subject knowledge Format, length, register	Organisation / Structure coherence/cohesion (legibility) paragraphing punctuation	Range of grammar and vocabulary	Accuracy of grammar, vocabulary and spelling
5	Task fully achieved: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All content points elaborated• Great variety of ideas and arguments, independent ideas• Very good knowledge of subject• Text entirely relevant to the topic• Appropriate format and register• Appropriate length	Clear overall structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meaningful paragraphing• Very good use of linking devices• No significant errors of punctuation• Fully coherent text, allows smooth reading	Excellent: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wide range of appropriate vocabulary• Ambitious attempts at advanced idiomatic language• Wide range of structures to express valid ideas efficiently• Great readiness to use complex grammatical structures	Excellent: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hardly any errors of vocabulary/grammar• Hardly any errors of spelling. Spelling error does not change meaning of word
4	Task widely achieved: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most content points elaborated, all mentioned• Good variety of ideas and arguments• Good knowledge of subject• Text mostly relevant to the topic• Mostly appropriate format and register• Mostly appropriate length	Widely clear overall structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mostly appropriate paragraphing• Good use of linking devices• Hardly any significant errors of punctuation• Widely coherent text	Good: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good range of appropriate vocabulary• Attempts at advanced idiomatic language• Good range of structures• Readiness to use complex grammatical structures	Good: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Few minor errors of vocabulary/grammar• Few minor errors of spelling• Errors do not impede communication
3	Task adequately achieved: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All content points mentioned, some content points elaborated• Average variety of ideas and arguments• Sufficient knowledge of the subject• Some gaps or redundant information• Acceptable format and register	Adequately structured <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paragraphing misleading or missing at times• Average use of linking devices• Coherent text, readability occasionally impaired• More frequent errors of punctuation	Average: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderate range of vocabulary• Moderate range of structures	Average: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some major errors of vocabulary/grammar• Considerable number of spelling errors, basic rules of spelling still observed• Interference from mother tongue possible
2	Task achieved only in a limited sense: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many inconsistencies in text type requirement• Most content points mentioned but not elaborated• Limited variety of ideas and arguments• Limited knowledge of subject• Frequent gaps or redundant information	Limited overall structuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frequent mistakes in paragraphing• Limited or incorrect use of linking devices• Lack of coherence, difficult and confusing to read	Limited: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited range of vocabulary• Limited range of structures• Simple language	Limited: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frequent major errors of vocabulary/grammar• Frequent errors of spelling, basic rules of spelling not observed• Frequent interference from mother tongue• Errors impede communication at times
1	Task poorly achieved: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hardly any content points dealt with• Poor knowledge of subject• Hardly any or no valid ideas and arguments• Hardly any relevant information• Major gaps or pointless repetition• Inadequate format and register• Inadequate length	Poor overall structuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No meaningful paragraphing• Poor and frequently incorrect use of linking devices• Text not coherent, nearly impossible to read• Numerous punctuation errors	Poor: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor/inadequate range of vocabulary• Poor/inadequate range of structures• Very simple language	Poor: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Numerous errors of vocabulary/grammar• Numerous errors of spelling• Mainly translation from mother tongue• Use of German words
0	Not enough to evaluate/ off topic	Not enough to evaluate	Extremely limited range of vocabulary/grammar	Hardly any control of vocabulary/grammar/spelling

*Veto category: if the candidate gets 0 points in this category, all other categories are 0 points too.

Pass mark: 60% (12 P.)

A4 Tasks for *Cold Mountain* Portfolio

⇒ You can work in pairs for the first four categories, you can work in a group of four for the creative task.

⇒ Choose ONE task per category.

⇒ Write it neatly. Content and appearance count!

⇒ Hand it in in a folder/binder. Deadline: December 15th, 2009. Portfolios handed in earlier are also very welcome!

VOCABULARY – GRAPHIC ORGANISERS

- Make a chart/table of interesting and important words. Categorize by parts of speech.
- Write a list of character traits for four important characters of the book.
- Make a character tree of your favorite character, where one branch is event, one is personality one might be appearance, one might be relations You can add more if you like.

CONTENT/STORY – GRAPHIC ORGANISERS (pre-writing prompts)

- Make a time line of all the events in the book.
- Make a flow chart of all the events in the book.
- Make a story web.

WRITING – “guided”

- Interview a character. Write at least ten questions (and the answers) that will give the character the opportunity to discuss his/her thoughts and feelings about his/her role in the story.
- Write a full (physical, emotional, relational) description of three of the characters in the book. Draw a portrait/find a picture to accompany each description.
- Look at the chapter headings (or your pre-writing prompts from above) and write a short summary of the book in your own words.

WRITING – “free”

- Choose a quote from a character. Write why it would or wouldn't be a good motto by which to live your life.
- Stories are made up, - on conflicts and solutions. Choose three conflicts that take place in the story and give the solutions. Is there one that you wish had been handled differently?

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- Make a game board (Snakes and Ladders is a good pattern), using problems/questions from the book as ways to get ahead or to be put back.
- Make an illustrated timeline showing events of the story and draw a map showing the location(s) where the story took place.
- Make a poster advertising the book so someone else will want to read it.

A5 Harvey Milk Project – Last Activity

Comment, discuss, answer in pairs:

Take notes, make lists, draw mind-maps,

- Gay rights – civil rights – human rights
- The 70ies, the Hippie generation
- Harvey Milk and Scott Smith – similarities/differences to heterosexual relationships
- Jack Lira – The Diva: his role in Harvey's life
- Cleve Jones – his development throughout the story (and in real life)
- The Campaigning: How? Strategies? Target groups?
- Elected into office Harvey Milk accomplished two things, what were they?
- Who killed Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone? And why?
- Murder case – prosecution – defense – sentence: was it a just sentence/punishment?

Further questions: Find out, if you do not know.

What was the big challenge of homosexuals in the 80ies?

Homosexuals today: improvements, drawbacks, famous homosexual politicians

Your personal view on the film: Answer the following questions in about 500 words.

1. Who is your favorite character and why?
2. Who is your least favorite character and why?
3. Describe THREE scenes in the film that really moved/impressed you and give reasons.
4. Describe ONE scene that you disliked and say why?
5. Learning experience. What have you learned from the film?

A6

Checking and editing: advice for students

First check

Look at the text as a whole:
Does it look like a letter, report, etc?
Does it look **well-organised**?
Can you read it?

Read your writing to yourself.

Ask yourself:

1. Is it **easy to read**?
2. Is the information in a **logical order**?
3. Have you included **all the necessary** information?
4. Have you included any **unnecessary** information?
5. Is the style **consistent**?
6. Is there an **introduction** and a **conclusion**?
7. Have you included a **variety** of sentences (short, long)?
8. Have you divided your writing into **clear paragraphs**?

Second check

Check your grammar

1. Are the tenses consistently used?
2. Are all the sentences **complete**?
3. Do the verbs and their subjects agree?
4. Do sentences and clauses link together?

Check your vocabulary

1. Have you used any words that are too formal or informal?
2. Have you used descriptive words to describe people, places, etc?
3. Are you using the same words or phrases again and again?
4. Can you change any words to make the writing more original or vivid?

Check your spelling

Check for words you usually misspell.

Check your punctuation

1. Do all sentences and proper nouns start with a capital letter?
2. Does each sentence end with the correct punctuation?
3. Are there too many commas?

Checking and editing: the key points

Check each piece of written work twice

First check

Look at the text as a whole

- Does your text look legible and well-organised?
- Does it answer the question?
- Is the style and register consistent and appropriate?
- Does it read well?

Second check

Check your text for detail

- Check your grammar
- Check your vocabulary
- Check your spelling
- Check your punctuation

A7 WORK PLAN for weeks 24, 25, 26 (1-19 March)

7AC

Week 24 and 25 – OPEN LEARNING

SPEAKING : choose one of the following options and prepare your speaking activity (2-3 min.); to be presented in class:

- telling a joke (students' book p.21, powerbook p. 20)
- present your favorite comedy (students' book p. 24)
- present your favorite comedy actor/actress (students' book p. 24)

Presentation: NO NOTES allowed!

- fluency
- pronunciation
- adequate vocabulary and structures

ENGLISH IN USE: Review Modules 1 and 2 (students' book p. 26 and 27)

Powerbook: p. 24, (25), 26, 27

Presentations: in week 25 (8 – 12 March) in alphabetical order.

Week 26 - READING (individual)

You can **choose ONE of the following books**:

- Mark Haddon: The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, Vintage 2004.
- Jack Kerouac: On the Road, Penguin Readers Level 5, Pearson/Longman, 2008.
- Stephen King: The Body, Penguin Readers, Level 5, Pearson/Longman, 2008.

Follow up task - WRITING: a book review (350 words)

How to write a book review: see students' book p. 22 and p. 138. There are also some preparation exercises in your powerbook p. 22 and 23.

NO COPY-PASTE from the Internet allowed! If you use sources you HAVE TO name them!
2/3 of the text HAVE TO BE your OWN WORDS!

Book review has to be handed in: **7 April** (not one day later).

A8 PEER CORRECTION

by _____ for _____

⇒ Read again the writing help on pages 23 and 138 in your students' book.
Then complete the check list below.

Task fulfillment:

- What book? – _____ information
- _____ (in your own words!)
- Book's _____ points
- C _____ and re _____

Register:

- n _____ style (no _____ forms)
- most should be written in _____ tenses

Organization:

- There should be clearly _____ paragraphs.
- Meaningful paragraphs

Coherece/Cohesion:

- Does the text allow smooth reading?
- How often do you have to stop and re-read because it is not clear? _____ x
(mark in text with “??”)

⇒ Now read your partner's text twice:

- First check: read for task fulfillment and register.
- Second check: read for organization and coherence/cohesion.

Symbols: completely fulfilled partly fulfilled

⇒ With the feed back of your partner and with the help of the following tasks write your second version.

- Try to find spelling and punctuation mistakes: Start checking from the end.
- Are the tenses consistently used?
- Are the sentences complete? (S V O)
- Look for ONE of your most common errors (see recent corrections) and try to avoid them!

⇒ Hand in your book review, version 2, together with this paper. Deadline: April 13th, 2010

The Perks of Being a Wallflower

Letter Quiz
Pages 42-139

Directions: Write three letters to Charlie. Each letter must be at least one hundred and forty words or more. You must choose one entry from each of the following bulleted letters below. During the quiz, you will be allowed to use the book and any reading responses you've completed. However, you may not share a book with anyone or any of your reading responses.

November 7, 8, 15, 23 (choose one)

December 7, 21, 25, 26, 30 (choose one)

January 4, 14, 25, February 9, 23, March 7, and April 18 (choose one)

An "A" response will do all or most of the following:

- Begin your letter, "Dear Charlie,"
- Date the letter one day after the date of the letter written to you
- Sign your letter, "Love always, your friend"
- Address specific events that happened in each letter
- Relate those events to real events in your life or to similar events that have happened to people you know at school
- Offer Charlie advice on how to deal with what happened in each letter
- Connect what happened in one letter to other events in the story



A 10 CORRECTION EFFICIENCY in writing tasks – QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge. It is very important for me to get valid data, so I can properly research my topic. Thanks in advance for your time and cooperation.

Circle the right answer for you, one per question.

1. How important do you think are writing tasks?

very important *important* *not so important* *waste of time*

2. How much time do you spend on your first version on average? (If you write them.)

less than 15 min *15-30 min* *30- 45 min* *more than 45 min*

3. How much time do you spend on your 2nd version (after peer correction) on average? (If you write them.)

less than 15 min *15-30 min* *30- 45 min* *more than 45 min*

4. How much time do you spend on your final version on average? (If you write them.)

less than 15 min *15-30 min* *30- 45 min* *more than 45 min*

5. Is my correction/my marking clear to you?

very clear *generally clear* *sometimes not so clear* *not clear at all*

6. Which correction mode do you like best?

Mistake marked and corrected, e.g. correct answer given

😊😊 ☺ ☹ ☹☹

Mistake marked, category given

😊😊 ☺ ☹ ☹☹

Mistake marked, category not given

😊😊 ☺ ☹ ☹☹

Mistake not marked, but category given

😊😊 ☺ ☹ ☹☹

7. Which correction mode helps you to learn most/best?

Mistake marked and corrected, e.g. correct answer given

😊😊 ☺ ☹ ☹☹

Mistake marked, category given

😊😊 ☺ ☹ ☹☹

Mistake marked, category not given

😊😊 ☺ ☹ ☹☹

Mistake not marked, but category given

😊😊 ☺ ☹ ☹☹

8. How important/helpful is feedback on content, structure, organization and task fulfillment?

very important *important* *not so important* *waste of time*

9. What do you think about peer correction for you as person who does it? (You can circle 2 options if you like.)

I learn something doing it. *I do it, because I have to. It is tedious (mühsam)* *Waste of time*

10. What do you think about peer correction for you as person who gets the feedback? (You can circle 2 options or circle 1 and add 1 comment.)

helpful *not so helpful* *doesn't really help* _____

A11 Interview Questions

Wie viel Zeit verbringst du im Durchschnitt für eine writing task

- 1st version
- 2nd version
- last version

Wie findest du die Korrektur von Frau Kreiner?

Arbeitest du effizienter und konzentrierter, seit du mehrere Versionen schreiben musst?

Hat dir das persönlich etwas gebracht?

Wie findest du die peer correction?

Bringt das was? Wenn du korrigierst? Wenn du Rückmeldung erhältst?