Students' Reactions to Writing Clinic Visits and Teacher-Student Conferences on Corrections Made Based on Coded Feedback

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Abstract

In a class of 16 Final Year Computer Science students with a low standard in written English in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course in a university in Hong Kong, the course designer attempted to use a 3-step feedback-giving method to help the students improve their writing in a pilot study. The 3 steps include each student (1) paying compulsory visits to the writing clinic before submission of a major written assignment (2) making error corrections with the help of an editing checklist and (3) attending a teacher-student conference to discuss the corrections made. In this pilot study, an attempt was made to pilot this 3-step method in the course and investigate the students' reactions to feedback-giving method through a questionnaire and interviews. A questionnaire was given to all students to complete after they had finished with the three steps to find out their opinions on the helpfulness of each method and the best arrangement to help them improve their writing. All students were interviewed to provide further information about the rationale for their answers to the questions in the questionnaire. Frequency counts were made for the quantitative part of the questionnaire. Open-ended questions were analysed using the content analysis method. All interview data were tape-recorded, transcribed, tabulated and categorized. Results of the analysis of the questionnaire and interview data show that most students found each of the three methods helpful and all of them thought that the 3-step method was the best arrangement to provide them with feedback in order to improve their writing.

Keywords: Writing clinic visits, teacher-student conferences, coded feedback