

Working with Student Writing

The notes below list the time stamps when various topics are discussed. Feel free to jump to any topic that interests you or listen to the whole conversation. These notes contain a link to the book *26 Steps*, that you can download to use with your students. Many English teachers feel this book is real treasure!

If you only have a little time, I suggest that you watch from time stamp 26:00 to the end of the video.

Big thanks to our student volunteer Lily, who agreed to do a session and have it taped for teachers to watch. Thanks also to Corinne Lang for talking with me about student writing and asking wonderful questions *and* having great insights. Thanks especially to Marla Gamoran for setting the session up!

1:00-4:00 Chitchat - Feel free to skip this. *Please* skip this! ☺

4:00 Introduction

5:17 Explaining grammar rules is really hard!

6:43 Using the articles: a and the

8:11 Overview of the session

9:07 Looking at student writing

9:53 Respond to what students want to communicate and not just the mistakes.

10:31 parts of speech; noun vs. verb vs. adjective

11:20 Let students try to find their mistakes before you find them.

11:30 Does error correction work?

12:05 A real advantage of tutoring over classroom learning

12:25 Letting correction come from the students

12:50 Subject-verb agreement; Amazon HAVE or Amazon HAS

13:15 Talking about subjects and objects; for elementary level students, you can refer to the subject as the "first noun" in a simple sentence.

14:20 Giving examples and rules

14:53 Using Google Docs

15:30 Advantages of Google Docs over Zoom whiteboard for working with writing

16:07 Redundant words

16:28 Preteach a concept that may appear in a later session without making a big deal about it

17:45 Ask students to restate confusing sentences. "How else can you say this?"

18:11 Students don't always know what they are trying to say

18:38 Sentences with missing subjects

19:15 Students make some mistakes (but not all mistakes) that they have the ability correct

20:34 Eliminate redundant words

20:40 Written English is not just written-down spoken English

21:01 Ask some of the same questions from session to session to cue students to find their own mistakes

21:35 Spelling

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22:30 Keeping a spelling list

24:27 Correct some errors without explanations

25:14 A good writer doesn't change from plural to singular for no reason

25:30 Word order problems

26:00-32:00 What exactly should a tutor correct? The big 13 issues! (see handout)

29:50 Article rules for a and the: If the noun is general, don't use THE.

X The life is good. -->Life is good.

Specific nouns need THE

X Books on the table are mine --> THE books on the table are mine.

1st time A/AN; 2nd time THE

Yesterday I bought a book. The book was really interesting.

I met AN interesting person. THE person I met helped me a lot.

32:30 - 36:00 Specific practice for grammar: Controlled composition.

<http://xwordgrammar.pbworks.com/f/Kunz-26+Steps.pdf>

Students change a paragraph written in the plural to the singular or vice versa. Students change a paragraph written in the past to the present or present to the future.

Example: Change the paragraph below from the plural to the singular

What makes movies blockbusters? What makes it difficult for Hollywood producers to predict which films will be blockbusters and which will be miserable?

What makes a movie a blockbuster? What makes it difficult for a Hollywood producer to predict which film will be a blockbuster and which will be miserable?

35:25 Teaching should be about **showing** not just **telling**!

36:20 Let writing assignments come from the student. A good writing assignment lets the students tell you something that you don't already know! A good assignment has an "information gap".

36:55 Using email messages for lesson content. The tutor can reformulate student sentences for tone and grammar.