To Correct or Not to Correct:
The Ethics of Addressing Grammar in Writing Center Tutorials

What tutor training materials, writing center and L2 literature, and writing center publicity prohibit and allow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distinctions writers don’t understand:</th>
<th>Prohibitions</th>
<th>Allowances</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutors do not proofread.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tutors can address grammar.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Apparent contradictions:</th>
<th>Prohibitions</th>
<th>Allowances</th>
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<td>Tutors aren’t grammar teachers.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Writers need to learn grammar.</td>
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<th>Fine shades of meaning:</th>
<th>Prohibitions</th>
<th>Allowances</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tutors do not prioritize grammar.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar is a legitimate request.</td>
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The resulting (faulty) tutoring continuum:

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NO  Proofread   Edit  YES  Organization  Content

Grammar??
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A revised, workable tutoring continuum:

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NO  Tutor controls  Tutor rewrites (could include organization/content)  YES  Writer engaged  Writer rewrites (could include grammar)
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EDITS: A Mnemonic for Addressing Grammar

Evaluate errors—limit the focus in some way (based on comprehensibility, patterns of error, writer preference, instructor comment, etc.)

Decide on a method—choose something that fits writer ability and type of error (read aloud, writer corrects; circle errors, writer corrects; underline verbs, check against subjects, etc.)

Involve the writer—let writers correct as much as they are able first; teach methods and strategies for the remainder; have writers practice immediately

Teach proofreading strategies—give writers a means to continue the particular type of correction on their own; teach them how to do it and what to call it

Specify further work—once a writer understands how to find and correct an error type, move on to another; give writers work to do on their own

References


