Tinkering with Comments: Tailoring Practice by Spying on Written Artifacts

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Tinkering with Comments: Tailoring Practice by Spying on Written Artifacts

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Purdue University Writing Lab
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Overview

- Overview of two IRB-approved research projects
  - Why Code
  - Methods
  - Participants
- Asynchronous Online Tutoring (Josh)
- Social Sciences Graduate Writing Group (Amy)
Why Coding?

Theory

Practice
Methods: Asynchronous Online Tutoring

• Coding of marginal and summative tutor comments
  - Coded using Nvivo
  - Inter-rater Reliability—Kappa Coefficients & Percentage of Agreement
  - **Type:** Global, Surface, Meta-textual
  - **Focus:** What is the comment about?
  - **Mode:** How does the comment communicate?

• Interviews with tutors

Inter-Rater Reliability

Kappa Coefficient

• Lowest—0.4811
• Highest—1.0
• Most frequent—1.0
• Guidelines for interpreting
  • 0.4-0.75 = Fair to Good agreement
  • Over 0.75 = Excellent agreement

Percentage Agreement

• Lowest—84.21%
• Highest—100%
• Vast majority >90%
Comments from a single bubble

This is a very important point, and I think that it clearly communicates the purpose of this paragraph.

Perhaps it should move to the beginning of the paragraph?

Codes for each independent clause

Type: Global
Focus: Content
Mode: Praise

Type: Global
Focus: Organization
Mode: Qualified Command
Methods: Graduate Writing Group

- Manual coding of marginal comments (pen and paper)
- Comments could receive more than one code per method
- Inter-rater reliability by “compare and discuss” method

Method 1: Style of Feedback
- Corrective
- Directive
- Interactive
- Evaluative

Method 2: Focus of Feedback
- Deletions
- Insertions
- Discipline-Specific
- Organization
- Sentence Level
Sample Coded Comment

Reader Comment

I would lead with this thought. The logic here should be that deployment poses a threat to the attachment system, thereby causing family members to experience anxiety and threat regarding safety and comfort.

Coding

Method 1:
Directive & Interactive

Method 2:
Discipline-Specific (General Content) & Organization (Paragraph)
Methods: Important Similarities

• Emergent code/A priori code hybrid
• Code refinement or clarification in the early stages
• Development of a coding scheme
• Codes based on writing center values rather than writer values
Participants

Asynchronous Tutoring (Josh)
- Tutors—“Christen” & “Ellen”
  - NS
  - Grad
  - 1st year Tutor
- Writers—94
  - 38 NS & 56 NNS
  - 38 Undergrad & 56 Grad+
  - 17 had 2 sessions
  - 15 had > 2 sessions

Graduate Writing Group (Amy)
- Social Sciences Research Institute
- ~4-6 regular attendees
- Focus on 2
  - “Mary”—experienced grad & WG
  - “Lisa”—1st yr. grad & WG
Asynchronous Tutoring

Coding Tutor Comments
Impetus

Tutor training:

• While tutors receive training for face-to-face sessions, they receive very little formal training for asynchronous online tutoring.

• What type of training would most benefit tutors, and on which areas of asynchronous tutoring should this training concentrate?
What would you say are the most common issues that you address in online submissions?

• **Ellen:** A lot of grammar. Mostly grammar. Even if they don’t really need help with grammar, or they actually really want help with the structure of the paper, they usually still say grammar ... even though, as a tutor, you know they don’t really want help with grammar, it [the appointment form] says grammar, so I try and help with that no matter what if they say it.

• **Christen:** The most common request is grammar ... but I always still make an effort to comment on global issues.
Interviews: General Patterns

When you’ve identified something to comment on, how do you decide what to say?

• Christen: Sometimes it’s questioning, like “I’m not following you here, what is this? What do you mean here?” Sometimes ... I might say “ok, so your thesis seems to be XYZ... is this accurate?” or “I’m having trouble following you at this part of the paper, can you strengthen your topic sentences?” ... as much as possible, I try to write down what I say out loud.
Three Applications

• Comparing comments written to L1 and L2 English writers
• Comparing summative and ‘side’ comments
• Observing change over time
Proportion of Type, L2 & L1 Writers

- **Global**: L2 Writers 60%, English L1 Writers 70%
- **Surface**: L2 Writers 70%, English L1 Writers 60%
- **Global**: L2 Writers 40%, English L1 Writers 60%
- **Surface**: L2 Writers 60%, English L1 Writers 50%

**Ellen**

**Christen**

- L2 Writers
- English L1 Writers
Proportion of Focus, L2 & L1 Writers—Ellen

- Content
- Correctness
- Organization
- Style-clarity
- Style-format
- Style-genre

L2 Writers
English L1 Writers
Proportion of Mode, L2 & L1 Writers – Ellen

- L2 Writers
- English L1 Writers
What would you say are the most common issues that you address in online submissions?

- **Ellen:** A lot of sessions in the summer I feel like I’ve been getting a lot more online sessions with a lot of international students, and a lot of international students want help with grammar.
Proportion of Type, Summative and Side

- Global
  - Ellen
  - Christen

- Surface
  - Summative
  - Side comments

- Global
  - Summative
  - Side comments

- Surface
  - Summative
  - Side comments
Proportion of Focus, Summative and Side – Christen

- **Content**: 45%
- **Correctness**: 15%
- **Organization**: 15%
- **Style**: 25%
- **Style-clarity**: 35%
- **Style-format**: 5%
- **Style-genre**: 5%

**Legend**:
- Blue: Summative
- Orange: Side comments
Proportion of Mode, Summative and Side – Ellen
Interviews: Summative comments

When you’ve identified something that you need to comment on, how do you decide what to say?

• **Ellen:** So, when I’ve identified something, it depends on what it is. If it’s, like, structure, then I phrase what I want to say differently. That’s more for something I can say as a summative comment at the end… organization, larger order concerns, that kind of stuff, that’s something I feel comfortable more so saying in a summative comment.

• **Ellen:** If it’s grammar, I’ll usually go ahead and start [reading the document] and I’ll just start working on the grammar from the beginning… as soon as I start picking up patterns.
Proportion of Type, Early and Late Sessions – Ellen

Global

Early sessions
Late sessions

Surface

Early sessions
Late sessions
Proportion of Mode, Early and Late Sessions – Christen
Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tutor Comments</th>
<th>Coding Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It seems to me that there should be a transition here that introduces technological field experiences.</td>
<td>Focus:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Josh—Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vicki—Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your use of punctuation is clear and appropriate.</td>
<td>Focus:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Josh—Correctness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vicki—Style-Clarity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graduate Writing Groups
Coding peer comments
Mary, Method 2, Percents of Total Comments

![Graph showing percent of total comments for deletions, insertions, discipline-specific, organization, and sentence structure.](image-url)
Mary, Method 2
Comparing Comments that Mirror Each Other

- Deletions
- Insertions
- Discipline-Specific
- Organization
- Sentence Structure
Mary, Method 2
Opposing Movement of LOC and HOC Comments
Lisa, Method 2, Percent of Total Comments

- Deletion
- Insertion
- Discipline Specific
- Organization
- Sentence Structure
Comparison of Discipline-Specific Comments—Paper 15

- Data Handling
- Measures
- Visual Models
- Style Guide
- Content
- Other

Lisa vs. Mary
Discipline-Specific Comments for Mary, Paper 18

- Data Handling: 34%
- Measures; Visual Model: 0%
- Style Guide: 8%
- Content: 58%

Legend:
- Data Handling
- Measures; Visual Model
- Style Guide
- Content
Comparison Method 1, Corrective and Interactive

Mary

Lisa

Corrective
Interactive
Comparison, Method 1, Percents of Total Comments

Corrective  Directive  Interactive  Evaluative
Comparison, Method 2, Percents of Total Comments

Note: Lisa's large amount of discipline-specific in Paper 15 is due to a focus on APA style.
References


Questions?

Feel free to contact us for more information:

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