Asynchronous Online Comment Codes

**TYPE of comment**

**Global (g):** Is the comment addressing major issues with “content, focus, organization, point of view [or] tone?” (Ryan & Zimmerelli 2010 p. 9)

**Surface (s):** Is this comment addressing issues in an individual sentence? Does it cover things such as clarity, sentence structure, word choice, punctuation, or citation?

**Meta-textual (met-txt):** Is the comment referring to a non-rhetorical aspect of the session or text, or offering a description of what a consultant will do during the session (e.g. opening and closing comments)?

**FOCUS: What is the comment about?**

**Correctness (cor):** Is the comment correcting an error, such as those that could be found in grammar, punctuation, spelling, or writing mechanics?

**Organization (org):** Does the comment make a suggestion that results in changing the paper’s organization?

**Content (cnt):** Does the comment suggest adding content, point out a lack of content, or interact with the content?

**Style:** Does the comment fit one of these uses of “style?”

- **style-clarity:** Is the comment on an issue with clarity, such as sentence structure or word choice?
- **style-format:** Is the comment on an issue that is a matter of formatting style, such as APA or MLA?
- **style-genre:** Does the comment address an issue related to the conventions of the written genre, such as informal speech or contractions?

(continued on reverse)
**MODE: How does the comment communicate the focus?**

**Advice (ad):** Is the comment phrased as advice from the perspective of the consultant?

**Questions:** Is the comment addressing the focus by asking a question?
- **Closed Question (qst-clsd):** Can the question be answered with “yes” or “no”?
- **Open Question (qst-op):** Does the question ask for a more detailed response?

**Explanation (exp):** Does the comment explain why something should be included, but does not make a direct suggestion to include it?

**Praise (prs):** Does the comment praise the student or the content of the paper?

**Command (cmnd):** Does the comment make a specific suggestion, but phrases it as an imperative?

**Qualified Command (q-cmnd):** Softens the imperative with “you should” phrasing.

**Criticism (crit):** Does the comment point out an issue, but offers no specific suggestion?

**Qualified Criticism (q-crit):** Does the comment point out an issue without offering a specific suggestion, but uses qualifiers (i.e. ‘softens the blow’ of the criticism)?

**Recast (rcst):** Does the comment offer no explanation, suggestion, or acknowledgment of the specific issue, but simply offers a corrected version of the text? (usually, stands alone in its own comment bubble with no other input from the tutor)

**Miscellaneous (misc):** Does the comment contain a feature that is not covered by any of the above codes? If the miscellaneous code is used, the comment feature classified as miscellaneous must be analyzed separately to determine its role in the comment and why it does not fit with any of the other codes.

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For details about the development of the coding system and about initial research using it, see the following article:

Graduate Writing Group Comment Codes

Method 1: Style of Feedback
Corrective = actual insertions/deletions on the page  [maps onto 1 & 2 in Method 2]
Directive = tells the writer what to do but makes no actual changes to the page; specific options mentioned; should/must/need; would if it offers a specific change
Interactive = talks to the writer/about the text; offers commentary; asks questions; could/might/maybe; would if it is less of a specific change & more of a personal preference
Evaluative = makes a judgement call; labels something good or bad

Method 2: Focus of Feedback
1. Direct Deletions
   a. Word = Single letter up to one complete word
   b. Phrase = Two words up to entire sentence
   c. Punctuation
2. Direct Insertions
   a. Word = Single letter to one complete word
   b. Phrase = Two words up to entire sentence
   c. Punctuation
3. Discipline-Specific Comments
   a. Data handling = Inclusion/exclusion of data; choice/explanation of statistics
   b. Measures = Sample questions; methods of measuring; relevance of proposed measures
   c. Visual model vs. text = Language to explain visual model; specific data in table vs. text vs. both
   d. Literature/citations/style guide = Relevant lit.; handling of lit.; style & format issues
   e. General content = Clarity of content; amount of explanation; suggestions for new material/topics; connections with other fields; coherence of argument; causal language
   f. Other
4. Organization Comments
   a. Paragraph = Order of sentences within a single paragraph; transitions between sentences; addition or deletion of sentences to clarify main points or connections (as opposed to clarifying content)
   b. Section organization = Order of paragraphs within a single section of the document; transition phrases/sentences between paragraphs to clarify main points/connections
   c. Whole document = Organization between sections or across the whole document
5. Sentence Level Comments
   a. Grammar = punctuation, plurals, articles, tenses, etc.
   b. Vocabulary = consistent terminology, word choice, nuances of word meaning, etc.
   c. Sentence structure = clause placement, sentence length, asides or parentheticals or dashes, grammatical aspects of forming a sentence
   d. Sentence clarity = requests to rephrase, comments about lack of understanding, could mean two different things/which did you mean, etc.