

- 1) *Basic vocabulary orientation*: the acquisition of a grammatically correct vocabulary as well as the correction of mistakes should be oriented towards frequently used vocabulary. The more often a word is used, the more important is knowing and applying its correct spelling.
- 2) *Selective correction*: marking all mistakes leads primarily to discouragement. It is more useful to point out the three to five most important types of mistakes or individual errors and to plan an effective, multi-stage training to correct them.
- 3) *Useful improvements, long-term training*: the traditional method of repeatedly re-writing an incorrectly spelled word is of no benefit in terms of educational psychology. Useful and effective training leads to improvement if the words in question are practiced in various different sequences over a period of 2–3 weeks.
- 4) *Help with self-help*: a thorough introduction to the usage and handling of dictionaries is a prerequisite for students' ability to effectively avail themselves of these tools.

5. Evaluation and assessment of written work: important considerations

• **Assessment function:**

The assessment of students' written products should not only be the job of the teacher. A communicative writing concept that involves the target group (see above 3.a), considers the feedback of other readers as equally important and useful, and should already be implemented during the writing process. Also useful in this context are writing conferences (see chapter 11.1), with which the students are already familiar from their regular classroom lessons. The instructor fulfills primarily the role of a final corrective authority who can and should provide constructive criticism for further improvement.

• **Criteria orientation:**

One of the major problems with the traditional method of essay correction is the great subjectivity and lack of transparency. In order to avoid this pitfall, clear guidelines should be provided, at least before larger writing assignments. The expectations should be outlined according to 4–5 criteria, which are best formulated in conjunction with the students. (Example: the text should be minimally 1 page in length, with a clear structure, comprised of introduction/main text/conclusion, and should contain at least 4 important pieces of information, etc.). The reference to these criteria in the discussions with the students and in assessing and grading the texts promotes transparency and motivation.

• **Promotional orientation in correcting and evaluating:**

This signifies that the instructor's focus is less deficit-oriented in terms of «what is wrong, what is missing?» and more guided by the question «what is present, what can be built upon and expanded?». As a subsequent step, the instructor will consider how to best plan and achieve improvements (with targeted exercises, deeper reflection, own usage and implementation) in an effective fashion. This is the only method that leads to long-term success and applies to heritage language teaching as well.

• **Evaluating the process:**

Traditionally, only a finished text is assessed. However, this method often fails to show particularly where the weaker writers experienced difficulties. This would require a closer look at the previous writing process. For instance, if a particular writing strategy has been practiced, it becomes evident if someone simply begins to write, or actually makes an attempt to follow the prescribed strategy.

• **Providing feedback:**

Simply returning a corrected and graded piece of writing is no longer acceptable by today's methodological standards. Promotion oriented teaching means providing the students with a constructive written or oral commentary about their texts, as well as specific suggestions and guidance towards further development and improvement of their work.

- **Competence orientation:**

The orientation towards defined competences (often differentiated as minimal, normal, or expanded competences) is a current topic in education debate. This would have to be considered in a broader context for the teaching of heritage languages. Linguistically, this would have to include, among other things, reference to the Common European Framework, cf. <http://www.goethe.de/z/50/commeuro/303.htm>

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