Lesson 2: A Revising Tool for Self-Correction

Instructor Name	Devon Jancin
Lesson Date (hypothetical)	Week 3 "Organizing and Developing a Rhetorical Summary"
Subject Area	English composition and rhetoric
Institutional Level	Mainstream college undergraduate (high proficiency level required)
Activity Topic(s)	A revising tool for self-correction
Instructional Group	CO150 International students

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will learn how Concord Writer is a tool that can assist them with the revising process.
2. Students will examine concordance lines of fixed/idiomatic expressions in Concord Writer and use
   them to inductively formulate correct patterns of usage and grammar.
3. Students will self-correct grammatical errors in their drafts to increase the readability and credibility (ethos) of their papers.

LEARNER BACKGROUND/PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Students have already been exposed to COCA in Week 1. A class period was devoted to going through a brief tutorial of what COCA is, it's basic functions, and how corpora might be useful. Students completed a homework assignment where they ran several basic searches for specific words in COCA, so they are familiar with what corpora and concordance lines are.

Currently in Week 3, students are working on their first big assignment—an academic summary. Their overall purpose is to read an article and pick out the author's thesis statement and supporting points, while avoiding going into too much detail (listing specific evidence). In addition to the rhetorical conventions of an academic summary, a main focus is the concept of plagiarism and paraphrasing correctly.

This activity comes in during the revision process of this assignment, after students have turned in the first draft of their essays for feedback on content, which now allows for more surface-level concerns (i.e. grammar and mechanical conventions). Comprehensible

development of the ideas in students' essays is often limited by a lack of grammatical knowledge (Ferris, 2002). What's more, sometimes students plagiarize because they feel pressure "to construct a knowledgeable persona" in their writing (Abasi, Akbari, & Graves, 2006, p. 110), which may cause them to think that the author explains an idea better than they can as an NNS. Therefore, giving the students a tool that can help them clarify what they mean in their own writing could be very valuable, especially early on in the semester. This activity is designed to help students guide their grammatical self-corrections as they revise their drafts, and to be a life-long language learning tool they can have at their disposal throughout their academic careers.

MATERIALS

1. Computer lab
2. Compleat Lexical Tutor→concord writer v.3
3. Concord Writer Tutorial Handout, Demo 2 focus (See Appendix 2)

ACTIVITY DEVELOPMENT

1. Tell students that now that they have written their first draft, we are able to move focus from rhetorical content concerns like purpose and audience to writing conventions. Ask the class to raise their hand if: *you think English grammar interferes with your writing.* (Expect most/all hands to go up)…*It is very difficult to express yourself to your audience when you aren't sure how to say something in English.* Have a class brainstorm on some of the ways we can help improve our grammar (i.e. go to the Writing Center, ask a friend, go to the teacher's office hours, look at a grammar book, read in English). *These are all good ways to help with grammar. Today I want to show you another resource that can help you help your own writing.*

2. (Whole class demonstration): *For example, let's say I'm writing about my favorite teacher, and there is a specific expression I want to use:* (Writes on board)*'One of the best…'*— is it *'teacher', or 'teachers'?*
(Expect the class to be half and half, since pluralization rules are especially difficult for L1 Chinese speakers because of L1 transfer).
Ok, so we aren't quite sure. Let me show you a way that you can find out. Teacher passes out the handout (Appendix 2).

3. *Everyone go to the Compleat Lexical Tutor homepage and click on concord writer v.3* (teacher demonstrates on projected computer, class follows individually). *I want us to click on 'Demo 2', which has the exact example we were just talking about. The problem is I don't remember which form of 'teacher' comes next, right? So what does it tell me is my solution? (*Expect: The student clicks "last 4 words" to get the concordance and a clear answer to the question).

4. *So, I just clicked the "last 4 words button" and Concord Writer has searched through its corpus and found these concordance lines for us.* (think-pair-share) *Take a second to read the first 10 and look for a pattern. Look at the first page of your handout if you need help.*

5. (Whole class) Expected result of think-pair-share: The general pattern is plural, ex: dancers, examples, matches, therefore the answer to our question is "One of the best teacher*s*".

6. *Ok, what if you have an expression that isn't 4 words? When I was looking at your first drafts, I noticed some of you using the expression "In other word". Everyone click 'empty' to refresh the box. Now type in "in other" and click on which button, 'Text end 4, 3, 2, or 1'?* (Expected answer: Last 2, because our phrase has 2 words in it). *So, based on our concordance lines what is our answer? (*lines 36-50 In other word*s).*

7. Let students have independent practice using their own essays. Walk around helping individuals.

CLOSURE

I will wrap up by pointing out that we have looked at the Demo 2 function only, and that some of them may have noticed there is also a Demo 1 (spelling and suffix forms) and Demo 3 (lemma word form). *Concord Writer has more uses, but we started with Demo 2 because fixed expressions (especially idioms) are difficult for second language learners, and other things such as spelling mistakes and word formation can be picked up by spellcheck. We do know that spellcheck doesn't always answer all of our questions though.* I will stress the importance of trying to limit grammatical errors, especially those that confuse the meaning of your idea, and suggest that students take a look at the other demos for homework if they feel they need help with spelling or word formation.

For homework: *I want everyone to finish going through your summary drafts and self-editing your paper. Pay particular attention to any idiomatic expressions you use: Are you unsure about a particular sentence or expression in your paper? Check it using Concord Writer or one of the other resources we discussed at the beginning of class.*