



See how English language learners struggle with corrective feedback.

## Corrective Feedback

**E**nglish language learners (ELLs) can find school a struggle. The key issue for them is their ability to understand feedback. One of the most common mistakes made by students who attend a school not teaching in their native tongue is their tendency to put words in the order of their native language, such as putting the verb last or the adjective after the noun.

Instead of immediately correcting the student because of sentence structure, it is more productive to focus on the substance of the response rather than the word order.

Ask the student what he or she is saying, then show the word order in both the student's native language and in English. Students need to see the comparison of what is acceptable, not a critique of what they have done. Continue to help the student with comparisons and feedback showing that you understand and recognize the differences. Let them keep the two feedback sentences for comparison.

For ELL students, answers may be hidden within the sentence and as teachers we need to be mindful and accepting of differences. Help students by speaking slowly and softly in conversational, not academic, English. Your positive attitude towards the differences will help students learn in a language that is not their own.