Issues Concerning Error Correction

- **Should learners' errors be corrected?**
  Studies have demonstrated that learners acquire second languages better when their errors are corrected in an appropriate way.
- **How should errors be corrected?**
  A. Desirable error correction techniques
      a. Recast – provides a reformulation of the error
      b. Elicitation – attempts to draw out target form/information from the learner
      c. Negotiation – encourages the teacher and the learner to come to the target information through talking the issue out
      d. Meta-linguistic feedback – provides information about target form
      e. Repetition – helps the learner realize the gap between the target form and the incorrect form (frequencies)
      f. Explicit correction – provides the correct form by the teacher
      g. Peer correction – correction from the peers
  B. Problematic error correction techniques
      a. Saying "That's incorrect," "That's wrong"
      b. Acting like you understand learners' utterances
      c. No correction and no response when learners use target form incorrectly
      d. Misunderstanding learners' utterances and wasting time correcting their "errors".
- **When should learners' errors NOT be corrected?**
  A. When the activity goals and target topics are not directly related to the learners' errors (e.g., When the target topic is the present perfect tense, it is desirable to focus on the form and show consistency in correcting the target grammar topic instead of correcting every error learners commit.)
  B. When the errors do not hamper the general flow of the meaning-focused task (e.g., Even if a vocabulary error or pronunciation error occurs, it is okay to let the communication progress as long as the error does not break down the conversation.)
- **Who should do the correction?**
  Learner-generated repairs can be also important in language learning because they indicate
      a. active engagement in the learning process on the part of learners.
      b. more interactions between the teacher and the learners, or between learners.

Implications for Teachers

- Consider the context
- Become aware of your current practices
- Practice a variety of feedback techniques
- Focus on the learner – it's important to let the learner self-correct