The Top 10 Errors Faculty Notice

Below is a list of the ten errors most commonly identified as irksome in surveys of faculty who teach writing. The results are based on research conducted by Chris Anson and Robert Schwegler in support of their textbook, *The Longman Handbook for Writers and Readers* (6th ed.) You can post these for students to learn, or for each error, create a mini video using a simple screen-capture program such as Jing.

1. Fragment:

   The heavy rain turned the parking area to mud. And stranded thousands of cars.

2. Fused sentence:

   The promoters called the insurance company they discovered their coverage for accidents was limited.

3. Unclear pronoun reference:

   After talking with the groundskeeper, the security chief said he would not be responsible for the safety of the crowd.

4. Double negative: The local authorities hadn't scarcely enough resources to cope with the flooding.

5. Dangling modifier:

   After announcing the cancellation from the stage, the crowd began complaining to the promoters.

6. Missing possessive apostrophes:

   Even the promoters promise to reschedule and honor the tickets did little to stop the crowds complaints.

7. Missing punctuation marks:

   "The grounds are slippery, the mayor announced, "so please leave in an orderly manner."

8. Lack of subject-verb agreement:

   Away from the microphone, the mayor said, "I hope the security chief or the promoters has a plan to help everyone leave safely."

9. Shift in person:

   If people left the amphitheater quickly, you could get to your car without standing long in the rain.

10. Unnecessary commas:

    Although, the muddy parking area caused problems, all the cars and people, left the grounds without incident.

Monolingual vs. Multilingual Writers

Top five L1 student error types (Lunsford & Lunsford, 2008)

- Wrong word
- Missing comma after an introductory element
- Incomplete or missing documentation
- Vague pronoun reference
- Spelling error (including homonyms)

Top five L2 student error types (Ferris, 2006)

- Sentence structure
- Word choice
- Verb tense
- Noun endings (singular/plural)
- Verb form