

Precorrection

Introduction

Precorrection is a proactive strategy that helps solve everyday problems with a simple and minimal amount of planning. By “getting in front” of disruptive behaviors that are predictable or readily anticipated, teachers and staff reduce or eliminate the likeliness of a problem behavior occurring. A little preplanning with the preventative strategy of precorrection means problem behaviors are dealt with before they occur, instead of reacting to them after they occur.

Precorrection includes visual supports (e.g., setting expectation posters) and verbal prompts delivered shortly before a problem behavior is anticipated in the authentic setting where it usually occurs, followed by strong reinforcement for engaging in appropriate behavior. This strategy has great flexibility and is usable in virtually any setting with any group of students, easily adapted to any activity or subject area where problem behaviors are anticipated. In fact, many teachers already use precorrection subconsciously. For example:

- A teacher might remind the whole class that an activity’s time is almost up and they will be cleaning up and transitioning to the next subject in a few minutes, and ask who can name one way they will show responsibility during the transition (e.g., clean and return all materials, walk safely, keep hands and feet to self). By this reminder, the teacher has given advance warning of a routine where he or she anticipated disruptive behavior (e.g., complaining of stopping the activity, leaving a mess at the activity area, physical conflict between students, running in class), and prompted students to think about which school-wide expectations would apply.
- A teacher who reminds students to use a recently taught and reviewed mnemonic strategy to check math work (e.g., long division steps, order of operations calculations, solving algebraic equations), helping students focus on the process and to turn to the strategy before asking a peer or the teacher for help.
- A teacher asks, “It’s time to line up for lunch, who can raise their hand and tell the class one way we show respect in the hallway and in the cafeteria?” “That’s correct, Angelique, push in your chair and form a silent line at the door.” This teacher precorrected for (a) students shouting out by reminding them to raise their hand if they have an answer, (b) unsafe chair legs by reminding students to push in their chairs, (c) disruption at the door by reminding students to form a quiet line, (d) disruption in the hallway by having the student repeat a hallway expectation, and (e) disruption in the cafeteria by having the student remind the class of a cafeteria expectation.

The subsequent materials provide a procedural checklist for implementing precorrection as an intervention, sample precorrection statements, a treatment integrity checklist, and pre/post-intervention social validity measures for students and teachers. Details include using it thoughtfully as a Tier 1 school- or class-wide daily practice and as a Tier 2 targeted intervention to help students who regularly display disruptive behavior. In addition, pre-correction can also be used as a component of Tier 2 and Tier 3 strategies.