

Module D #9: Error Correction

General Considerations

Behavioral and academic errors will occur even under the best of learning environments. Academically, there are occasions when errors are encouraged as students engage in trial and error as part of the learning process. Error correction is a teachable moment to provide feedback to the student which ends in a demonstration of a correct or appropriate response. Some general guidelines follow:

CONSISTENCY

Behavioral errors can occur in all school settings and therefore, all staff needs to respond consistently. It is less important what the agreed upon response is than that something is consistently utilized. Consistency is one of the main keys to changing behavior. The same is true for academic errors; a consistent, non-punitive response will develop confidence in students to seek assistance and attempt more challenging tasks.

ACTIVE SUPERVISION (see practice #2)

(MOVING, SCANNING, AND INTERACTING). Madeline Hunter used to say, "Inspect what you expect." Effective teachers scan continuously for appropriate and inappropriate behavior. They are also continuously up and moving about, interacting with the students and providing supportive interactions. When teachers use prompts, it not only sets students up for success but also reminds the teacher to watch for the desired behaviors and academic task completion across the school day.

PRE-CORRECTS

Pre-corrects are a means to proactively remind ourselves and others of the desired responses or behaviors prior to engaging in a task or transition. A pre-correct is intended to be preventative and is used as a general reminder of the academic or behavioral expectation.

A CALM, IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

A calm immediate response has a positive effect. Use a professional and composed voice tone and volume.

SPECIFIC, YET BRIEF

Specific descriptions of the behavioral and/or academic expectations help students to know exactly what is expected. With specific descriptions, you are using the error as an incidental teaching opportunity. Be short and concise, and then disengage quickly if correcting a behavioral error. Address the concern as a learning error and use the same objective and targeted feedback you would use with an academic error.

QUIET, RESPECTFUL INTERACTION WITH THE STUDENT

First, make quiet contact in close proximity with the student, securing their attention. Next, state your request, re- direct, or indication of an error in a respectful matter-of-fact manner to encourage compliance and relationship building. A private, quiet, personal contact will help with compliance and/or a willingness to re-address a task as well as improve the relationship.

REFOCUS CLASS

If the inappropriate behavior or lack of academic understanding will require a bit of time, first refocus the attention of the class on their tasks at hand. Then deal privately with the student. Most behavioral correction strategies can be handled within the classroom or setting, while still maintaining respect for the student and the learning of the entire class.