



### Virtual Instruction: Precorrection

#### What Is It?

**Precorrection** involves determining when challenging behaviors tend to occur and then making changes to the classroom environment or providing supports for students both to prevent those behaviors from happening and to facilitate appropriate behavior.

#### What Do We Know About This Skill/Practice?

Many years of research and practical application have proven the effectiveness of precorrection. More specifically, research indicates:

- Precorrection is an approach that teachers can use both to increase positive behavior and decrease problem behavior.
- Precorrection has been shown to be effective for general and special education students of all ages, pre-K through 12th grade.
- Teachers can use precorrection to prevent common challenging behaviors that occur both in the classroom (e.g., during group work, during transitions) and outside the classroom (e.g., in the hallway, on the playground).

#### Procedures

Following are five easy-to-implement steps for using this practice in a virtual learning environment.

1. **Identify the context and potential problems:** To prevent a problem behavior, you must first anticipate the nature of that behavior and identify the context in which it is likely to occur (e.g., activity, setting, time).
2. **Establish behavioral expectations:** As part of creating a safe and respectful virtual classroom environment, you should establish and explicitly teach behavioral expectations—that is, the behaviors you want your students to display.
3. **Adjust the context:** To facilitate student success, make changes to the context that supports appropriate behavior, based on your students' needs. See the box to the right for a few examples.
4. **Provide practice opportunities:** Practice makes perfect (maybe not immediately, but it's a step in the right direction). To set students up for success, you should review the expected behaviors. This may take the form of discussion, question and answer, or role playing.
5. **Offer immediate and specific reinforcement:** When students engage in an expected behavior, be sure to provide a positive reinforcer to increase the likelihood that they will continue to do so.

#### Example Context Adjustments

Changing classroom structure:

- Adjust schedules or routines
- Include expectations on your virtual background
- Post a virtual timer

Using strategies:

- [Active supervision](#)
- [High-p requests](#)
- [Choice making](#)

### Tips for Implementation

In addition to the five steps listed above, the following three steps can help facilitate the success of this practice. \*

6. **Develop a prompting plan:** Beyond teaching, practicing, and reinforcing appropriate behaviors, you will need to regularly remind some students of the expected behavior. Reminders can be in the form of gestures (e.g., finger on lips to signal quiet time), verbal prompts (e.g., verbal reminder), environmental prompts (e.g., expectations poster), and manual prompts (e.g., visiting breakout rooms).
7. **Develop a monitoring plan:** Although precorrection has been shown to be effective, you need to determine whether your precorrection procedures are effective in preventing or decreasing problem behaviors and increasing expected behaviors. This can be accomplished by, for example, collecting data on the occurrence of inappropriate behavior or how often students earn reinforcement.
8. **Gather feedback:** Students can be a valuable source of information. Consider asking them what types of supports they need to be successful or what types of reinforcement are motivating.

\* The Comprehensive, Integrated Three-Tiered Model of Prevention (Ci3T) combines these three actions with the steps listed above. [Learn more about their eight-step process.](#)

### Things To Keep in Mind

- Precorrection can be offered to an individual student, to a group of students, or to an entire class.
- Behavior expectations can be defined as broad goals for behavior (e.g., "Be responsible"). Because behavior expectations are often abstract for young students, the teacher should create rules to help clarify their meaning as they are applied within specific activities and contexts (e.g., "Log in on time.")
- When possible, expectations and rules should align with school-wide expectations to maintain consistency across environments.
- In some cases, a discussion of appropriate behavior is all that is necessary for the practice opportunity. However, for certain behaviors or students, modeling and role-playing may be necessary.
- Reinforcement can range from a thumbs-up to an end-of-quarter celebration (if enough points are earned by a given period). It doesn't have to be complex or expensive as long as the students find it rewarding. In fact, many students respond positively to behavior-specific praise, which is quick and simple to administer.

Example of behavior-specific praise: "Lars, thank you for putting your phone on the charger." / "Simone and Gentry, thank you for muting yourselves during instruction."

In addition to reinforcing the appropriate behavior of the identified students, behavior-specific praise can serve as a reminder to other students who overhear the praise and encourage them to

adhere to the behavior expectations. To learn more about how to use behavior-specific praise, view the IRIS Fundamental Skill Sheets below:

- [Behavior-Specific Praise](#)
- [Virtual Instruction: Behavior-Specific Praise](#)

When developing a monitoring plan, it is beneficial to create a hierarchy of prompts, starting with the least direct and intrusive to the most (e.g., a class reminder, class-wide corrective feedback, corrective feedback to only those students engaged in the inappropriate behavior). Hopefully, a class reminder is all that is needed. If not, a plan is in place to address the behaviors.

## Implementation Examples

The table below illustrates how the teacher provided precorrection when students were not meeting the established behavioral expectations as defined by the rules developed for virtual instruction.

Context and Problem Behavior	Behavioral Expectation/Rule	Adjustment to Context	Practice	Reinforcement
<b>Context:</b> Virtual instruction <b>Problem Behavior:</b> The students use their phones during class time.	Place phones away from learning area during instruction.	Phone rule is posted on the teacher’s virtual background.	The teacher leads a discussion about potential problems if students are using their phones during instruction.	The teacher provides behavior-specific praise to those students who are adhering to the expectation.
<b>Context:</b> Virtual math instruction <b>Problem Behavior:</b> Students are not actively participating—they do not respond when the teacher asks for input (e.g., thumbs-up, response in chat box).	Students will respond to teacher prompts.	Teacher uses a word cloud tool or online poll that displays student responses.	The teacher leads a discussion about how important it is for everyone to participate.	“Wow, look how many different responses we have in our word cloud! Thank you for responding.”
<b>Context:</b> Virtual instruction, breakout rooms <b>Problem Behavior:</b> Students are laughing and talking about topics other than the assignment.	Students will work on assignments during breakout sessions.	The teacher employs active supervision, randomly hopping into each breakout room.	Immediately preceding a breakout session, the teacher chooses a student to describe the expected behavior.	If the small group is working on the assignment, the teacher gives them a virtual thumbs-up.

### High School Video Example

In the video below, Ms. Shawnes wishes to use precorrection to prevent Noah from using his phone during instruction. Note the procedures Ms. Shawnes uses to deliver precorrection in the example and where her delivery falls short in the non-example.

### Foundational Research & References

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### About the Author

This resource was developed in collaboration with the Comprehensive, Integrated Three-Tiered Model of Prevention (Ci3T) Strategic Leadership Team. More information on precorrection can be found on the Ci3T Website: <https://www.ci3t.org/covid>.