What Is It?

Active supervision, a strategy for preventing challenging behaviors from occurring (or escalating) while simultaneously encouraging desired behaviors, requires educators to frequently and intentionally:

- **Move** around the room

- **Scan** and monitor student behavior

- **Interact** with students

What Do We Know about This Skill/Practice?

Active supervision has been proven effective through many years of research and practical application. Research indicates:

- Active supervision is an efficient and effective strategy to reduce a variety of challenging behaviors and increase positive and on-task behaviors:

  - In classroom and non-classroom settings

  - During transitions to different activities or settings

  - Across age groups

- The use of active supervision in combination with precorrection (e.g., a reminder of behavioral expectations, a change to the environment) and explicit timing (i.e., informing students of the amount of time they have to complete a task) can reduce the number of disruptions and redirections during class.

> **For Your Information**
>
> Active supervision is often confused with *proximity control.* Although proximity control is an important element of active supervision, it is a stand-alone strategy in which the teacher moves within close proximity (within three feet) of the student(s) for a few seconds to remind student(s) of behavioral expectations. When doing so, the teacher continues to provide instruction. Proximity control, unlike active supervision, does not involve student interaction.

- Active supervision requires a minimal amount of time and resources to effectively implement. It involves using proximity, interacting with students, and providing feedback.

Procedures

Following are four easy-to-implement steps for using this practice.

1. **Identify an activity or setting (e.g., independent practice, transition) to use active supervision.** To prevent challenging behavior from occurring, identify when or where students are commonly off-task or likely to engage in challenging behaviors.

2. **Provide a prompt.** Provide a prompt for students to begin or engage in an activity.

3. **Scan and monitor.** Once students begin the activity, walk around the room, frequently and intentionally scanning the room and monitoring student behavior.

4. **Interact with students.** While walking around the room, interact with students making sure to:

   - Reinforce desired behaviors: Use non-verbal (e.g., eye contact, thumbs up) as well as

verbal cues (e.g., behavior-specific praise) to indicate to students that they are following expectations.

○ Address challenging behaviors: Redirect behavior quickly, calmly, respectfully, and in a neutral tone. As soon as students get back on track and begin to follow expectations, acknowledge their behavior and offer positive reinforcement.

Tips for Implementation

In addition to the four steps listed above, the three actions below can be helpful when implementing this practice.

- **Ensure students understand behavior expectations.** Students may not be aware of the behavioral expectations for a particular activity or setting. For example, some students may need to be given explicit directions on how to ask for help if they have a question or feel that the activity is too difficult.

- **Use proximity.** Walking around the classroom facilitates close physical proximity (e.g., within three feet) to all students, which can prevent challenging behavior and increase student engagement (i.e., proximity control).

- **Offer opportunities for feedback.** Students can provide useful feedback on whether prompts or reinforcement are helpful. For example, it may be that they prefer verbal reinforcement rather than non-verbal reinforcement. Because active supervision may be new or unfamiliar to students, they may find constant monitoring to be intrusive. If so, reminding students that the purpose is to support them and help them succeed may help address this issue.

Things to Keep in Mind

- To effectively use active supervision, arrange your classroom in ways that allow you to quickly and efficiently scan, monitor, and physically access all areas.

- Be sure to circulate throughout the entire classroom, making sure you vary pathways.

- Even in large open spaces, like playgrounds and cafeterias, actively walk around the area and maintain an appropriate level of proximity to interact with students and prevent challenging behaviors from occurring.

- When interacting with students, reinforce positive behaviors and immediately address undesired behaviors. Ensure at least a 4:1 ratio of praise to corrective statements.

- Use active supervision in combination with other strategies:

  ○ *Precorrection:* Although behavior expectations may be clearly established for some activities, reminding students of the behavior expectations before they get started (i.e., precorrection) may help prevent challenging behaviors. For example, the teacher may state, "Please complete your journal entry for today by responding to the question on the board with three to five sentences." Although the prompt is to complete the daily journal

entry, the teacher reminds students of a well-established routine which is to respond to the question on the board by writing three to five sentences. Other students may need more help or reminders to understand what's expected during transitions, including what to do if they have not finished one activity before it is time to move on to the next.

- ○ *Explicit timing*: Informing students of the amount of time they have to complete a task may also help prevent challenging behaviors. For example, at the beginning of an activity, the teacher may say, "You have three minutes to turn and talk to your partner." During the activity, the teacher may say "You have one more minute."

- Use active supervision as a Tier 1 support or as a Tier 2 support for students who consistently display challenging behaviors. The steps are the same, but for Tier 2, engage in active supervision with greater intensity (e.g., monitor and interact with the student more often).

Implementation Examples

The table below provides examples of active supervision.

Identify an activity or setting	Provide a prompt	Scan and monitor	Interact with students
Context: Peer editing during language arts class **Challenging Behavior**: A couple of students often argue with their partners while working on peer editing.	**Prompt:** "Please take out the persuasive essay you worked on yesterday and work with your partner to peer edit." **Precorrection :** "Remember to work quietly and be respectful when offering feedback."	The teacher walks around the classroom observing students as they work with a partner. She more frequently scans and monitors partners who tend to argue.	The teacher offers non-verbal cues to students who are respectfully working with their partner. She notices that two partners begin to argue and quickly redirects them back to the task by asking a question about their paper. She reinforces them once they begin working collaboratively again.

Context: Working on projects during art class. **Challenging Behavior**: A few students refuse to share markers, paint, and other art supplies with students at their table. This has led to arguments, spilled paint, and even destruction of art work.	**Prompt:** "As we discussed yesterday, today we will be creating self-portraits. Please get started." *Note: The teacher did not remind the students about sharing art supplies because this is a well-established expectation.*	The teacher walks around the classroom observing students as they begin to work on their art project. She more frequently scans and monitors tables that often argue over certain paint and marker colors.	The teacher smiles and gives a thumbs up to students who are sharing art supplies. She notices that one student has pulled the bin of markers right next to him and is refusing to share them with the table. She quickly walks over to the student, kneels down at eye level, and quietly reminds him of the behavior expectation. The student moves the marker bin back to the center of the table where all students can access them. The teacher provides behavior-specific praise to reinforce the student's behavior.

Context: Cafeteria **Challenging Behavior**: Students frequently get into heated arguments, which can quickly escalate to physical altercations.	**Prompt:** The teacher walks with the students to the cafeteria and releases them for lunch. **Precorrection:** Before going to lunch, the teacher reminds the students of behavioral expectations for lunch. Additionally, reminders about behavioral expectations are posted in the cafeteria.	The cafeteria monitors walk around the cafeteria observing students during lunch. They scan and monitor, paying close attention to students who seem to have challenging behavior during this unstructured time.	The monitors offer non-verbal cues to students who are eating lunch and talking quietly to reinforce positive behaviors. One monitor notices two students who begin to argue and quickly walks toward them. Once the monitor is in close proximity, the students stop arguing. Later, the monitor notices two students who are standing and yelling at each other. Again, the monitor moves within close proximity, but this time she verbally addresses the issue in a quiet and respectful manner.

Elementary Video Example

In the video below, Mr. Santini engages in active supervision as students work independently. Note how in the example Mr. Santini correctly implements the procedure for active supervision, but in the non-example he unsuccessfully does so.

Active Supervision

Elementary School
Example & Non-example

Secondary Video Example

In the video below, Ms. Harris wants to implement active supervision to encourage on-task behaviors, first during a partner activity and next during independent practice. Note the procedures Ms. Harris uses to implement active supervision in the example and where her implementation falls short in the non-example.

Active Supervision

Secondary School
Example & Non-example

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Implementation Fidelity Checklist

The Implementation Fidelity Checklist below can be used to ensure the strategy is being implemented correctly (i.e., with fidelity).

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Directions: Use this checklist to ensure this strategy is being implemented with fidelity. Place a check in the box for each step implemented correctly.

Date/Time: _____   Teacher: _____

Student(s): _____   Observer (if applicable): _____

Active Supervision	
Steps to Implement	Notes
1 ☐ Identify an activity or setting to use active supervision.	
2 ☐ Provide a prompt.	
3 ☐ Scan and monitor.	
4 ☐ Interact with students.	

Foundational Research & References

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