Using
Error Correction
to Improve
Student Performance

Feedback and error correction during the acquisition phase of learning is critical to each student's learning. Measuring the accuracy of the student's response is central to each practice session. The teacher should correct the response, if necessary, and allow the student to respond correctly. Continue practicing until the student can perform the skill reliably.

Error correction provides for:

- Building accuracy;

- Correction during the acquisition phase of learning;

- Guided practice with immediate feedback;

- Responding as an individual or small group; and

- Successful guided practice before allowing independent practice.

Feedback is necessary so that:

- Students do not practice errors.

- Teachers can be sure students are learning.

- Instructional adjustments may be made.

Suggestions for using error correction as a strategy:

- Always correct errors before advancing to the next item or problem.

- Provide the correction quickly, in 3-4 seconds.

- Supply the right answer/desired response.

- Have the student repeat the response.

- Always end with the student making a correct response.

Benefits of feedback and error correction:

- Incorporates opportunities for guided practice and active responses.

- Provides direct teacher-to-student interaction.

- Helps to inform instructional design.

Avoid assigning independent practice, seatwork, or homework until the student has achieved proficiency.

From: Heward, W. L. (1997). Four validated instructional strategies. In J. Crandall, J. Jacobson, & H. Sloane (eds.), *What Works in Education* (pp. 55-64). Cambridge, MA: Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies.

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