



BONUS GUIDE

Strategic Error Correction Protocol

**TEACH ACCURATELY. CORRECT
CONSISTENTLY.**



RATIONALE

Why Error Correction Matters

How you respond to a wrong answer shapes the next one. A consistent protocol turns every error into a fast, low-frustration learning opportunity.



Prevent Error Patterns

Immediate correction stops mistakes from being rehearsed into habits.



Build Fluency

Clean, correct trials produce accurate and faster independent responding.



Reduce Frustration

A calm, predictable routine keeps errors from becoming aversive events.



Protect Motivation

Reinforcement keeps flowing, so the learner stays engaged and willing.

CORRECT THE ERROR, NOT THE LEARNER.

PREVENTION FIRST

Errorless Teaching First

The best correction is one you never need. Errorless learning prompts the correct response before an error can occur, keeping reinforcement dense while stimulus control transfers.



WHAT

Prompt immediately so the learner answers correctly on the first trial.



WHY

Prevents rehearsed errors and preserves a high rate of reinforcement.



WHEN

New targets, weak skills, or any high error-probability program.



KEY PRINCIPLE

Fade prompts systematically as the learner succeeds, so correct responding transfers from your prompt to the natural SD.



GOOD TO KNOW

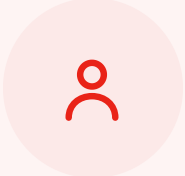
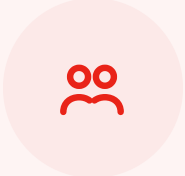
Errorless teaching reduces the need for correction, but a clear correction protocol still matters when errors emerge during fading.



PROMPT TYPES

The Prompting Hierarchy

Prompts range from most to least intrusive. Choose the least intrusive prompt that still guarantees a correct response, then fade toward independence.

				
Physical	Partial	Model	Gesture	Verbal
Full hand-over-hand guidance to complete the response.	A light nudge or touch to initiate the movement.	Demonstrate the response for the learner to imitate.	Point or gesture toward the correct item or action.	Spoken or positional cue toward the answer.



MOST-TO-LEAST VS LEAST-TO-MOST

Most-to-least starts with strong prompts and fades them, ideal for new or error-prone skills. Least-to-most starts minimal and adds help only as needed, best for emerging skills.



TRANSFER OF CONTROL

Prompt Delay

Time delay inserts a pause between the SD and your prompt, giving the learner room to respond independently before help arrives.

1

Start at 0-Second Delay

Deliver the SD and prompt simultaneously to guarantee correct, errorless responding.

2

Introduce the Delay

Wait a set interval after the SD before prompting, so independence has a chance to emerge.

3

Progressive or Constant

Progressive delay grows the wait gradually; constant delay holds a fixed interval such as 3-5 seconds.

4

Reinforce Independence

Deliver stronger reinforcement for unprompted correct responses than for prompted ones.

**OUTCOME**

Stimulus control transfers from your prompt to the natural SD, producing durable independent responding.

CORE PROCEDURE

The 4-Step Error Correction

When an error occurs, stay neutral and run these four steps in order. The distractor trial ensures the final correct response is truly independent.

- 1

Model / Prompt
Immediately prompt the correct response so the learner produces it.

 **PROMPT**
Least intrusive that works.
- 2

Re-present the SD
Present the same instruction again and allow an independent response.

 **RETRY**
No prompt this time.
- 3

Insert a Distractor
Interpolate an easy, known task to break the error sequence.

 **INTERPOLATE**
Use a mastered target.
- 4

Re-present & Confirm
Deliver the SD once more and confirm an independent correct response.

 **CONFIRM**
Reinforce richly.



RESULT
The trial ends on an unprompted correct response, so the learner rehearses accuracy, not the error.

BY OPERANT — PART 1

Correcting Mand & Tact

Correction must match the operant under instruction. Prompt in the same modality you are teaching, then transfer to an independent response.



Mand

Confirm the MO is present, prompt the correct request, then transfer to an independent mand before delivering the item.



Tact

Provide an echoic or model prompt for the label, then re-ask "What is it?" and reinforce the independent tact.



Transfer

Never reinforce the prompted response alone; always end on an unprompted correct response.



WATCH THE MOTIVATION

A mand only counts when the MO is genuine. If the learner does not want the item, contrive motivation before correcting.



TIP

Keep the reinforcer visible but unavailable during mand correction to maintain the establishing operation.

BY OPERANT — PART 2

Listener, Echoic & Intraverbal

Each remaining operant has its own prompt topography. Match the prompt to the response you want, then fade it to independence.



Listener

Use a gestural or model prompt toward the correct item, then re-present the instruction for an independent selection.



Echoic

Re-model the target sound or word and reinforce successively closer approximations toward the full response.



Intraverbal

Deliver a partial verbal prompt or first sound, then fade the prompt across trials until the answer is independent.



SHAPE, DON'T FORCE

For echoics and intraverbals, reinforce approximations. Demanding a perfect response too early can suppress vocal behavior.



CONSISTENCY

Use the same correction sequence across all operants so the learner experiences a predictable, low-stress routine.

TOWARD INDEPENDENCE

Transfer Trials & Fading Prompts

A prompted correct answer is only the start. Transfer trials and systematic fading move the learner from your prompt to true independent responding.

1

Prompt, Then Transfer

Follow every prompted response with an unprompted re-presentation of the same SD.

2

Fade Systematically

Reduce prompt intensity one level at a time as accuracy holds across trials.

3

Differentially Reinforce

Give the biggest reinforcement for independent responses, less for prompted ones.

4

Track and Adjust

Use data to confirm fading is working; step back up a level if errors return.

**WATCH FOR PROMPT DEPENDENCY**

If the learner waits for your prompt before responding, your fading is too slow. Increase the delay and thin prompted reinforcement.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Do & Don't

Small delivery habits decide whether correction builds skills or breeds dependency and frustration. Keep it neutral, brisk, and data-driven.

DO

- ✓ Stay neutral and calm on every error.
- ✓ Keep the pace brisk to maintain momentum.
- ✓ Reinforce independent responses richly.
- ✓ Use data to guide prompt fading.

AVOID

- ✗ Saying "no" or "wrong" harshly.
- ✗ Repeating the same failed prompt.
- ✗ Reinforcing prompted answers as independent.
- ✗ Lingering on the error and raising frustration.



REMEMBER

Your affect is part of the procedure. A steady, matter-of-fact tone keeps errors from becoming aversive and protects rapport.



AT A GLANCE

Quick Reference Flow

The full decision path in one place. Run it the same way every time so the learner always experiences a predictable, reinforcing routine.

☐ **Present the SD**
Deliver the instruction clearly and wait the planned delay.

☐ **Correct Response?**
If independent and correct, reinforce immediately and move on.

☐ **If Error, Run the 4-Step**
Prompt, re-present, insert a distractor, then confirm.

☐ **Transfer the Trial**
Re-present the SD unprompted to secure independence.

☐ **Confirm & Reinforce**
End on an unprompted correct response and record the data.

●
PREVENT, CORRECT, TRANSFER, CONFIRM.

