



Overcorrection

Definition

There are four types of overcorrection procedures:

1. **Restitutional overcorrection** requires the student to correct the effects of his/her misbehavior by restoring the environment to better than its original condition.
2. **Positive overcorrection** requires the student to practice an appropriate behavior an abundant number of times.
3. **Neutral practice overcorrection** has a student repeat an action that is neither restitutional nor related to the desired behavior. This often takes the form of contingent exercise.
4. **Full cleanliness training** requires the student to excessively clean the result of wetting or soiling her/himself. The basic steps for all overcorrection procedures are the same and are described in detail below.

Things to Do

- ✓ Give a verbal cue.
- ✓ Follow the verbal cue with overcorrection.
- ✓ Pair overcorrection with timeout from positive reinforcement.
- ✓ Proceed with restitutional activity.
- ✓ Minimize attention.
- ✓ Observe the student.

✓ Give a verbal cue.

When the student engages in the problem behavior, give the cue. This may be in the form of a verbal reprimand (see *LRBI—Level II: Startle/Verbal Reprimand*). For example, while using a firm voice, an instructor briefly and specifically describes the inappropriate behavior for the student to stop doing . . .



✓ Follow the verbal cue with overcorrection.

Immediately follow the verbal cue with the overcorrection activity until the misbehavior is reduced.

✓ Pair overcorrection with timeout from positive reinforcement.

During overcorrection time, the student's ongoing activities are suspended, and timeout from positive reinforcement is in effect (see *LRBI—Level II: Nonseclusionary Timeout*).

✓ Proceed with restitutorial activity.

Using clear and concise instructions, inform the student of the specific corrective actions to be done. For instance, _____ . **REMEMBER:** Deliver these instructions in a neutral tone of voice.

✓ Minimize attention.

Consider all sources of attention that may inappropriately reinforce the student's negative behavior. For instance, your body language, on-looking students, or staff should be arranged to minimize this effect. Avoid eye contact and unnecessary physical contact and conversation.

✓ Observe the student.

If the student reengages in the misbehavior, start the overcorrection activity over again. Later, provide ample opportunity for positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviors. Carefully observe the student during the rest of the day to reinforce the student's appropriate behaviors. Try to "catch them being good."

Examples

Example 1

Restitutive Overcorrection

-  Diana writes all over her desk with crayons. She is required to clean her desk and five other desks in the classroom.
-  Pedro eats nonnutritive substances, such as trash and cigarette butts. He is required to clean out his mouth, pick up and throw away the trash, and clean five trash cans.
-  Joseph bites his peers while participating in free play time in the classroom. He is required to brush his teeth, cleanse and medicate his victim's wounds, and apologize to everyone in the classroom.
-  Shelly doesn't keep her clothing on. She is required to wear extra clothing and to improve the appearance of her classmates by buttoning or zipping their unfastened clothing and/or combing their hair.

Example 2

Positive Practice Overcorrection

-  Maggie runs down the hall. She is directed to walk appropriately up and down the hall five times.
-  Manuel interrupts class by talking out without raising his hand. He is directed to raise his hand, get called on, and speak 20 times.
-  Jennifer throws a softball and hits other students during P.E. activities. She is told to throw the ball back and forth appropriately with another student 20 times.

Example 3

Neutral Practice Overcorrection

(Examples?)

Example 4

Full Cleanliness Training

(Examples?)

Potential Problems and Solutions

A Larger Noncompliant Student Becomes Combative When Physical Prompting is Required

Positive practice overcorrection is most effective with students who are smaller than the teacher. **NOTE:** *Is there an alternative solution that an instructor can use with larger noncompliant students?*

Positive Practice is Time Consuming

Since the procedure is used contingently, these sessions cannot be scheduled and most likely will interrupt your regular classroom routing. **NOTE:** *Perhaps there is an alternative solution to the time issue?*

The Procedure May Become a Positive Reinforcer

The intensity of attention given to the student during this procedure can become a strong reinforcer for some students. **NOTE:** *What should an instructor do if the procedure becomes a positive reinforcer for the student?*

The Student's Misbehavior Elicits Anger in the Instructor

Positive practice must be delivered in a completely non-emotional manner. This is difficult in that the misbehavior may elicit anger in the teacher. **NOTE:** *What should an instructor do when consumed with anger?*

Getting Ready

Define the Behavior

Using observable and measurable terms, define what behaviors will necessitate overcorrection procedures. For example, this is too vague . . .

Willis
???

Instead . . .

Willis
???

. . . is a behavior you can see and count.

Select a Verbal Cue

Select a verbal cue to use whenever the student engages in the problem behavior. For example, "No throwing," or "No running in the hall."

Select an Overcorrection Activity

Select an overcorrection activity that is relevant to the problem behavior. This activity must restore the student's immediate environment to an improved condition or be related to the misbehavior. Be sure the activity is long and repetitive enough to have an impact on the student.

Record Baseline Data

Collect data on the rate, frequency, or percent of intervals of occurrence of the problem behavior for at least 3 days before implementing overcorrection procedures.

Schedule Time and Assistance

Decide when the program will occur and arrange an adequate amount of time and staff assistance to implement the program.

Materials and Supplies

Required supplies vary with restitution activity. Determine what they are and prepare ample supplies.

**References**

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Kerr, M. M., & Nelson, C. M. (1989). *Strategies for managing behavior problems in the classroom*. Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing Company.