

Positive practice overcorrection

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Executive summary

This case study will focus on showing how positive practice overcorrection reduced inappropriate behaviour in a pupil in Park House School.

This case study will go through what intervention was implemented and why. It will also showcase the steps taken to implement this intervention and the results of the intervention.

Introduction

The pupil discussed in this case study is a 9-year-old boy with autism. The pupil is a vocal learner with many advanced academic skills, however, needs support with daily living skills. They are able to mand spontaneously for various motivating items and prides themselves on being independent. The pupil has some behaviours that challenge in the form of throwing, hitting others and self-injurious behaviour.

The pupil enjoys being in school and likes the routine associated with school. They pick up skills quickly and learn through observation and imitation. They are able to follow and initiate transitions using a visual timetable. They can write and read and have great technological skills. They enjoy and thrive during their academic groups with the qualified teachers.

This pupil requires a lot of sensory input. In order to help themselves focus and stay on task; they require a movement break every 15 minutes. This helps them stay focused and alert to enable the pupil to learn. The pupil is a visual learner therefore gets visually stimulated. They enjoy watching different coloured paint mixed together or items flying in the air. Their sensory diet is also implemented throughout the day to provide regular sensory input.

This case study will look at the intervention put in place to eliminate the throwing of inappropriate items both in and outside of the classroom.

Method

Reducing throwing was targeted because of the dangerous and disruptive nature of the behaviour. The pupil was throwing any item they could find into the air with the risk that it may land on another pupil or staff or create property destruction. The pupil frequently threw their chewy into trees, which was a very important accessory to his sensory diet and therefore not accessible if they needed it. Parents reported the pupil throws items into the streets which prevented them from going into the community with just one parent due to the risk. It was observed that items thrown were under the antecedent 'interrupts to the environment' and automatic reinforcement.

Positive practice overcorrection is the process in which the pupil is required to repeatedly complete an appropriate behaviour to the target behaviour or an incompatible behaviour for a set duration or a set number of responses ¹. This intervention was chosen due to the educational element which teaches the pupil to engage in the appropriate behaviour simultaneously.

This intervention required the pupil to pick up the thrown item 4 times and hand it to their tutor appropriately. The items were repeatedly put back on the floor. This was done for both antecedents. Tutors also increased the pupil's sensory diet in order to reduce any throws which were automatically reinforcing.

The pupil initially needed to be physically prompt with a hand over hand prompt to prevent him from throwing the item again during the overcorrection procedure. However, over time, the hand over hand prompt was faded off as he stopped throwing during the overcorrection.

The intervention was shared and implemented by parents at home as well.

Results

Figure 1 shows the results of the positive practice overcorrection intervention. The bold phase line indicates when the intervention began. From the graph you can see the gradual increase in the frequency of items being thrown by the pupil before the intervention began. Once the intervention

was implemented, there was an initial increase in the behaviour, however, the behaviour began to reduce. On average, before the intervention they were throwing 2 items a day however after the implementation, they began throwing on average once per day. From the graph you can also observe that toward the end, there are more days where there is no throwing at all. Parents as well indicated a reduction in throwing at home although no formal data was collected.

Overcorrection has long been used to reduce inappropriate behaviours in people. Fox and Azrin (1973) 2 found that overcorrection was effective in reducing self-stimulatory behaviours in 4 children with disabilities. They found that it was more effective than alternative interventions trialled such as reinforcing non stimulatory behaviours.

Carey and Bucher (1981)3 also looked at the suppressive effects of overcorrection. They additionally compared the two types of overcorrections together, restitutorial overcorrection; where the target behaviour results in the learner repairing damage to the environment and also engaging in additional behaviour to bring the environment to a condition better that it was before the target behaviour occurred 1; and positive practice overcorrection. They found that although both reduced the target inappropriate behaviour, positive practice overcorrection because of its topographical similarity to the inappropriate behaviour, was a successful means of teaching an appropriate replacement behaviour.

In a school setting, positive practice overcorrection works best as it adds the educational component and teaches the pupil to engage in appropriate behaviour that serves the same function as the targeted inappropriate behaviour. In this case, removing unwanted items from the pupil's environment. Teaching the pupil to pick up the item and hand it over to the teacher provides them with an appropriate way to remove the item.

Discussion

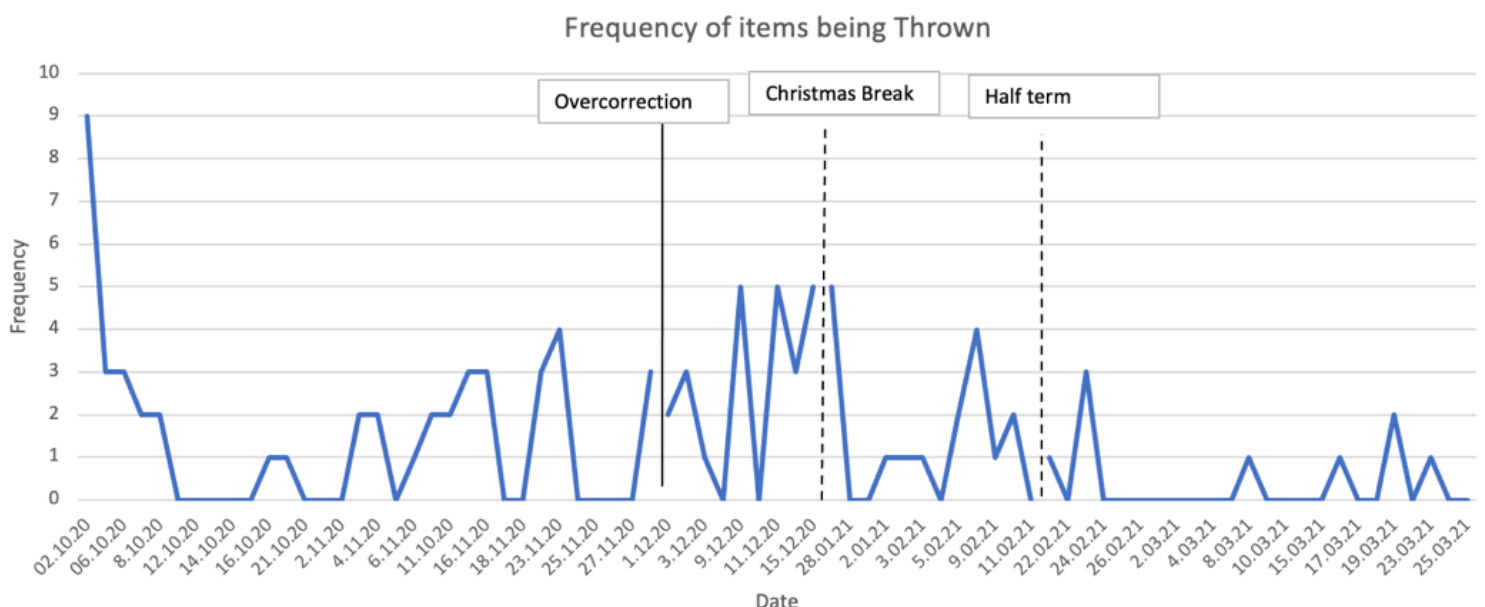
Positive practice overcorrection can be helpful in reducing inappropriate behaviour and also teaching replacement functional behaviours. The student is able to engage in the school environment with more independence and the reduced risk of injury to his peers.

In the future, we hope to reach zero episode of throwing. Shapiro (1979) 4 conducted a long term follow up after using overcorrection. He found that after 18 months, the inappropriate behaviour targeted was still suppressed.

Additionally, teaching the pupil functional communication to strengthen the replacement behaviour will help to ensure progress.

Most importantly, parents are feeling more confident about being in the community with their child.

Figure 1



References

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