

Using Video Interaction Guidance to Develop Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Skills in Professional Training for Educational Psychologists

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In this study we assessed the effects of paragraph length on the reading speed and comprehension of students. Students were randomly assigned to one of three groups: short paragraph length (SPL), medium paragraph length (MPL), or long paragraph length (LPL). Students read a 1423 word text on a computer screen formatted to align with their group designation, followed by assessments of content recall, application, and transfer. Results indicate that paragraph length has a significant effect on content application and transfer, but not on content recall. These results are interpreted within the current literature on text comprehension and computer screen eye fatigue.

Video as a Tool to Support Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

The potential value of using video in teaching and learning in higher education has been explored before. Reviews have typically highlighted the high value it can bring as a tool for reflection and development. Berk (2005) noted,

If faculty are really committed to improving their teaching, a video is one of the best sources of evidence for formative decisions, interpreted either alone or, preferably, with peer input. If the video is used in confidence for this purpose, faculty should decide whether it should be included in their self evaluation or portfolio as a “work sample” for summative decisions. (p. 52)

Video provides a way of reviewing an individual’s behavior or performance in intricate detail, making it possible to see things often missed during reflection or even during observation. Detailed analysis allows a person to explore what was effective and what could be improved or developed. Video has been described as a tool for developing the interpersonal skills of students in professional training courses in higher education. Dent and Preece (2002) noted that the use of video to develop clinical skills in medical training was well established over a decade ago. Roter et al. (2004) described the use of video feedback intervention as a way of enhancing patient-physician communication during the first year of training for medical qualifications. Video feedback of simulated interviews was evaluated. The researchers used video coding software to demonstrate that changes in student behaviors took place as a result of a “one hour didactic and role-playing practice session” (Roter et al., 2004, p. 147) based on the four skills areas. Although essentially an exploratory study, the authors argued that “video review is a powerful and effective teaching tool” (Roter et al., 2004, p. 156) and that despite the logistical

difficulties video use can pose they suggest the impact of 2 hours of video work is as positive as much longer communication skills teaching programs.

Video has been used as a tool to model effective teaching. Seago, Mumme, and Branca (2004) developed the *Video Cases for Mathematics Professional Development*. This is a system whereby videos of real classroom teaching are provided on a CD to assist teachers in exploring how to teach linear mathematical functions. Canter and Canter (1976) developed a widely implemented program for supporting teachers with positive behavior management, also based partly on video exemplars that were used in the training sessions. Other examples include Santagata (2009), who explored video use in low performing schools, and Borko, Jacobs, Eiteljorg, and Pittman (2008) who described how video can be used to improve teacher professional development. Borko et al. (2008) used an intervention over a 2-year period where video was integrated into workshop sessions that aimed to problem solve aspects of teaching and learning. The researchers emphasized the notion of a supportive atmosphere in the workshops, and achieving this allowed teachers to talk about video of their own classrooms and video of other teachers more effectively. Interviews with teachers who took part and coding of the dialogue in the workshops showed that over the course of the workshops dialogue focused to a much greater extent on elements of the teaching. Without comparison data it is difficult to be specific about the impact the video itself made, but teacher’s perceptions of the power of the video experience were recorded in the interviews.

In a different context, trainee teachers learned classroom management skills, through video feedback to promote positive behavior management (Speidel & Tharp, 1978). More specifically the aim was to increase the rates of positive feedback to pupils in the classroom. The intervention consisted of a lecture, training on identifying specific pupil behaviors, modeling of target behaviors by a demonstration teacher, training on the

use of praise, watching videotaped model situations, guided practice in the classroom (which were videoed) and feedback sessions where the practice session was discussed. There was evidence that trainee teacher behaviors that were the focus of the teaching program (the use of praise in classrooms) increased substantially post intervention and at 5-month follow up. Behaviors that were not the focus of the intervention (e.g., the use of tokens) did not change.

These examples typify how video might generally be used to support teaching and learning. Target behaviors or key elements of effective practice are identified and then taught or modeled. The learners practice to implement the new learning and their attempts are recorded on video. The learners then have the opportunity to see for themselves whether they put their learning into practice, either with or without tutor or peer facilitation and feedback. Although perhaps typical, using video in this way is very different to the VIG methodology that will be described below.

Video enhanced reflective practice is an intervention that incorporates many of the ideas of VIG. As the use of video enhanced reflective practice in HE to support teaching has already been described as a tool for developing the skills of teachers and lecturers in higher education (Cave, Roger, & Young, 2011), it is only briefly introduced here. In this method lecturers and teachers took part in an intervention that involved reviewing video of their actual teaching and video of mock teaching sessions to identify ways to improve learning. The perspective taken being that “what is most significant for student learning is how the interaction is managed and how the teacher communicates with their students, above what the context of the message is” (Cave et al., 2011, p. 184).

VIG differs from other approaches to using video as a tool for learning and development in particular ways. In order to appreciate the differences it is necessary to explore VIG in some detail.

Video Interaction Guidance

Video interaction guidance is well established as an intervention that will improve parent and child relationships and as such is recommended in UK national guidance on children’s wellbeing (National Institute for Clinical Excellence, 2012). The process of undertaking VIG involves three steps: (1) recording video footage of people during normal interactions, (2) analysis of the footage by a trained guider, and (3) a shared review of short clips of the video that the guider selects to explore in detail. These three steps can then be repeated to work on new goals and develop new learning. The process focuses on fine tuned analysis of short video clips, called microanalysis. It also focuses on the quality of the conversation between the VIG

guider (the person taking the video and editing it) and his or her client when they look at the video clips together. For full details about delivering VIG see Kennedy, Landor, and Todd (2011).

VIG as a Tool for Developing Relationships

Often used with parents to enhance parent-child relationships (Fukkink, 2008), the intervention has its basis in the ideas of intersubjectivity and attunement (Cross & Kennedy, 2011; Trevarthen, 2011; Trevarthen & Aitken, 2001). Through seeing successful moments of interaction a parent develops greater sensitivity to a child’s initiatives in interaction and becomes more attuned to the child’s thoughts and feelings at any one point in time. The result of more sensitive parental responses to children’s initiatives can be seen in terms of both child and parental well-being (Fukkink, Kennedy, & Todd, 2011).

Although the significance of early experiences makes interventions that focus on mother-infant relationships particularly valuable, there are many adult-child and adult-adult relationships in the professional arena where attunement and sensitivity to another person are vital to the success of the task being undertaken. In the context of psychology, psychiatry, and counseling, the link between intersubjectivity and the therapeutic alliance, sometimes referred to as the working alliance (Clarkson & Porkorny, 1994), is well established, and many writers have explored the ideas that underpin this important feature of a therapeutic relationship.

Ideas associated with the therapeutic alliance include empathy, interpersonal skills or interpersonal intelligence and communication skills. “Almost all would argue that the qualities of warmth, personal congruence, empathy, contact and positive regard are necessary, if not sufficient components of any therapeutic alliance” (Clarkson & Porkorny, 1994, p. 58). There are also clear links with the conceptualization of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills seen in emotional literacy (Goroshit & Hen, 2012). Any professional training in the “helping professions” is likely to include learning that focuses on the development of some of these skills.

Relationships in Higher Education

The importance of relationships and interpersonal skills for effective learning in higher education is well established. For example, Brockbank and McGill (1998) described the task of teaching in higher education as being based on facilitation where learning is a “social and collaborative process” (p. 147) based on the relationship between learners. Here the building blocks required for effective adult learning are

described in great detail, and they include a great variety of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills such as active listening, awareness of posture and maintaining eye contact, as well as more advanced processes such as emotional regulation and empathy (Brockbank & McGill, 1988, p. 208). A key aspect to this relationship is described as *immediacy*. This, Brockbank and McGill (1988) noted, is an idea that relies on the facilitator bringing into focus factors that are present in the relationship in the here and now, and so being mindful of the present.

Some authors have also described this relationship in terms of intersubjectivity. For example, Light and Cox (2001) argued that adult learning in higher education is best facilitated by “what may be called an intersubjective or dialogical model of communication” (p. 21).

Training Educational Psychologists

The role of the educational psychologist (or school psychologist) combines facets of both the therapeutic and learning relationship. The tasks of establishing a therapeutic alliance and effective adult learning conversations are key, both while studying as competencies are being developed and later when qualified and in practice. Given the strong links between intersubjectivity and attunement and the tasks required for adult learning, it is possible to argue that VIG could have a role in enhancing intersubjectivity and attunement in the context of developing professional competencies in the fields such as psychology, psychiatry or education (indeed conceivable in a very wide range of professions). This would at face value seem to be a significant change of context from the theoretical roots of the VIG model, but it is perhaps a more logical extension of the approach from its historical application with parents and children.

The contribution VIG can make to professional competencies in a different context has already been explored by Hayes, Richardson, Hindle, and Grayson, (2011). Here research was undertaken into the impact that VIG could have on the professional skills of teaching assistants working in schools. Quantitative findings from this small-scale study indicated that teaching assistants experienced significant benefits through the approach in terms of the quality of their relationships with young people they worked with in school. Qualitative findings indicated that increased self awareness and reflection were recognized as key benefits of the process. Results also showed that while the task of being videoed was initially found to be anxiety provoking and aversive it was later experienced as a very positive process.

At University College London (UCL), the doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology program

aims to enable trainee educational psychologists to integrate theory and practice effectively to become skilled and accountable professional practitioners. The 3-year doctorate program develops professional competence as defined by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Standards of Proficiency (SoPs) and British Psychological Society Required Learning Outcomes. The professional training program achieves this through focusing on the three elements of academic knowledge, research ability and professional practice. VIG was introduced as part of the course in 2009 in order to focus on the final skill set. VIG aimed to extend and enhance trainee psychologists’ interpersonal effectiveness skills using a shared framework of communication (the principles of attuned interaction).

Although there are many things to learn while training to use VIG, there are two key areas of competency that are required to use VIG effectively: firstly, microanalysis of video footage and secondly, conducting shared reviews, both of which are important to using the method as an intervention. The VIG approach also aims to develop trainees’ awareness of their own communication skills and reflectively review how to evolve these to improve effective communications with clients. A core competency for educational psychologists is the ability to consult, communicate and co-operate with others in a supportive manner. Indeed, the need to build the trust and respect of service users (SoP 1b.3.7; HCPC, 2012) and use a range of appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication (SoP, 1b.3.8; HCPC, 2012) are core competencies. VIG offers a means and method by which trainees could critically examine their interaction skills and inform professional development in an illuminating and informed manner.

How VIG Fits into the Training Program

VIG is used at UCL as a tool for reflective practice to enable trainees to evaluate existing communication skills and critically consider alternatives in a supportive fashion. This resonates with the HCPC SoPs to recognize own interpersonal skills (SoP, 1b.4.1; HCPC, 2012) and monitor and review practice (SoP, 2c.1; HCPC, 2012). Moreover, VIG uses video of the individual in live practice situations, which would make learning relevant for trainees in keeping with adult learning models and underpinning the doctoral training course. In this way self-directed learning could occur across domains of development since it is rooted in the individual’s own experiences, making it as meaningful as possible (Knowles, 1984). Finally, VIG would form and follow the spiral curriculum at UCL, with learning occurring in a recursive fashion, revisited and reviewed over time as professional skills progress. The use of

VIG was infused across the 3 years of the doctorate to ensure effective learning experiences in the evolution of communication skills. It was designed to develop trainees' interpersonal effectiveness by deepening understanding and skills beyond base line standards of proficiency.

VIG is introduced in the first year of the program (see Appendix) as a method by which to develop trainees through learning about their own skills in effective communication. The principles of attuned interaction serve as a framework by which trainees can become more aware of, and analytical of, their own interpersonal and intrapersonal style. Trainees use video of themselves and micro-analyze this alongside tutors and fellow trainees to explore and critically evaluate their own communications skills. The use of their own video provides a potent and powerful tool for trainees to engage in self-reflection on their interpersonal effectiveness. In this manner video enhanced reflective practice is the main mechanism of learning. The use of trainees' own videos offers an illuminating insight as to their own style and skill in face-to-face communications. The work in the first year then forms the foundation for learning which is built upon in the second year in a 2-day training on VIG in which trainees receive teaching on the approach and experience how to both use and implement it as an intervention. In this way VIG is used as a vehicle to support professional development (see Figure 1). The principles of attuned interaction are revisited and revised for trainees and then extended into the context of live practice situations that trainees bring to the session. In these workshops the trainees bring video footage from professional practice with clients in order to facilitate their development of interpersonal effectiveness skills. The microanalyses of video are used in the context of VIG, and the skills of conducting a shared review using the video are practiced. Such skills are then built upon in the third year.

In the third year, the skills of microanalysis of video and then use of selected clips in the context of shared reviews are practiced in a series of workshops and supervision sessions. At this point the trainees take video of themselves in real live practice situations and then microanalyze each other's footage. This is then used in supervision with a tutor to microanalyze and identify individual clips to use as feedback with a paired trainee colleague in a shared review. These shared reviews place the trainee in the position of VIG Guider and recipient. In this manner, trainees both experience VIG as a client and as a Guider with the supervision and support of the tutor. Such shared reviews are filmed and then microanalyzed by the trainees and tutor to further inform professional practice skills. This offers a meta-evaluation using video in a

powerful way to critically examine and evaluate professional skills. The experience ensures that trainees refine their communication skills between VIG supervision sessions by identifying their own goals for development in a self-directed fashion. This culminates in a reflective commentary which trainees submit to outline the development of their professional competencies in relation to VIG across the doctorate program. Edited video forms part of the piece to allow trainees to explicitly evidence the evolution of their communication skills.

Perspectives of the Students

Student evaluations of VIG. Students in the doctorate program provided anonymous evaluations of all their teaching and supervision sessions on the course. The evaluations for VIG taught sessions and VIG supervision sessions over a 3-year period were collated. Students rated the sessions on a 4-point scale: *excellent*, *good*, *satisfactory*, and *unsatisfactory*. 114 separate ratings over three years indicated that VIG was very positively received by the students with 56% of the ratings given as *excellent*, 37% of the ratings given as *good*, and 7% given as *satisfactory*.

Additional comments on teaching and supervision sessions included many comments reflecting the value the students could see in using video in this way. Students often commented on how the teaching and supervision sessions felt, and that there was acknowledgement of the anxiety associated with being on video and the supportive nature of the teaching and supervision sessions. For example, "Very supportive and constructive way of micro analyzing individual video footage. Tutors were extremely encouraging and positive in the feedback provided, and small groups made the task feel less daunting"; and,

Although I was quite apprehensive about analyzing the videos before the session, the supportive atmosphere made this a really enjoyable experience, and I felt I learned a lot about the ways in which I interact that I was not aware of before the session.

These student comments highlight how the small group structure and strength-based approach used in VIG often worked to allay the fear that being videoed can evoke.

Students commented on the session as an enjoyable experience and one that they value in terms of their learning. For instance, one student explained,

This session was really enjoyable. The introduction to VIG was very useful and is something that I hope to use in my future EP practice. I really

enjoyed the positive focus of the intervention, which was reflected within the session.

Another student noted,

A really interesting session. It was great having a range of views from the session leaders. The use of our own video to use the structures discussed throughout the session was really useful in developing a deeper understanding of VIG.

The fact that students found the VIG sessions engaging and interesting may well have had an impact on their use of the skills learned. Indeed, the quote from the first above indicates that they intend to use the skills in their practice post qualification. The themes that are seen in these initial reactions can also be traced in the student's views about the process when they reach the end of the program.

Student reflections after the full VIG process.

As part of their professional portfolio submitted at the end of the training program the students are required to include a reflective commentary exploring their thoughts, feelings and learning points relating to the VIG process. Thirty-nine reflective commentaries were used to identify examples of learning points and reflections on the process that are of interest. The quotes are not presented as necessarily being representative of all 39 and the text has not been subjected to formal thematic analysis or content analysis as the intention is not to present a research paper, but a description of the practice and some illustrative comments from student reports.

As they had started to do in their evaluations, students identified the contribution that VIG made to their professional competencies, some noting the particular advantages of using video. Students related the experience to the development of professional skills and competencies that are needed for psychology. For example, one student said,

I feel that my interpersonal and consultation skills have developed during the professional training. Initially, I had to be consciously aware of active listening skills such as paraphrasing, summarizing and feeding back, but now I feel these skills come more automatically and I can concentrate on the quality of my questioning skills.

Another student explained,

[Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills] are skills that I have been working on, and received feedback on, throughout the course, but VIG was useful as it allowed me to watch myself in the video. This provided a more objective, and more insightful,

way to reflect on my skills than either just receiving feedback following an observation, or just reflecting in my head on how a meeting had gone.

The comment by the first student above appears to be describing his or her progression through the conscious competence learning model with the student moving from conscious competence to unconscious competence in certain skills. The usefulness of the video for self-modeling is highlighted by the second student.

As well as developing specific skills, the students commented on the distinctive contribution that the use of video has:

A unique feature of the approach that I found particularly useful was watching myself 'from a distance' on the video footage and having time for self reflection. I found that these aspects promoted my critical thinking about a range of my interactional behaviors.

In line with the intention for students to relate the learning to key principles in effective interaction, some students identified learning that related to sensitivity, attunement, or intersubjectivity. For example, a student explained,

I was also aware of the importance of developing secondary intersubjectivity with the client, thereby maintaining attuned interaction and effective communication. I found this difficult initially, as it was a new skill to have to refer to while also receiving and encouraging interactions.

Another student noted,

Myself and the consultees [*sic*] appeared attuned for a large proportion of the discussions. There was balanced turn-taking between us, I checked that she understood me and we 'had fun' at appropriate points in the discussion. These attuned interactions had a positive impact on the consultations, such as the consultee being "activated" throughout and providing a foundation for the higher levels of communication (e.g., collaborative problem solving).

As this last quote highlights, students readily make the link between the understanding and competences that are developing in terms of interpersonal skills and the overall outcomes and aims of their work: effective problem solving with other people, generally teachers or parents in the case of the educational psychologist. This next example also illustrates how students can see the relevance of the approach to the practice of promoting psychological change in others:

The learning that I have experienced using VIG has developed my interpersonal skills that show a sensitivity for the needs of others. This is because the principles of attuned interaction emphasize receiving the other person and following their initiative. The practice of deepening the discussion as outlined in the section above on future learning has also given me the tools to “appropriately and assertively challenge assumptions or viewpoints in a constructive manner to move matters forward.” Being able to do this facilitates others’ learning as they are able to challenge their views of the self and reframe their attributions about their abilities and relationships.

A balance of caution and fearfulness of having your professional behavior presented before you, coupled with a sense of the value of this is seen in the following comment, made by the same student:

I felt vulnerable to comments from others on my professional style. This enhanced my understanding of how vulnerable clients may feel when their interactions are analyzed and the importance of a guider being sensitive and supportive in their comments if this is to be constructive.

Other writers have noted apprehension and anxiety related to the use of videos (if common) and the need for a supportive process (Borko et al., 2008). Establishing this is at the heart of the VIG method and, despite the drawbacks associated with the initial fear that might be experienced by students, the realization that it is a positive learning experience inevitably follows. For example, one student explained, “VIG offers a nurturing environment in which to explore areas for development. The positive focus helps people be open to change through advice, support and feedback. I can now understand the value of offering learning conversations based on videos.”

Conclusions

The experience of incorporating VIG into the professional doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology has demonstrated that it can make a valuable contribution to the learning of students whose interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are key to their success in their field of work. While anonymous evaluation shows the positive way the experience is received by the students, illustrative comments from the reflective commentaries also highlight that students recognize a potential additive benefit of VIG over and beyond other forms of teaching and learning. There are also areas that anyone implementing VIG should be

alert to in terms of potential drawbacks. As an accredited approach, tutors delivering VIG need to undergo significant training in the approach themselves that lasts a minimum of 18 months. Only then can tutors begin to learn to use the approach on the course in the role of trainer and supervisor. This works well where tutors are also, for at least some of their time, practicing applied psychologists using VIG in their work. A second potential drawback relates to the need for technology. Establishing and maintaining the technology requirements for students to take, edit and view their own video is much easier today than it was a decade ago, but even now there can be software glitches and other issues. Good IT support is essential.

Future Research

VIG and its applications have the potential to be used as valuable learning tools within higher education, particularly during professional training in applied psychology and the helping professions. Further research is needed in order to examine where it is most effective and the key mechanisms of change involved.

Much research remains to be done. For example it would be useful if research was conducted to compare the skills of those using VIG and/or video enhanced reflective practice with more traditional methods of developing interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. In addition, longitudinal studies on the impact of VIG on skills over time would add to the evidence base. Studies evaluating how VIG could be used to improve students identified as requiring support in developing their skills would be useful. Feedback and evaluations from clients that students within professional training have worked with would also add the client perspective to research. However, despite the need for future research VIG has demonstrated that it is a very useful reflective tool for higher education.

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Appendix
Progression of Skills in Video Interaction Guidance Through the Course

Year 1. Introduction to VIG.

Whole group introduction to microanalysis using a selection of videos of adults and children from VIG trainers archive. **Video Context:** Small group initial practice of microanalysis using a video of TEPs own interactions at university.

- Application to self-reflection and interpersonal effectiveness skills development.
- Understand the Principles of Attuned Interaction.
- Begin to be able to microanalyze video footage of self.
- To understand the background theory to VIG and apply this knowledge to other aspects learning and professional development.

Year 2. A 2-day VIG training course.

Take a lead on microanalysis of video of another person's interaction for the first time in a small group context. First introduction to guiding in a shared review and first experience of VIG supervision.

- Advanced and specialist training into application of the method.
- Develop confidence with microanalysis and of analyzing footage of other people.
- Begin own skills progression as a guider in the shared review.
- Experience supervision.

Year 3. Application and development.

Take full responsibility for undertaking microanalysis of two more videos of another TEP interacting in a real placement situation. Also an opportunity to see change in the situation over time. Take part in four further supervision conversations. (Two individual sessions focused on microanalysis and two small groups sessions focused on shared reviews.)

- Developing skills in establishing the therapeutic alliance.
- Individually tailored video interaction guidance and practice.
- Develop increasing fluency with microanalysis.
- Extend experience of guiding in shared reviews.
- Complete a written assignment demonstrating an understanding of theoretical underpinnings and application of VIG within educational psychology. Also to include reflections on own learning experiences using VIG.
- As a "client" experience VIG as an intervention used to support professional development as a TEP.