

Student Teachers Looking at Themselves on Video: A Means to Putting the Learner at the Centre

Dr Sheridan Forster, RMIT University, sheridan.forster@rmit.edu.au

Abstract

The interactive relationship between a student and their teacher has a impact on learning outcomes and attitudes towards education. Communication enables the learner to be at the centre.

Second year BEd/BSc(Disability) students at RMIT learn about communicating with children with disabilities. They learn about different forms and functions of communication, the different profiles of comprehension and expression, and most importantly, they learn about being reflective practitioners.

An important part of their course is a school visit where they observe and write a communication profile on one child and then interact with the child. Uniquely, an interaction is videorecorded (5 min), the student teacher watches the recording, and selects three short clips. The clips are chosen by focusing on their use of "principles of attuned interaction"; a set of principles for good quality interactions that are used within a process of interaction intervention called Video Interaction Guidance (Kennedy, Landor, & Todd 2011). The student shares one of the clips with their peers, explaining why they chose it, describing the interaction behaviours that they used to enable the child to interact optimally. Peers share what they like about the clip, perhaps describing elements that the student had not previously noticed. Based on their enhanced knowledge about what appears to best help the child that they interacted with, they come up with a single working point – a behaviour that they want to do more of next time they interact.



Photo by Debby Watson - <http://www.debbywatson.co.uk/> - used with permission

Student teacher outcomes

The student teachers highly valued this experience of watching their own interaction with a child with a disability.

All of the students were able to complete a video recording, review the video, and identify 3 of their behaviours that appeared to make their interactions with the child work. They were also able to identify something that they would like to work on more.

They presented two of their short clips to their peers, and their peers were also able to constructively describe what they felt enabled the interaction to work. They wrote these up for a marked assignment.

Student's identified their own use of things like:

"Throughout all of my interactions with A I ensured I listened actively, not only to the sounds that she was making with her voice and hands, but I also actively listened to the messages she was sending out that may not be audible. By this, I mean that I was listening to her body language, to where her attention was etc. I was trying to receive as much communication as possible so as to respond appropriately and successfully".

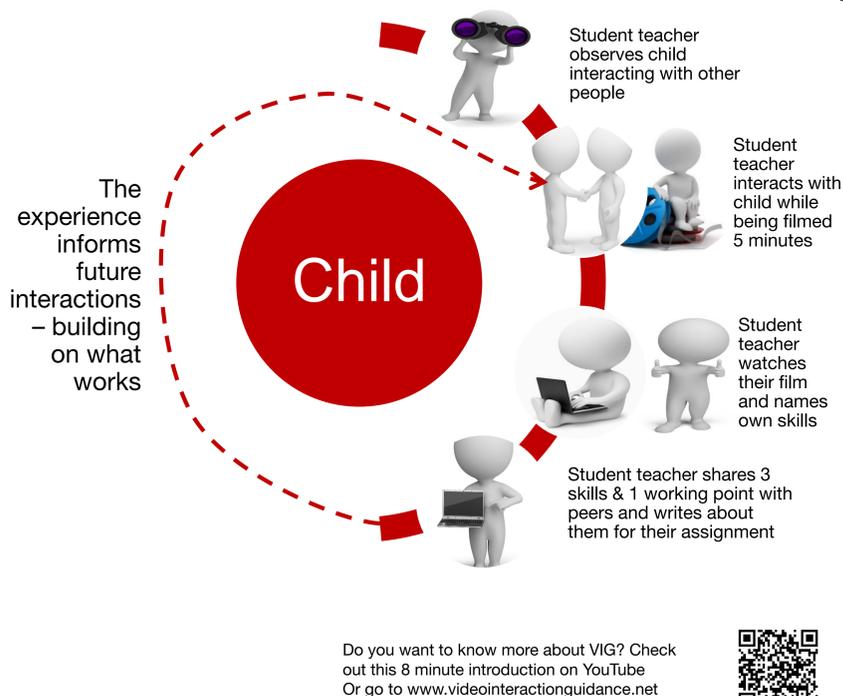
"The most prominent behaviour of attuned interaction that was displayed during the entire interaction was at the moment where the discussion began, 'deepening discussion – naming difference of opinion' I had wanted to see how the student dealt with my opinion being different. The student was aware that my opinion differed from his and kept repeating his choice/opinion".

"Overall, I think my body language, including, turning towards her, smiling and nodding, demonstrated I was interested and wanted to get to know her and learn more about her. I talked to her about her interest and could see from her body language that she was comfortable, happy and engaged in the conversation (smiling and answering questions, continued to show me photos). Furthermore I ensured I gave her time to respond, we took turn taking and both contributed to the interaction".

After the experience, one student reported:

"I felt very positively about workshoping my video interaction with my peers. It reinforced my belief in myself and showed me what I am doing well in my practice. It also highlighted ways that I can improve my communication ability with students".

Process



Do you want to know more about VIG? Check out this 8 minute introduction on YouTube Or go to www.videointeractionguidance.net



Principles of Attuned Interactions & Guidance



Being Attentive	<input type="checkbox"/> Looking interested with friendly posture <input type="checkbox"/> Giving time and space for other <input type="checkbox"/> Turning towards <input type="checkbox"/> Wondering about what they are doing, thinking or feeling <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoying watching the other
Encouraging Initiatives	<input type="checkbox"/> Waiting <input type="checkbox"/> Listening actively <input type="checkbox"/> Showing emotional warmth through intonation <input type="checkbox"/> Naming positively what you see, think or feel <input type="checkbox"/> Using friendly and/or playful intonation as appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Saying what you are doing <input type="checkbox"/> Looking for initiatives
Receiving Initiatives	<input type="checkbox"/> Showing you have heard, noticed the other's initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Receiving with body language <input type="checkbox"/> Being friendly and/or playful as appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Returning eye-contact, smiling, nodding in response <input type="checkbox"/> Receiving what the other is saying or doing with words <input type="checkbox"/> Repeating/using the other's words or phrases <input type="checkbox"/> Receiving and then responding
Developing Attuned Interactions	<input type="checkbox"/> Checking the other is understanding you <input type="checkbox"/> Waiting attentively for your turn <input type="checkbox"/> Having fun <input type="checkbox"/> Giving a second (and further) turn on same topic <input type="checkbox"/> Giving and taking short turns <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing to interaction / activity equally <input type="checkbox"/> Co-operating - helping each other
Guiding	<input type="checkbox"/> Scaffolding <input type="checkbox"/> Extending, building on the other's response <input type="checkbox"/> Judging the amount of support required and adjusting <input type="checkbox"/> Giving information when needed <input type="checkbox"/> Providing help when needed <input type="checkbox"/> Offering choices that the other can understand <input type="checkbox"/> Making suggestions that the other can follow
Deepening Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting goal-setting <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing viewpoints <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative discussion and problem-solving <input type="checkbox"/> Naming difference of opinion <input type="checkbox"/> Investigating the intentions behind words <input type="checkbox"/> Naming contradictions/conflicts (real or potential) <input type="checkbox"/> Reaching new shared understandings <input type="checkbox"/> Managing conflict (back to being attentive and receiving initiatives with the aim of restoring attuned interactions)

What did I do in the interaction that made it work?

Conclusion

The school visit experience, with a focus on positive self-reflection, contributed to students that were reflective, curious, and motivated to enhance communication in their future career.

It strengthened the link between putting the student with a disability first, and adapting one's own communication style to meet the student on their communication level.

In reflecting on the experience a few weeks later, a student said how nice it was to spend time just building rapport, that they wouldn't usually spend that time if they were "teaching". Why do you think student teacher's might think this? Is the teaching posture different from the relationship building posture? When should they cross over and interaction become teaching?

Bibliography

- Forster, S. (2015). Supporting interactions with adults who have profound intellectual and multiple disabilities as their skills deteriorate *Video Enhanced Reflection on Practice: VIG for Mentoring, Coaching and Professional Development*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Fukink, R. G. (2008). Video feedback in widescreen: A meta-analysis of family programs. *Clinical Psychology Review, 28*(6), 904-916. doi: 10.1016/j.cpr.2008.01.003
- James, D. M., Hall, A., Phillipson, J., McCrossan, G., & Falck, C. (2013). Creating a person-centred culture within the North East Autism Society: Preliminary findings. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities, 41*(4), 296-303. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-3156.2012.00757.x
- Kennedy, H., Landor, M., & Todd, L. (2011). *Video interaction guidance: A relationship-based intervention to promote attunement, empathy, and wellbeing*. London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Shaw, E., & Martland, I. (2014). VIG as a tool for building confidence and professional development in school support staff. *Educational Psychology in Scotland, 15*(1), 29-32.
- Quinn, S., Herron, D., Menzies, R., Scott, L., Black, R., Zhou, Y., . . . Freeman, R. (2015). The Video Interaction Guidance approach applied to teaching communication skills in dentistry. *European Journal of Dental Education, n/a-n/a*. doi:10.1111/eje.12146