Video Modeling Imitation Training (VMIT)

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Table of Contents

What is Video Modeling?

Video modeling has been used with children with autism for over a decade (Ayres & Langone, 2005; Bellini & Akulian, 2007; Cardon, 2012; Charlop-Christy et al., 2000). Video modeling is a mode of teaching that uses video recordings and display equipment (e.g., television, computer monitors, iPads, smart phones, portable DVD players) to provide a visual model of a targeted behavior or skill. Research has indicated that personalized videos are more effective for children with autism than commercially made videos (Palechka & MacDonald, 2010). One of the benefits of video modeling is that it helps to facilitate *observational learning*, the type of learning that occurs when observing the behaviors of others (Bandura, 1977; Cardon & Azuma, 2011). The four key components of observational learning are: attention, retention, production, and motivation.

1. Attention: The display equipment (e.g., computer, iPad, smart phone) offers a restricted field of vision and can therefore focus a child's attention on relevant stimuli while decreasing their tendency to attend to irrelevant stimuli.

2. Retention: Because of the consistent repetition of the modeled behavior, children are more likely to retain the information they have seen.

3. Production: Children are given multiple opportunities to practice, or produce, the behavior they saw occurring in the video.

4. Motivation: Many children with autism are highly motivated by the electronic devices used to display the video model. Therefore the act of the viewing the video model is highly motivating.

You can film an adult, a sibling, or a friend in the video (Bellini & Akullian, 2007). Just be sure that whoever you choose can follow instructions and do *exactly* what you want them to do!

Imitation Ideas
(Please note – these are only a few suggestions,
there are many different actions you can choose from.)

Play Actions –

- Stacking blocks
- Pushing a car
- Nesting cups
- Ring stackers

Self-Help Skills –

- Brushing Teeth
- Putting on socks
- Eating with a spoon
- Cleaning up a basket of toys

Learning Activities –

- Matching colors
- Song gestures
- Looking at a book
- Sorting objects

Remember, pick a target action that has a clear beginning, distinct movements, and a clear ending point. It may help to choose a toy that your child has shown interest in.

Helpful Tips to Consider
When Making your Video

✓ Practice the target action several times before you begin recording

✓ Keep the video area free of clutter

✓ Try to focus on the person in the video and stay close enough to cut out any extras that could be distracting. You want a very neutral background

✓ Be sure there is plenty of light so the video will be easy to see

✓ The person on the video should not wear distracting patterns or logos

✓ Be sure televisions or other background noises are turned off so they don't create a distraction on the video

✓ **The person in the video should use a key word or short phrase to describe what they are doing. Repeat the same word or short phrase several times. Keep it simple!**

✓ The videographer is SILENT!

✓ Be sure the target action is clear during the video (e.g., stack 3-5 blocks, push a car across the table, brush teeth in an exaggerated manner)

✓ Be sure the target action is performed at an ideal rate, don't rush!

✓ If you ever get stuck, you can always push the home button

Steps to Creating a Video Model

1. Turn on the tablet or smart phone using the button at the top or bottom of the device

2. Choose the action you want to video. (See tips on p. 3 & 4)
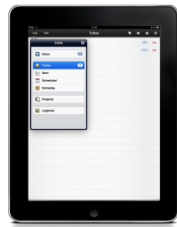
3. Press the camera icon

4. Landscape is often preferable, but it depends on the task you are filming.

5. BE sure you are in video mode

6. Hold the device steady (in either portrait or landscape mode) and aim at the person performing the action. The camera should capture the person's face and the action they are performing. Limit all other background distractions
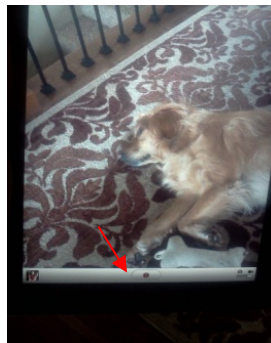
Portrait

Landscape

7. Press the record button on the device

8. Record the entire action that you want to teach your child
(Note: The record button blinks red while recording)

a. The person recording the video is SILENT! The person modeling the target action in the video should use a **key word** or **short phrase** that corresponds with what they are doing. Keep it simple and keep it natural!

9. Press the button again to stop recording

10. To view your video to be sure that it captures the action and the sound the way you would like.

Note: Be sure the volume is turned up so you can hear the sound

11. When you are satisfied with the video, choose several more actions that you would like your child to imitate and make more video recordings by repeating the steps above.

Video Modeling Imitation Training

1. Open the video/photo button on the device.
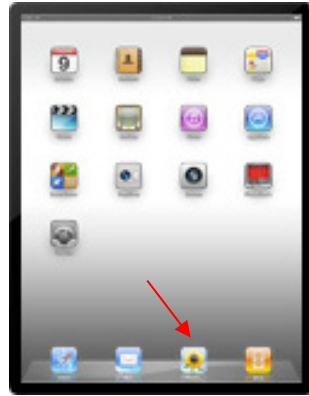
2. All of the video models that you have recorded will be displayed. You will know it is a video because it will have a small video icon in the bottom left corner and show the length of the video in the bottom right corner

3. Select the video you would like to play by pressing on it

4. Place the device in front of your child. If the imitation action requires the use of an object, be sure the object is close by

5. Press the play icon in the center of the screen

6. After you child watches the entire clip, you may state, "Time to play", "Let's play", or "Now you". If an object is required for imitation, hand them the object

7. If your child imitates what they saw in the video model within 10 seconds,with a purposeful action that looks distinctly like the action that was modeled, praise them and let them know how happy you are!

8. If the child does not imitate what was in the clip, repeat steps 4, 5 and 6 again. You may re-play the clip up to three times

9. If your child does not imitate after three attempts, physically prompt them to do exactly what was seen in the video clip

10. Verbally praise your child after you help them complete the action with a physical prompt

11. Move on to the next video clip

12. Repeat steps 3 through 11 for each action until your child has had an opportunity to imitate each action two times.

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