

What is Video Modeling?

Video modeling is a teaching technique which involves having a student watch a model perform a target skill on a video tape and then practice the skill that he or she observed.

What types of skills can I teach with it?

Video modeling can be used to teach a wide variety of skills. You can use video modeling to teach communication skills, such as saying “hello” and “goodbye;” daily living skills, such as hand washing or grocery shopping; social skills, such as making comments during play, and academic skills, such as spelling.

How do you do it?

Video modeling involves two primary steps: making the tape and then using the tape to teach your student.

1) *Making the tape:* To make the tape, you simply videotape a person demonstrating the skill you want your student to learn. Adults and peers seem to work equally well as models. Typically the tapes are brief, usually less than five minutes.

2) *Teaching with the tape:* The general procedure for teaching with video modeling starts with having your student watch the video tape. Typically your student will watch the tape 1-3 times; if the student enjoys the tape, several viewings are better. Immediately afterwards, you tell the student, “Now let’s do it, just like on the video” and have the student attempt the skill. Typically, no prompts are given while the student is attempting the skill although you may want to deliver reinforcement at the end for correctly performing the skill.

These steps are repeated over a period of days until the student demonstrates mastery of the skill.

Variations: It is not necessary for your student to perform the skill immediately after watching the tape. Success has also been seen when the student watches the tape in the evening before going to bed or in the morning before starting school.

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An instructional strategy in which a child learns by watching a model perform the skill on a video tape.

Are there any prerequisites?

Although we don't know for sure yet what skills a student needs in order to benefit from video modeling, it seems logical to assume that a student needs at least basic imitation skills to benefit. Students also need to be able to attend to the video. Students who really like videos or who have strong visual skills seem to be ideal candidates for video modeling.

Does it work?

Yes. A large number of studies have shown video modeling to be effective in teaching students with autism a variety of skills. Students seem to learn quickly and generalize the skills. However, that being said, there are indications in the research literature that video modeling is not successful with ALL students with autism. At this point, we don't know why some students learn from it and others don't.

What else should I know?

To assist a student in generalizing skills, sometimes multiple tapes can be made. For instance, to help a student generalize a play script to unscripted verbalizations and actions, you might make three different short tapes of different ways to play with a

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specific activity. Likewise, to help generalization of purchasing skills, you might show several video clips showing purchasing in different stores.

Also, if a student doesn't seem to be completely learning a skill using video modeling, prompting with fading can be used in conjunction with the video modeling to help the student perform the skill at the desired level.

For information on the research behind video modeling, see Research Brief #2: Video Modeling.

References and Resources

Neuman, Liisa (2004) Video modeling: A visual teaching method for children with autism. Brandon, FL: Willerik Publishing.

Sigafoos, J., O'Reilly, M., and de la Cruz, B (2006) How to use video modeling and video prompting. A title in the series *PRO-ED Series On Autism Spectrum Disorders*

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