



## Video Modeling

Video modeling (VM) has been used to teach skills to people with developmental disabilities since the 1970s, however it is not the only use of the methodology. VM has been used to improve the skills of sportsmen and women, as a critical tool for public speakers, and to teach academic skills. This strategy has also been shown to be an effective tool for teaching skills to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Several studies have shown results for using VM to teach various social skills or play skills to children with ASD either in single subject studies or in small group settings. In both individual work and small group settings, VM has shown effectiveness in teaching skills from play skills, to compliment giving, spelling and literacy skills, to fitness skills for adults.

There are many advantages derived from the use of VM, including:

- Increased efficiency of skills instruction and acquisition,
- Improved treatment fidelity,
- Reduced need for prompting and prompt reduction strategies,
- Faster uptake of skills, and
- Improved maintenance and generalisation of learned skills.

### Video Modeling in the iMsocial™ Program

The iMsocial™ program utilises two VM methods: feed-forward and positive self-review.

**Feed-forward** VM is the creation of videos displaying skills that children have not yet developed. Creating Feed-Forward videos typically requires the editing and collation of different components of skills that children possess, but have not yet displayed appropriately. Children can participate in a role-play with another person, demonstrating the targeted behaviour. A role-play can show a person or a peer acting out the desired skill even when they are not yet proficient in that skill.

Typically, feed-forward is used to teach a skill that is above the current skill-level of the learner. For example, you can teach children how to say hello to someone they do not know using the feed-forward video modeling method.

**Positive self-review** VM is used to improve the frequency and/or quality of an existing behaviour. The aim is to reinforce a positive skill. Children are filmed performing the same skill or behaviour multiple times. The footage is edited to show only the best instances of the desired behaviour. Any undesirable behaviour (i.e. swearing or hitting out) is edited out of the footage so that only the best examples of the targeted behaviour are retained. For example, you can teach children how to take turns using the positive self-review method.

### **The Focus on Positive Behaviours in iMsocial™ Video Models**

The iMsocial™ program teaches positive skills utilising VM that is strength-based, rather than deficit focussed. In this way, each VM focuses on what children are capable of achieving rather than reiterating what skills they lack. Using negatives or mistakes to teach new skills can result in problems with confidence, frustration and an increase in problem behaviours. This is particularly the case for children with developmental delays, who may not have the confidence or capacity to differentiate between positive and negative when presented to them on screen.

The focus on positive behaviour in video models is also important because some children with ASD have the ability to mimic behaviour. This means that if children are presented with a video model that contains negative behaviours, it is unlikely that children would self-critique the behaviour but instead model what has been seen. Therefore, the negative behaviour is more likely to be reinforced.

VM has also been shown to build confidence for children and young people. According to Buggie (2009, pp. 7 – 8) ‘when someone views images of himself successfully performing a behaviour, he has visual evidence that he can do it’. Many children and young people with ASD experience a deficit in confidence with regard to social interactions as a result of many years of social *failures*. Therefore showing children what they have done *wrong* does not necessarily improve their interactions and leaves them with feelings of inadequacy.

However, if children feel more confident in their ability to interact socially, they will be more confident in other areas of their lives, and more resilient when faced with difficult tasks. Providing children and young people with opportunities for positive self-belief and experiences of social success is highly important.

### **Why is Video Modeling Effective for Children with ASD?**

Children and adults with ASD often have a tendency to focus on one point or focus of interest, and ignore other aspects. When multiple cues (i.e. sensory, visual, temporal and tactile cues) are presented, children with ASD are more likely to respond to only one cue than typically developing children. This is one of the reasons that children may respond well to VM, because children with ASD can focus on the learning material on the DVD and ignore whatever else is going on around them. Furthermore, the highly visual learning processes of people with ASD results in the effectiveness of VM because VM is 'observational', thus the person observes the video and learns the skill.

Most interesting are the results of research that VM is equally effective for people with ASD and intellectual disability. This increases the desirability of VM as an intervention from the perspective of service providers looking to provide effective interventions for people with ASD and intellectual disability. Many social skills service models that are effective for clients with ASD are not designed for people who also have an intellectual disability.

### **Who is the Best Role Model for Video Models?**

Studies applying VM interventions have used various role models, including adults, peers, self, point of view and mixed models. Research shows positive outcomes regardless of the type of model being used. However, the models that seem to be most effective are self and peers, including siblings.

This research is supported by the anecdotal feedback from participants in previous iMsocial™ programs where many participants were disappointed when they were not in the video model themselves and enjoyed watching their friends in the video models.

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