

Video Profiling:

Enabling Children and Adults with Complex Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Video Profiling is a way of securely sharing information regarding learning, communication and independence skills of children with complex speech, language and communication needs. It was developed by Mr Wade and Mr Greathead, two Speech and Language Therapists working in special schools and mainstream schools.

The idea and realisation

Any person working with children with Special Educational Needs knows how important it is for everybody to have an understanding of what strategies will maximise children's learning and communication. As a Speech and Language Therapy team in a primary aged special needs provision (Hatton School, Redbridge) we began developing Video Profiling in October 2007 as a way of supporting students who were moving to new schools to record their current skills and help new members of staff get to know them quickly.

From our understanding the transition from primary to secondary schools is a time of high anxiety for teaching staff, parents and most importantly children. We could see how such anxieties can rise when the child has complex needs. The team's feeling was that the key to a successful transition is the sharing of relevant information. Traditionally this included writing transition reports detailing the child's skills and behaviours and also conducting school visits.

As it was common practice in the school to take photographs to document achievements and to aid staff training, adapting the school's ethos to taking videos was straightforward. We felt that the use of videoing would be a much more efficient means of sharing information about children with complex needs.

We decided on a list of general videos that should be included for each child:

- Interacting with his/her peers and adults
- During child-centred interaction
- Use of AAC communication systems e.g. symbol based and/or signing
- Life skills e.g. lunch time, putting coat/shoes on, using a transition schedule
- Following instructions
- Specific Speech and Language Therapy activities and strategies

Once we had our collection of videos for each child we developed a Microsoft PowerPoint template to help categorise, display and allow for comment on each video. The whole process took about three hours per profile to produce. Following this the school's Head

Teacher checked the Video Profiles to ensure we had achieved a realistic representation of each child before we copied the videos onto CDs and invited parents in to watch them prior to hand delivering them to the secondary schools.

Parents commented positively about being able to view the school setting without their presence affecting their child's behaviour, as well as the ease of using the template to view the videos. Parents can now be better supported at home with videos on how to carry out specific Speech and Language Therapy strategies and activities.

Feedback from the schools was very positive; teaching staff have been able to learn about new children and identify specific training needs and classroom adaptations. The result of this is that the child enters an environment in which they can be supported more effectively from day one by a more informed staff team and a better prepared physical setting, contributing to a smoother transition. In addition, new staff can now be trained quickly using the video profiles on how to best support a child.

Over the year we found that creating video profiles benefited staff, parents and our students in many ways. Parents enjoyed seeing the skills their children were learning at school, teachers were able to record and monitor progress, Speech and Language Therapists used them to train other professionals and the students loved watching themselves on the videos.

We integrated the video profiles into the school's existing communication and learning packages and the school was awarded a Leading Aspect Award in February 2009 in recognition of its whole school approach for supporting staff and parents to manage children's communication difficulties.

How Video Profiling can be used

A good way to envisage how Video Profiling can be used around the child is to think of the Multi Disciplinary Team involved with the child:

Parent

"My son has a diagnosis of Autism. I like to see what work he is doing at school and how the teaching staff work with him. The Speech and Language Therapist video records sessions with my son so that I can see how to best work with him at home. The video profile makes me motivated to try new strategies and activities. At parent's evenings and Annual Reviews the video profile helps

everyone focus on my son's skills."

Speech and Language Therapist

"I work with non-verbal students. One of my intervention priorities is to make sure that other people are able to use PECS with my client. I create video profiles so that other professionals and my client's parents are able to see how their child uses PECS and within which contexts. It's also a good way of giving me a baseline assessment on which to measure progress".

Clinical Psychologist

"I receive referrals from families and other professionals who are seeking my advice on managing challenging behaviours. I am based within a clinic so it's difficult for me to observe these behaviours in context. A video profile gives me the opportunity to look at specific behaviours and make informed decisions on why they are occurring and how they can be managed effectively".

Occupational Therapist

"One of my responsibilities is to set up programmes to be carried out by other professionals and parents. Creating a video profile of activities and intervention routines enables people carrying out my programmes to see exactly what they need to be working on. If they video themselves carrying out the programme and upload it onto the client's video profile then I can monitor the programme remotely, without having to be on site".

Teacher

"A video profile enables me to demonstrate what I am teaching my students to their parents. It makes parent's evenings more fun and interactive!"

Educational Psychologist

"I make routine visits to schools to assess, advise and monitor students with more complex needs. Having access to a student's video profile via the internet gives me an opportunity to 'observe' the students who have been referred to me before I go into the school. It gives me a chance to prepare strategies and take appropriate resources with me when I meet students at school."

Mainstream Schools

A Video Profile was created prior to an Annual Review meeting for a child with Autism in a mainstream school. I wanted to demonstrate to the child's parents the progress that had been made and also to model 1:1 therapy for the parents which could then be applied in the home setting. The child's SLT aims were displayed and relevant videos were linked to each of the aims.

At the meeting we were then able to watch the videos and focus on the child's strengths and weaknesses with recently recorded evidence.

Feedback from the child's parents was very positive:
"Video Profiling offers us the chance to see our son work directly with the speech therapist and see visually what is being done and how it is being done. We find this is a much better way to learn and apply these techniques at home. Reading it on paper is not the same and if we went into school to see it directly, our son would not want to work. It makes the speech therapist's skills more accessible and real which enables us to help our son better."

- Mary and Chris, London. Parents of child who has a diagnosis of Autism.



Video Profiling website

The future of Video Profiling is moving away from CD based Microsoft PowerPoint templates. We felt that by moving Video

Profiling onto the internet forum we would be able to make it available to more children, adolescents, adults and their families. We also felt that the time involved in hand delivering CDs, due to the content of the videos, meant that a lot of time was being lost in basic logistics.

We are presently developing a secure website www.videoprofiling.co.uk to provide more information to parents and professionals about Video Profiling and to host and display the videos to specified people.

In terms of security we have consulted a number of industry experts to ensure that the content of our website will remain safe. At the risk of sounding too technical, the website will have the following features:

1. Each service user (adult/child) will be given an individual identity number. No personal identifiable information will be stored on the website, so no names; D.O.B; addresses etc.
2. Only specified individuals will be able to access each Video Profile. Access will be granted via a lead individual in the school/hospital department.
3. On entering the website users will be required to enter 3 pieces of security information in addition to the Video Profile ID number: their alphanumeric password (that will need to be changed regularly) and two memorable pieces of information for that individual. For more information go to www.halifax-online.co.uk for an example of how Building Societies use such a procedure to protect their customers.
4. We (at Video Profiling) will be able to monitor who is logging on to which Video Profiles and at what time. This way we will be

able to flag up concerns for inappropriate use with the lead individual in the department.
5. The website will be 'hosted' (i.e. stored) on a server that is used by high profile companies such as Orange, and the British Army in the Public Sector. By choosing this server we are demonstrating our commitment to the security of all Video Profiles on our website.

Schools, colleges and day services will be able to quickly subscribe to the website and create Video Profiles, upload videos into each profile, and make comments. Parents and other professionals will then be able to observe and comment on the specific child's videos. The website will be very easy to use and is designed for the least technological savvy individuals out there!

For more information about Video Profiling in your school or to join our mailing list please contact us at:

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