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Lining Up Strategies:
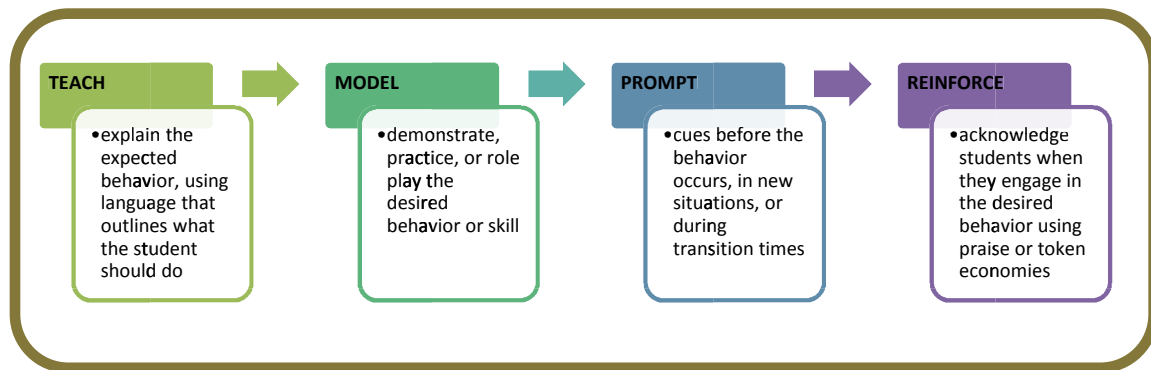## Video Modeling with Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

By Raven Stromek and Cheri Sinnott

It was the end of the day, and Mrs. Smith* was frustrated. Her deaf and hard of hearing preschool students, part of a self-contained class in a neighborhood public school, were supposed to line up for the bus to take them home. Mrs. Smith had tried multiple strategies, but her young charges still refused to get in line.

To help Mrs. Smith and the rest of the school's preschool staff, the Illinois Service Resource Center (ISRC), a statewide service and resource in Illinois that provides behavioral support for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, introduced an intervention based on video modeling. Video modeling is an educational technique that teaches students what is expected of them through showing them a video that allows them to see the expected behavior so that they can copy it.

Mrs. Smith clarified her expectations, and the students practiced getting their coats and backpacks, putting them on, and lining up. Then ISRC staff filmed her as she signed to her students what they should do when "it was time to go home," and the students went about their practiced steps. The video was shown to the students daily for one week immediately prior to end-of-the-day dismissal. To the amazement of Mrs. Smith and the rest of the preschool staff, the students—having watched the film of the instructions and their own performance—demonstrated appropriate behaviors as they lined up for the bus every day after viewing the video. The students had learned behaviors that combined into a routine. The routine was important; the students would use it at the end of the day throughout the school year.

Illustrations courtesy of Raven Stromek

TEACH		MODEL		PROMPT		REINFORCE
•explain the expected behavior, using language that outlines what the student should do	→	•demonstrate, practice, or role play the desired behavior or skill	→	•cues before the behavior occurs, in new situations, or during transition times	→	•acknowledge students when they engage in the desired behavior using praise or token economies

Video Modeling— A Natural Strategy

The ISRC has utilized video modeling as an intervention with deaf and hard of hearing students both at home and at school. It is one of the strategies that the ISRC uses to assist teachers and parents as they teach, model, prompt, and reinforce behaviors or skills. This strategy is part of the "Teach, Model, Prompt, Reinforce" framework, known by its acronym, TMPR, and it has proven effective for teaching skills and behaviors both at home and in the classroom.

While research exists that identifies video modeling as an effective practice for students who have Autism Spectrum Disorders, insufficient research exists for use of this technique with students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Yet the visual nature of the strategy makes it ideal for these students. When teaching expected behaviors or skills to students who are deaf or hard of hearing, visual strategies are essential, and modeling a skill or behavior on video is an ideal visual strategy. With visual modeling, teachers translate instructions and expectations into live action. Students don't have to imagine what the behavior looks like; they can see it.

In addition to teaching routines, video modeling can also be used to provide students with insight into social situations. The visual nature of video allows them to understand the narratives that underlie these situations and

Above: Video modeling is one of the strategies ISRC interventionists use as part of the TMPR framework to teach students skills and behaviors.

provides an understanding into the language that the situations require. Categorized as "scripted videos," these videos may feature what Carol Gray (2003) has called "social stories"; they show a situation or activity as it unfolds and include information about what students should expect to happen and why.

> *Social narratives … [emphasize] the significant social cues of given social situations. The story provides the learner with examples of appropriate social responses. The value of the social narrative is that it allows educators to pre-teach social situations and provide learners with strategies to respond to those situations. The narrative must be individualized to the learner's needs and interests.*
> ~ Autism and Tertiary Behavior Supports (2012)

Presenting social narratives through video provides consistency across staff so everyone—teachers, support staff, administrators, and parents—knows the same procedures and uses similar language as they encourage students to complete tasks and respond to social situations. Videos support the integration of signed language, spoken

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For more information about video modeling and behavioral support for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, Stromek and Sinnott can be reached at *deafeduc8or@comcast.net* and *cheris@isrc.us*, respectively.

language, Cued Speech, speechreading, and other visual access to clear communication.

As social stories typically consist of simple, almost cartoon-like presentations, educators might justifiably resist using them as an intervention for older students. When developing behavioral interventions, it is always important to maintain student dignity and provide materials that are used by same-aged, typically developing peers. Modeling on video allows educators to present the content and format of social narratives while integrating technology and media that are accepted by older students.

A variety of skills can be addressed by video modeling, but video modeling most readily addresses behavioral, social, and emotional needs. It allows teachers to address behavior and social-emotional learning academically. Specific behaviors and skills taught with video modeling include:

- social skills
- academic and functional skills
- communication skills
- daily living skills
- play skills
- perception of emotion
- perspective taking
- routines/procedures
- self-advocacy

Helping Students Take Charge
Video modeling proved useful in helping Charles, a 5-year-old student with a cochlear implant, who was having challenges calming down, focusing, and paying attention. He was a distraction to his peers, and his teacher spent a substantial amount of time addressing his behavior, taking away from instructional time with the rest of the class.

Charles became the model for the video *Charles Takes Five to Slow Down*. With help from ISRC, Charles's teacher identified five steps that he could use to calm down. Charles was taught each step and then videotaped as he performed it.

With the camera rolling, Charles:

1. rolled his body over a foam roller;
2. enacted the "smell a flower-blow out a candle" strategy, in which he pretended his forefinger was first a flower and inhaled deeply and then pretended his finger was a candle and exhaled deeply;
3. did wall push-ups;
4. read his schedule; and
5. re-enacted the "smell a flower-blow out a candle" scenario.

Charles was then shown the video. For the first few weeks, he watched the video prior to using the routine. As he learned to do the routine independently, it became less necessary to show him the video. The visual nature, consistency, and predictability of this intervention met the sensory and hearing loss needs of this student.
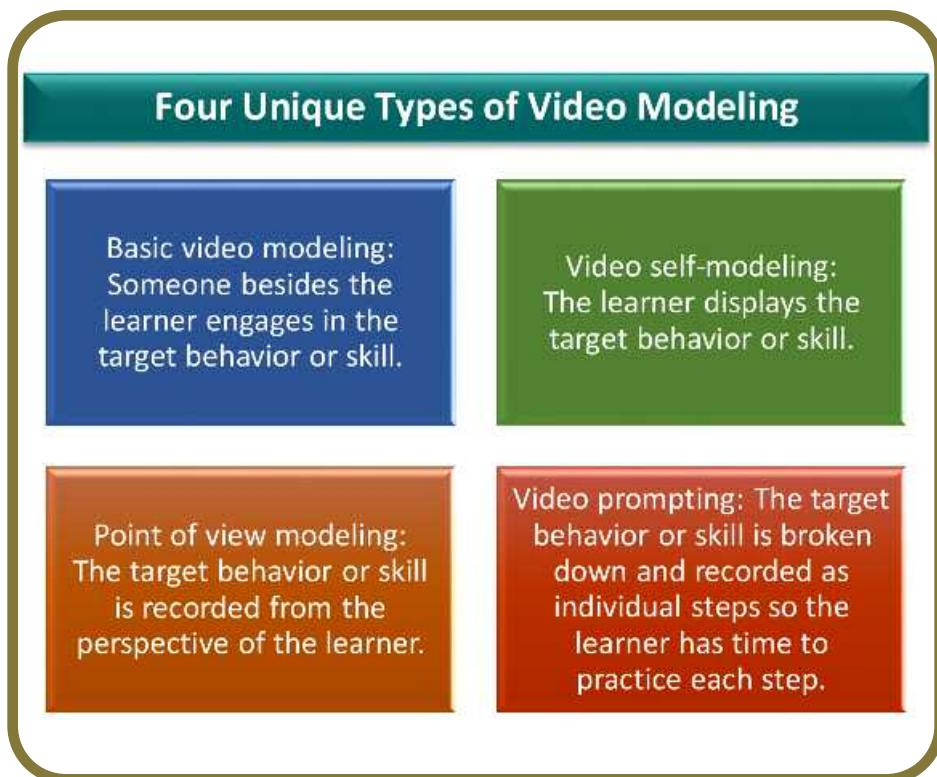
Video Modeling— A Variety of Styles
There are four types of video modeling (National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders, 2010). These include:

1. **Basic video modeling**—Someone other than the learner performs the targeted behavior or skill on camera. Basic video modeling may be used when the student is unable to perform the behavior or skill at the desired level or if the student has a particular fondness for mimicking the behaviors of others.

2. **Video self-modeling**—Learners demonstrate the targeted behavior or skill on camera. This is particularly useful when the students' behavior needs shaping, the students are compliant with making the video, and they respond well to seeing pictures of themselves.

3. **Point-of-view video modeling**— The target behavior or skill is recorded from the perspective of the learner. The camera focuses on the task, which is performed as the child's eyes would see it. Some appropriate activities suited for this strategy include the activities that

Four Unique Types of Video Modeling

Basic video modeling: Someone besides the learner engages in the target behavior or skill.

Video self-modeling: The learner displays the target behavior or skill.

Point of view modeling: The target behavior or skill is recorded from the perspective of the learner.

Video prompting: The target behavior or skill is broken down and recorded as individual steps so the learner has time to practice each step.

occur within structured work stations, hand washing, and playing with a toy. These activities can teach the steps for completing the task in depth, or a sequence of steps in a more complicated task, without requiring the child to shift perspective, which adds an additional level of difficulty or generalization.

4. **Video prompting**—Individual steps of a targeted behavior or skill are recorded on video. This is helpful because it allows the learner time to practice each skill before moving on to the next. Video prompting is also helpful for more complicated tasks that need to be completed in a particular sequence but, unlike point-of-view video modeling, it shows the task completed from the onlookers' perspective.

Video modeling is a useful tool to support the acquisition of a variety of skills, behaviors, and routines. Teachers of deaf and hard of hearing students, for whom print may be a source of frustration, especially when they are in a difficult situation, may find video modeling useful for learning vocabulary and language as well as learning how to integrate language into social situations. The visual nature of video makes it particularly accommodating to sign language, Cued Speech, captions, and other visual communication modes.

Video modeling, with its consistency of presentation, may be used at school, in the home, and in the community. Consistency across settings and environments is important. Videos can be shared with parents, and skills initially taught in school can be carried over to home. Likewise, parents can make videos at home to be watched in school. Video modeling is equally valuable in teaching home-based routines such as going to bed, hygiene, and getting ready for routine events (e.g., school, sports practices, games, church).

The Watch Me Learn website (*www.watchmelearn.com*) notes that "visual images create a 'visual database' in the

> **The visual nature of video makes it particularly accommodating to sign language, Cued Speech, captions, and other visual communication modes.**

brain." Regardless of the deaf or hard of hearing student's method of communication, video modeling helps to create that visual database. The consistency, predictability, and visual nature of video modeling make it an ideal tool for teaching appropriate behavior to students who are deaf or hard of hearing. It has proven to be effective as a component of ISRC's TMPR framework of intervening to address and change student behavior.

* Mrs. Smith is a pseudonym. The names in this article have been changed to protect individuals' privacy.

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Teaching Through Video Modeling: Step by Step

By Raven Stromek and Cheri Sinnott

1. Identify the desired skill or behavior. What behavior or skill do you want your students to learn?

2. Decide which type of videos is most appropriate:

- **Task analysis videos** show the order in which something is done; they are most appropriate for teaching specific skills and behaviors, especially those that must occur according to a prescribed sequence. For example, the steps of tying a shoe need to be taught in a specific order. The amount of detail or number of steps can be individualized to fit the cognitive, physical, or other abilities of the student.

- **Scripted videos** show how to handle social situations, including how to use language. Scripting provides sentence structures and examples of phrases that can be used in real-life situations. These videos can show students how to initiate, maintain, and end interactions with others. For example, questions to keep a conversation going might include: "What's your favorite …?" or "Do you like …?" To end a conversation, a student can be taught to say, "Nice chatting with you."

3. Identify the type of modeling. Do you want to avoid actors and simply show prompts, activities, and undertakings as they unfold? Do you want to demonstrate the skills yourself? Do you want to select individual students? Or do you want to videotape the class? Don't forget that most situations in which students are videotaped require parents' permission.

4. Plan for filming:

- *Time*—Even though the video itself will be brief, it may require several takes to get a version that is useful. Don't forget to allocate enough time.

- *Place*—It is ideal to make the video in the environment in which the skill or behavior is expected to occur. For example, use the school cafeteria to teach mealtime manners.

- *Materials*—When possible, use real materials. For example, Mrs. Smith's class used real coats and real backpacks.

- *Actors*—When possible, use people who are familiar to your students. For example, use classmates, teachers, and staff from your school rather than individuals whom your students do not know.

5. Film. Ask for assistance if you need technical help. Good preparation will pay off!

6. Incorporate viewing into the class schedule. Students should view the video more than once. Set a schedule and make viewing part of the students' daily routine. Show the video immediately prior to the opportunity for practicing the targeted skill or routine. This may be once or multiple times daily.

7. Reinforce. As your students begin to display the desired behavior or skill, don't forget to acknowledge it with reinforcement. Students can be reinforced in a variety of ways, both verbally and nonverbally (e.g., praise; edibles; sensory experiences; tangibles such as stickers, small toys, or a prize box; social opportunities such as designated time with preferred adults or peers).

8. Follow up. Repetition is effective. Once the skill is mastered, gradually move to fewer viewings while maintaining the same level of proficient performance. It is important to include opportunities to teach students to generalize the skills they have learned. Teach students to apply the skills in different locations and to use the script with a variety of people. Turn taking, a skill that lends itself to scripted videos, can be generalized by developing scripts in various settings, using a variety of games, and involving different players. Scripted videos that teach perspective taking should be developed with different events and contexts to encourage generalization.