



Video Enhanced Reflection on Practice Realising the Potential of Professionals: 'From strength to strength'

The first international conference in the UK on VERP (Video Enhanced Reflective Practice) was held at Newcastle University on June 10 and 11 2013, with contributors from **the UK, Australia, Finland, the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Portugal, France and the USA.**

VERP is an application of Video Interaction Guidance (VIG). VERP uses video for the shared reflection on short clips of practice to support professional development by building on current strengths. The aim is to support professionals, as individuals or in groups, to build on their current strengths and to further develop their attuned communication skills with others. It is effective in enhancing leadership and bringing about organisational change. It supports successful team-building through the shared reflection on video clips of practice and it has applications in all settings, with children and adults. Projects range from children's centres to investment banks, from diabetes units to secure forensic adolescent hospitals, from nurture groups to Educational Psychology Services.



Workshops covered a broad range of areas: education, mental health, early years, services for disabled adults and young adults, social work, special educational, communication impairments, leadership needs and mainstream schools. Presenters likewise came from a

diverse range of backgrounds including educational and clinical psychology, speech and language therapy, social work, academia, portage teams, private practice, psychotherapy, family therapy, teaching and care work. Following the conference, presenters had the opportunity to submit proposals for the first UK book on VERP being edited by Hilary Kennedy, Miriam Landor and Liz Todd, to be published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

This newsletter provides some information about the conference, details of some of the issues that arose in group discussions and some of the feedback that was received. Links to the presentations are available from the conference webpage, hosted by the Centre for Learning and Teaching, Newcastle University (see end).

DAY 1: KEYNOTES

VERP: Early inspiration, present practice and future aspirations

Lia van Rosmalen, Human Resources Manager at Combinatie Jeugdzorg Eindhoven, and Hilary Kennedy, Psychologist and AVIGuk National Trainer

Hilary Kennedy began by tracing the inspiration for early VERP courses to the Netherlands, with a particular focus on the work of Lia van Rosmalen at Combinatie Jeugdzorg, Eindhoven, the Netherlands.

She described how a team in Eindhoven developed these courses in the early 90s where she worked with groups of professionals working with young children with special needs and parents of the same children. These courses were translated into English and became the 'Communicating with Children' courses that were delivered to over 300 early years practitioners in Dundee.



Lia has been in her organisation for 22 years. She described how she has kept the thread of using VIG for Professional Reflective Practice at the core of her organisation and is influencing national Continuing Professional Development (CPD) policy. VIG is used as a reflective tool for all new entrants to the organization and 3 supervisors for VIG reflective practice work to support new entrants in this way and support situations where communication is at risk of breaking down. Hilary also described how she is embedding a VERP component for managers to many new VIG training

projects in the UK and how VIG trainees are delivering VERP courses as part of their VIG training.

Together, they proposed that VERP is the quickest, most supportive way to promote high quality reflective practice and that it should be at the heart of all CPD in the helping organizations.



Just conversations: VERP as a communicative method within Social Work contexts

Robin Sen, Lecturer in Social Work, University of Sheffield

Models of communication in social work are principally derived from counselling models, particularly those of person centred-counselling (Rogers, 1957). While these have clear merit, they are a poor fit for many social work contexts. In social work communication often occurs in strained contexts where there is need to challenge fundamental aspects of a person's behaviour and professional input is frequently not welcomed at first engagement.

This paper presented on the delivery and evaluation of a project which used VERP with a small group of newly qualified child and family social workers, consultant social workers and social work lecturers. The course content looked at applying the principles of attuned communication within child and family social work contexts and developed the concept of how 'just conversations' could be achieved, using strategies from VERP and the literature on negotiation.

The evaluation of the project used a randomised control trial design with pre and post self-evaluation questionnaires and vignettes administered to the newly qualified social workers, as well as end of training evaluations completed by all participants. Both control and intervention groups made progress in self-confidence, knowledge and skills in most areas, with the intervention group making some greater progress in a small number of areas: some, although not all of, the difference in progress could be linked to the VERP training.

The paper concluded by considering how VERP might be developed within social work contexts, reflecting on the following key issues:

- To what extent is attuned interaction based on communicative technique and strategy which can be learnt and to what extent is it based on factors beyond technique and strategy?
- What is the connection between VERP and reflection on use of self and self-development?
- Is VERP more than a stepping stone to becoming a VIG practitioner or are there particular merits to VERP in its own right?



Video feedback for professionals: Design and effects in various settings
Ruben Fukkink, PhD, professor at the University of Amsterdam and Katrien Helmerhorst, MSc, PhD student at the University of Amsterdam

Video feedback is used in various pre-service and in-service training contexts to

enhance communication skills for various "interpersonal professionals" for whom effective communication plays a vital role in their work. A review of scientific evaluation studies shows a rich history of video feedback approaches with different assumptions and varying effects. This interesting line of study of the past 50 years emphasizes core principles for future practice. The brief history of scientific study into video feedback also provides suggestions for the experimental design of future scientific evaluations.

Building on this overview, Katrien Helmerhorst described an ongoing experimental study into the effects of video feedback for caregivers in childcare in the second part of the presentation. This study was composed to develop and evaluate an intervention program to improve quality of caregiver-child interactions in childcare centres. Her contribution provided a concrete example of both practice and scientific study

How VIG improves communication skills of nursery teachers

Katerina Silhanova, VIG Trainer, VIG supervisor, Social Worker, Leader of the National Centre for VIG (Czech Republic)

Effective communication is crucial for nursery teachers' day-to-day job. The "Communication for nursery teachers: Look, listen and tell" project was funded by the European Union Social Fund for Investment in Educational Development, and it was implemented in two regions of Moravia (the Czech Republic). This project aimed to improve nursery teachers' communication skills using Video Interaction Guidance (VIG).

48 qualified nursery school teachers distributed by 4 groups (12 in each group) participated in the project. Each group of teachers met once a month for a 2-day VIG training session during a period of 4 months (i.e. 4 training sessions in total). The days were intensive and included some teaching (i.e. VIG principles, theories of communication, attachment, intersubjectivity, Vygotsky ZPD and

empowerment), work presentations using videos in reflective process, and small group reflection focused on the most successful moments of communication and interaction in the specific professional contexts.

Preliminary results suggested a strong improvement in the communication skills and performance of nursery teachers. In particular, participants reported feeling more able to understand the child and to choose an appropriate response to a specific need of the child. Surprisingly, participants reported feeling an improvement in communication not only in their professional contexts, but also, in their personal interactions at home.

DAY 1: WORKSHOPS

The following workshops were held – summaries of each are available from the link on the conference website:

Exploring the Role of Mentalising and Mind-mindedness within nurturing relationships in schools

“Connect Reflect and Grow” – professional development in the early years

Video Feedback Coaching for Teachers (VFC-T): Science for the young is a challenge for the teachers

Investing in the Workforce, Developing Practice - VERP with Residential Teams and Young People



Diabetes project, Ninewells hospital, staff and patients

Supporting staff to better interaction with people with communicative impairments through OIVA

An intervention for staff groups working both with challenging behaviour and environments

Supporting interactions during skill deterioration between an adult with intellectual disability and dementia and disability support workers

Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP) as a Leadership Development Tool

Broadening delivery of VERP to build organisational competence



VERP projects in educational and Social Work services carried out by Glasgow Educational

Psychology Service Research consultancy group

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Again summaries of the posters are available from the conference website:

Applications of VERP for Systems Change

VERP for Achieving Model Fidelity and Effective Implementation of Evidence Based Practice

‘Interact to communicate’ using VIG to

enhance Early Years practitioners' communication skills with Early Years Children

'The VERP in VIG' – professional development through VIG supervision

Using VERP to support a pupil with ASD

VERP and Young People (Manage anxieties)

VERP and Supervision of staff

innovative creative ways to change the culture

- Importance of building safety and trust
- Cross-disciplinary benefit and equalising ethos
- Need to become attuned to individual with management – what are their concerns/needs?
- Ask what's the benefit for the organisation with VIG/VERP?
- Use of video interaction principles with leaders and managers

DAY 2: OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION



Some of the issues raised within the themes for discussion were as follows:

Research and VERP

- The influence of supervisors' interactive style on trainees' interactive style in development (micro-analysis → interactive patterns)
- Measures for interaction / measures context driven → what are the desired outcomes?
- MRC framework for complex evaluations / framework for other work? Discipline contexts
- TME Target, Monitoring and Evaluation / Routine Outcome Monitoring
- Careseeker outcomes

Management and VERP

- How to use the principles of attunement more and in more



Groups and VERP

- Offer VERP to 'team around child' which includes parents
- Possibly include 7 steps (beginning of) to help practitioners understand how to take conversation to a deeper level
- To overcome initial anxiety, offer taster session
- Universal one day training – everyone/conference. Moss ward → VERP supervision x 4 people, staff bring clips, feedback reflections once a month → VIG Guider facilitative reflections, certificates for those who attend fully
- Including families in the group work. Each person takes a video and brings 1 video which group discusses – promotes learning from each other. Build up slowly, 1-1 first then build it up into them being included in the group

Early Years and VERP

- Perinatal professionals need training in attunement – because women (mostly) in heat period are very sensitive to non VERP communication and judgement

- Content of VERP trainings – would be linked to the priorities of the group e.g. communication, attachment. ‘What is it we want VERP to support?’
- Supporting communication between parents and early years settings professionals
- Evaluation – outside observer perspective with rating scale (tapes)
- Creating a multi-agency framework of shared understanding (helpful in organisational context) → VERP can produce this feedback from participant. Stick of rock approach
- PIMH service – role of VERP; recognise difficulties, being able to identify and help, increase attunement, people changing their own practice e.g. health visitors, nursery, early years settings staff, mind-mindedness with children and parents, hearing something good about what they’re doing (counteract fear), improve resilience



Getting Started with VERP

- Different levers of persuasion to support work in VERP: partners, colleagues, managers, local authorities
- In 2014 legislation for children with special needs emphasis on ‘listening’. Run by a lead professional. ‘Parents as experts.’
- Links to formative assessment?
- Start with a small scale project and reflect on how it went and evaluate
- Finding a way in a given context to enable others to see how powerful VIG/VERP can be. ‘Sharing magical moments’ at different levels within an

organisation/family to bring about change that is positive

- Research to convince commissioners, knowledge of government policy and local policy, new independent projects using old networks, creating, different levels of persuasion

Delegates considered what they were going to do next with VERP. Many spoke about developing the principles and applications of VERP further in their own practices and extending their knowledge base:

- Linking the impact of VIG to forensic research
- Exploring systemic development of VIG/VERP in work and skilling up on understanding and applying theory of inter-subjectivity, communication principles and attunement as part of work with schools
- Making VIG/VERP part of the recruitment process in my practice
- Looking at the neuropsychological evidence base behind VIG
- Creating more structures around my VERP work so that it would be easier to implement and evaluate VERP
- Looking at strategic planning involving managers and trainees and supervisors and setting up structure of VERP and VIG
- Planning a VERP project within work and thinking more about practicalities of this (e.g. consent, technology and evaluation)
- Considering how to measure changes in confidence, skills and outcomes from VERP cases
- Ideas for pilot projects in LA to then present outcomes to Senior Management for potential commissioning of larger scale developments
- Designing/ carrying out VERP training and using the list of competencies to form interactions

- Looking at using VERP more within an SEBN (Setting in Education) establishment
- Keep in contact with several colleagues about development of VERP within an MSc Course
- Research Seminar focussing on research methodology in more detail micro/ molar measures
- Revising my VERP practise – simpler, structured checklist for skills/ shared review

Delegates expressed a collective desire to remain in contact and forge new links and experiences with VIG and VERP in their own contexts. In response to what they had found inspirational about the conference, feedback centred on hearing about diverse practice through the use of video clips from a broad range of international professionals:

- This conference was inspirational because it was inclusive of work with people with profound disabilities, no other conference has done this in this way
- Helpful: reflection about the process and impact we have on the process of supervision
- The conference living out the attunement principles so enthusiastically
- Good atmosphere and helpful to share experiences of VIG, VERP across agencies and different contexts
- The hurdles others have overcome to incorporate VIG/VERP in their work
- The development of such a powerful psychological tool which is relevant across so many professions and contexts; has potential to gather robust evaluation data and is based on defining positive relationships and communication
- All the qualitative stories, the enthusiasm all guiders show!
- The international aspect and the shared ethos across so many countries
- Equal value placed on all contributions from meta-analysis to single case studies

- People's passion for connecting and communicating in times of adversity
- Conference has facilitated non-judgemental sharing from all in an open way – organisers have 'modelled' this way for everyone to have learning conversations and for contributions to be valued and taken forward for AVIG UK
- Watching clips and hearing about peoples experiences of using VERP
- To be part of planning the future of VERP within AVIG UK

There was also discussion on a book which may arise from the conference. Delegates commented on the fact that this was carried out in a very inclusive way.



A very successful and enjoyable conference was summed up by this delegate: 'Fantastically inspiring presenters and lots of opportunities for networking and discussion!' For further information please see the conference webpage at:.....or contact Professor Liz Todd at Newcastle University: Liz.Todd@ncl.ac.uk

