The Use of Self-Narrated-Modeling Video to Increase Positive Behaviors in Children

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Abstract

Parents’ encounter many challenges raising their children, foremost among them time for parent-child interaction to assure a strong bond and positive behaviors. Because they are immature, children often behave out of confusion and impulsivity. In addition, if a child has a behavioral diagnosis, parents may feel defeated and become reactive to negative behavior instead of parenting with purpose and a calm demeanor. Parents need a tool that is easy to implement, engaging, timely, and effective in encouraging positive behavior. Parents can easily implement instructional videos, using self-narrated-modeling to facilitate their child’s acceptance and learning of positive behaviors.

Self-narrated-modeling consists of a video of a child instructing and modeling desired behaviors for himself. As the child instructs himself, he also performs the desired behavior on the video. Step-by-step instruction of the desired behavior precedes a demonstration. Upon completing the video, the parent and child view the video together. As the child tells himself what the task is and then demonstrates the task, the parent affirms the chosen behavior. The one-to-three minute video will communicate a plethora of positive messages to the child, such as clarity of direction, affirmation, autonomy, encouragement, belonging, and family agreement. This paper investigates the biological, psychological, and social implications of video as it relates to a child’s learning and his resistance to learning.
Method

Developing the video involves five steps: (1) joining, (2) video preparation, (3) video production, (4) video editing, and (5) the delivery of the completed DVD with instructional brochure.

Joining involves taking notes, goal alignment, and discovering the family’s needs. Notes collected on a one-page template include a short family bio, individual names and ages, the primary parental concern, behavioral goal, and a brief description of both the child’s and family’s interests.

Video preparation starts with providing the parent with a one-page outline listing the steps for video production. In addition, therapist and parent create a storyboard, identify filming areas, establish a filming schedule, and discuss roles. Infusing fun and excitement, the therapist also encourages the child’s participation and attention.

Video production commences with the therapist asking the child this question “Would you like to help us make a video teaching ourselves and other children how to (positive behavior)?” At the point of agreement, the child takes center stage, while parent and therapist coach the child. Positioning, communication, and desired behaviors will all be part of the coaching process.

Editing software such as Pinnacle may be used for this project. The parents’ and therapist’s involvement is removed, leaving the child as the star of his video. The video will include a title for the behavior, the child explaining the behavior, the child modeling the behavior, and the parent affirming the child. Once the therapist has completed the editing process, he or she creates an instructional brochure for the parent.
Upon delivery of the DVD and brochure, the therapist provides a demonstration where the therapist plays the role of parent and the parent the role of the child. The parent will gain an understanding of how the child should respond during the process, furthering the video’s desired impact. Solidifying the video’s impact, the parent will quickly identify the emotional impact of the tool from the child’s perspective.

**Video**

**Biological Impact**

For the purposes of this research, sensory stimuli involving viewing a client-narrated-model of one’s own behavior is highlighted.

Televisions and computers are the primary source of video delivery in the American home, with 96.7 percent of homes owning a television (Stelter 2011). Television and its visual auditory capabilities have informed, swayed, and educated viewers for decades. Acting on the alpha and beta brain waves, television evokes thoughts, emotions, and feelings, creating a re-orienting response repeatedly drawing the viewer’s attention back to the television (Young, 2002; Krugman, 1971; Schmidt, Pempek, Kirkorian, Lund, & Anderson, 2008; James, 1890).

Television acts upon the viewer’s brain as it creates and reinforces neural pathways. Utilizing the sense of sight causes a parasympathetic response causing the heart rate to fluctuate, and blood vessels to dilate as the body shifts blood to the brain. Combined visual and auditory stimulation engages the largest parts of the brain, with vision employing the greatest area. Of the two, vision is the most important sense when considering learning and attention (Medina 2008).

**Psychological Impact**

Television may affect a child’s psychological health. Length of viewing time, content viewed, and social isolation, are problematic (Burk, 2003). Burk (2003) writes, “Avoidance of
social relations, with increased time spent with video electronic media is frequently characteristic of the modern manifestations of a number of psychiatric entities, including depression, a variety of anxiety disorders and certain psychotic disorders” (p. 7). Like Burk, Alfred Adler would agree that avoidance of social interaction and excessive isolation involving electronic media devices displaying ungoverned content might adversely affect a child’s mental health. Children watch and observe everything, but they struggle with accurate interpretation (Adler, 1979). Ungoverned content could nullify parental influences offering to opposing morals and judgments. Bandura (1969) writes, “The findings revealed that exposing children to adult models who expressed moral judgment that ran counter to the children’s dominant evaluative orientations was effective in modifying their judgmental behavior in the direction of the social influence” (p. 275).

Unrestricted use of electronic media devices facilitates a disconnected family environment. Media device usage is a source of contention with many families today. However, research also presents video as a very effective learning tool. Buggey (2007) writes, “Videos containing self-modeling accelerate learning from base line performance” (p. 152). Video modeling, used as an intervention showed positive results, with every case achieving positive movement. In the area of on-task behavior and discussion, there was a 100% increase (Baker, Lang, & Oreilly 2009). Rao and Gagie (2006) reported on the visual support of electronic media devices as it relates to learning: “They are part of everyone’s communication system they hold attention, they enable the student to focus with less stress, and they can make abstract concepts more concrete” (p.26).

Social Impact

Without question, television and other forms of media devices are an intricate part of American culture (Buggey, 2010; Rao & Cagie, 2006). In addition, a growing number of cell
phones are video capable. Personal computers, video editing software, and video recording devices, lower in price points every year.

Originally, technology promised a more organized life, which would leave more time for family interaction and leisure activity. However, young children spend approximately three hours a day watching television resulting in less family interaction, not more (Schmidt, Pempek, Kirkorian, Lund, & Anderson 2008). Stout (2010) in her article “Antisocial Networking” describes how most young people under 18 years of age correspond with their peers through media devices. Approximately 33 percent of social interaction is face to face, and 67 percent of social interaction takes place through media devices.

Client-narrated-modeling video is a parenting tool that joins parent and child in a child directed learning experience. Buggey (2007) described video self-modeling as a useful tool and a logical extension of parenting, with little down side. Video self-modeling assisted children diagnosed with autism, selective mutism, and fine motor skill development (Rao & Cagie 2006). Buggey (2007) stated that the reason VSM is not more widely used was that the editing process might seem cumbersome to parents. Recently less expensive user-friendly editing software has become available. A buyer can now purchase a user-friendly Pinnacle video editing software for approximately $60, which, for many families, will depose the cumbersome feelings experienced from past editing software.

Summary

Research demonstrating television’s negative effects on children derives from uncensored content, length of viewing time, child development, and social isolation. Collaborating with the research, client-narrated modeling videos, utilize approximately two to three minutes of viewing time involving both child and parent. The video’s content will be G-rated and requires parental
clarification and affirmation. Client-narrated-modeling coupled with parent affirmation affirms behaviors that are in agreement with parental values and morals. Affirmation allows the child to reflect on himself and his behaviors (Cottle, 2002).

Considering television’s orienting response, brain stimulating abilities, modeling potentials, ability to make abstract concepts concrete, and the availability of electronic devices, client narrated-modeling videos appear to be a practical parenting tool.

Learning

Biological Impact

Historically viewed as “blank slates” waiting to record all within their environment, neurologists currently understand that infants embark on life with a complete neurological suite of tools for the purpose of learning and storing information (Medina 2008). Medina (2008) states, “Preloaded with lots of information software, infants acquire information using specific strategies, many of which are preserved into adulthood … understanding how humans learn as infants means understanding how humans learn at any age” (p. 264). Each sense: sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste, contributes to an infant’s testing and hypothesis about his world. Donald Hebb found that exploration and environment contributed greatly to biological learning especially during the younger years (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2005). Hergenhahn and Olson, (2005) write, “According to Hebb, each environmental object we experience stimulates a complex pattern of neurons called a cell assembly. For example as we look at a pencil … the result is the perception and identification of a pencil” (p. 379). Medina (2008) and Hergenhahn and Olson (2005) demonstrate that the brain employs established neural pathways to acquire new learning. Their research indicates that repetition establishes and equips the child with the ability to tie connections between past and new stimuli accelerating the learning process.
Psychological Impact

Perception influences learning. If a learner perceives himself as belonging to a group, class, or family community, learning can be positively influenced (Dreikurs, Gould, & Corsini, 1974; Feigal, 2007; Dreikurs, 2001; Whitley, 2001). Parents enhance and promote belonging when the child identifies the parent as a positive influence. Essentially, parents who position themselves as success mentors observe longer lasting positive behaviors (Feigal, 2007).

Dreikurs, et al. (1974) demonstrated that cooperative behavior is contingent upon a child’s sense of value in a group. Providing the child with a voice during a family council meeting is a perfect venue to instill worth in a child.

Self-efficacy is also a crucial element of learning (Bandura & Schunk 1981). In addition, small goals set and attained can motivate the individual to develop interest in activities where interest was formerly nonexistent. A child must believe that he can accomplish the task. Modeling facilitates belief in oneself and the ability to accomplish the observed goal (Bandura, 1967; Kahn, Cangemi, 2001; Bandura & Schunk, 1981).

Feigal (2007) and Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver, and Wehby (2010) agree that clear concrete positive affirmation will promote the learning of new behaviors. Feigal states children will internally associate how they feel about the parent’s expression of heartfelt appreciation, and start re-navigating a course in the desired direction. Feigal also states any movement towards a desired goal is worthy of heart-felt appreciation. Focusing on the child’s positive movement will strengthen the parent-child bond promoting the acceptance and learning of a new behavior (Feigal, 2007; Partin, et al. 2010).
Social Impact

Most learning develops within a social setting. However, correctly interpreting what is happening within a social setting is paramount to learning. Frazoni (2003) writes, “When explaining the actions of others, we are especially likely to commit the fundamental attribution error. But when explaining our own behavior, we tend to give more weight to external or situational factors” (p. 111). Pointing out a child’s positive behaviors as fact in the presence of siblings and peers fosters a positive social learning experience. Feigal (2007) writes, “Use your three-part statement of heartfelt appreciation, 'When you … I feel … because …’ Remember, these three part statements are the emotional impact equivalent of yelling” (p. 29). This approach identifies a specific time and a specific action. Attaching a feeling provides the child with a snapshot of how others view him at that moment. Research demonstrates that learning in a social setting requires clear, concrete, and properly timed praise (Feigal, 2007; Partin, et al., 2010; Brosvic, Epstein, Cook, & Dihoff, 2005).

Summary

Learning encompasses more than taking in information and recalling it later in the day or later in life. Learning, for the purposes of this paper, is implementing and sustaining new behaviors. Biological considerations affecting the procurement of new behaviors are nutrition, sleep, physical exercise and relevance (Medina, 2008). Parents must consider biological variables to promote learning.

Of the two types of learning, imitation and modeling, Bandura (1967), Kahn and Cangemi (2001), Buggey (2007), and Bandura, A, & Schunk, D. (1981) agree that modeled behavior supports the learning of new behaviors more effectively, bringing on positive change more rapidly.
Frazoni (2003) and Dreikurs, et al. (1974), agree that private logic, attribution error, and group belonging alter or contribute to the learning experience. However, providing a model, accompanied by clear concrete positive praise and affirmation can bring about recurring positive behaviors (Brosvic, et al., 2005; Feigal, 2007; Bandura, 1967; Buggey, 2003; Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Dreikurs, & Soltz, 1992).

**Resistance to Learning**

**Biological Impact**

Biologically, resistance is a natural part of every human being’s life. Moving on from birth, children spend their life’s journey joining and separating from others. Alfred Adler believed that all individuals, regardless of race, color or culture strive for security, significance, and belonging. Resistance to learning could indicate a lack of security, significance, or belonging (Dreikurs, & Soltz, 1992; Medina, 2008; Dreikurs, 2001).

Sax (2007) reports that resistance to learning arises due to brain development, stage of life, or gender. He contests that girls are approximately two years ahead of boys due to an underdeveloped parietal lobe gray matter in boys. The parietal lobe gray matter is responsible for integrating information. In addition, boys tend to learn through applying the concept to a task; girls tend to learn visually and auditory (Sax, 2007; Medina, 2008).

Resistance to learning also occurs when a child’s neural pathways encounter an unfamiliar situation (Medina, 2008). A child well practiced in a subject, i.e., math, but has had little exposure or practice in a subject like English, the child may resist learning English knowingly or unknowingly. Nobel Prize winner Eric Kandel presented to the world that the brain physically changes as learning takes place. Repeated exposure to stimuli physically changes the brain reinforcing existing neural pathways (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2005; Medina, 2008).
Psychological Impact

Whitley (2001) states, “Underachievers find changing their ways to become more successful quite difficult because the motivational patterns that cause underachievement make up the core of these children’s ideas about themselves,” (p. 46). Later in his book, Whitley demonstrates that students fail due to their perceptions of themselves as failures. It appears that some children are predisposed to procrastination, shyness, socializing, and perfectionism. Some children are just plain discouraged. Children who are discouraged operate through one of following four mistaken goals: seeking attention, seeking power, seeking vengeance, or hopelessness. The result is resistance to parental influence. (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1992)

Feigal (2007) states, “Alternatively, our input can also deliver the heart-brain message, ‘I am not a good kid. I can never do the right thing. I am a failure.’ We have a choice about what we download into the child” (p. 14). Partin, et al. (2010) write, “For example, researchers have long recognized the prevalence of negative interactions between teachers and students who exhibit problem behaviors” (p. 172). Essentially, educators focus their attention on what the child is doing wrong creating confusion within the student (Lago & Dellalo, 1998).

The child has a 50/50 chance of guessing the right behavior in an unclear situation. (Stouwie, 1971; Partin, et al., 2010). Feigal (2007) has stated the need for properly timed and clear messages between parent and child. Removing abstract statements and replacing them with concrete observations at the appropriate time will alleviate confusion and proffer the chance of a repeated desired behavior. Brosvic, Epstien, Cook & Dihoff (2005) produced a study involving 110 students who received the following after an exam: no feedback, delayed feedback, immediate feedback, and interactive responding during and after exams. Those students who received immediate feedback with interactive responding out-performed those students that did
not by thirty percent on the final exam. Their study focused on clarity of instruction along with timing. Like Feigal (2007), Brosvic, et al. (2005) demonstrated that parents and instructors who provide clear feedback and affirmation closest to the actual behavior would increase the chance of reoccurrence. Ansbacher & Ansbacher (1964) write, “The educator’s task is much easier when he starts with a single encouraging accomplishment and uses it to make the child believe he can be just as successful in other things. The educator entices the child from one fruitful pasture to another” (p. 400).

**Social Impact**

Social impact attributed to resistance appears in family and educational settings alike. Often, classrooms and families with resistant children are high in competition and low on encouragement (Dreikurs, et al., 1974; Dreikurs, 2001). Rhodes & Brickman (2011) identified children between the ages of five and six determine from whom they will reject or receive help based on whether they perceive that person as a team member.

Inequality within a group promotes resistance. Eva Dreikurs Ferguson (2001) writes, “Feelings of inferiority that concern personal status exaggerate when a person has lowered social interest, and personal inferiority feelings in turn sabotage the individual’s commitment to contribute to the welfare of the community” (p. 327). Dreikurs would further state, “The concept of social equality is fundamental for effective problem solving” (p. 327). Often, children positioned as beneficiaries of entitlement by their family members, deprive the child the opportunity to contribute to the family unit. The absence of responsibility in the presence of freedom and equality often will be a catalyst for resistance from a child. Dreikurs, et al. (1974) state, “When parents assign jobs to their children, children feel resentful. Especially, if children,
have not previously been required to do anything in the past, they believe they exist to enjoy life and not to be imposed upon” (p. 51).

Although we are considering social impact on resistance, we must consider the individual within the group. Lagattuta, Nucci, & Bosacki (2010), performed a study to determine at what age personal domain would affect moral decisions. The study essentially stated that children between four and seven recognize personal domain, but are not willing to break a moral rule to maintain autonomy. However, as children grow older, personal domain does become a greater factor. Their study reasoned that a threatened personal domain causes resistance to appear.

Summary

Resistance to learning is a result of many variables surrounding biological, psychological and social constructs. Resistance is likely to occur when there is a biological deficiency, a lack of relevance, a stage of development issue, or discouragement (Medina, 2008; Sax, 2007; Whitley, 2001; Dreikurs, 2001; Feigal, 2007; Dreikurs & Soltz, 1992). Feigal (2007) addresses a child’s need to have a positive view of the parent and himself in order to manage resistance. Rhodes and Brickman, (2011) and Ferguson (2001) and Dreikurs, et al. (1974) and Feigal (2007) emphasize the need for a democratic family system that fosters a positive view of the individual and the family unit creating worth and belonging.

Summary: Video, Learning, and Resistance to Learning

Biological, psychological, and social perceptions warrant consideration when introducing a client narrated-modeling-video. Acceptance of the video is contingent on the child’s readiness and ability. For this reason, children ages four to eleven years of age are the population of focus. Children younger than four might struggle to articulate or join in during video production. Children older than eleven might contend with social perceptions as it relates to the video.
On a biological level, Medina (2008), documents the sense of sight as the sense that engages the largest part of the brain. Young (2002) and Krugman (1971) and Schmidt, Pempek, Kirkorian, Lund, and Anderson (2008) agree, video acts upon the viewer converting abstract concepts into concrete ones. Repeated exposure to stimuli develops neural pathways reinforcing and establishing neural networks that assist in accelerated learning where stimuli share common traits (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2005).

On a psychological level, learning appears to progress or digress based on the learner’s perception of self and those around him (Dreikurs, et al., 1974; Feigal, 2007; Stouwie, 1971; Partin, et al., 2010). Client narrated-modeling videos offer a systematic approach that fosters belonging, significance, and security in a child. Focusing on clarity and parent affirmation, client narrated-modeling videos, presents a clear message to the child’s heart and mind leading to repeated positive behaviors (Dreikurs, et al., 1974; Feigal, 2007; Stouwie, 1971; Partin, et al., 2010).

Because the child directs the video, he maintains self-efficacy, personal domain, and autonomy. The child introduces the new behavior via video with the parent present. The parent assumes the role of a success monitor by affirming the child during the viewing process. Research substantiates modeling followed by clear and concrete affirmation closest to the behavior increases the chance of learning (Bandura, & Schunk, 1981; Bosacki, Lagattuta, & Nucci, 2010; Brosvcic, et al., 2005; Dreikurs, et al., 1974; Feigal, 2007). Removing opportunities for negative reinforcement nullifies a great deal of resistance in a child (Feigal, 2007; Whitley, 2001; Lago-Dellalo, 1998). Feigal (2007) stated, when appropriate, ignore negative behaviors, and invest valuable parenting time feeding positive behaviors.
Research collaborates with the use of client narrated modeling video through electronic media vices such as televisions or computers to direct learning is socially applicable. Dreikurs, et al. (1974); Feigal (2007), Buggey (2010), and Partin, et al. (2010), Stouwie (1971), Partin, et al., (2010), and Cottle, (2002) agree, clarity of message, properly timed affirmation, heartfelt appreciation, providing a sense of significance, belonging, and security within a social environment aids in solidifying the acceptance of desired behaviors. Parenting tools that utilize socially established media devices as the medium of delivery establishes ease of use. Highly recognized episodes like “Mr. Rogers”, “Sesame Street”, & “Electric Company” have taught children everything from counting to etiquette via video for decades.
References


