Taking a closer look: Exploring Processes and Evaluating Outcomes of a Video Intervention: Video Interaction Guidance (VIG)

Submitted by Danya Gromski to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Educational Psychology in Educational, Child & Community Psychology, September 2011.

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Signed: _________________________________           Date:   23rd September 2011
Overview: Paper 1 and Paper 2

Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) is an intervention that aims to enhance communication within relationships. It is based on a pedagogical model initially developed by child psychologist, Harrie Biemans (1990) in the Netherlands for use with troubled families which is known as video home training (VHT). VIG was first used in the UK within Dundee Educational Psychology Service in 1992. It has become increasingly well known in the UK and is used in a range of settings with parents, children and professionals to enhance communication and develop positive interaction skills.

The Every Child Matters Agenda (DfES, 2004) recognises the crucial role of parents, carers and families in improving outcomes for children and young people and the need to provide support in order for them to do so. There is also an increasing recognition that EPs are well placed to apply psychology through the development of direct intervention work with children and their significant others (Norwich, 2005). In recent years, there has been an objective within the profession to increase the extent to which work carried out by Educational Psychologists (EPs) is evidenced-based, professionally defensible and psychological (Frederickson, 2002).

In working to promote and achieve such priorities the Educational Psychology Service in which I have been working as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) utilises a wide range of interventions. One such intervention is VIG, in which twenty EPs have received training and some are using in their work with parents, teachers, children and other professionals. The evidence-base
for the effectiveness of VIG has been developing over the last twenty years through small-scale studies in the Netherlands and the UK. The VIG approach is grounded in psychological theory (See Section 1.2.1, pg. 12 below) and puts into practice many core principles within the field of Educational Psychology such as empowerment, collaborative working and respect.

**Rationale**

A basic requirement of evidenced-based practice within Educational Psychology is that services and individual practitioners evaluate outcomes of intervention programmes (Frederickson, 2002). Whilst small scale studies have reported VIG to be effective, enabling EPs to recommend it as an evidence-based intervention (Fukkink, 2008; Juffer, Bakermans-Kranenburg & Van Ijzendoorn 2007; Simpson, Forsyth & Kennedy, 1995; Kaye, Forsyth & Simpson, 2000) this is not necessarily sufficient. It is also important to understand something about the impact of such interventions within a local and individual context. It is becoming increasingly accepted that outcomes in *efficacy* research carried out under highly controlled conditions do not always transport directly to routine practice with the same effects. Rather, this must be demonstrated, undertaking *effectiveness* research into outcomes based on those routine settings (Bower, 2003).

Furthermore, Carr (2000) identifies that for children and adolescents with all kinds of psychological problems, the ‘best available’ treatment does not work in up to one third of cases. Current research within the field of VIG has not identified how the intervention brings about change for clients. Although
Explanations can be drawn from the theoretical base of VIG; this has not yet been fully explored in practical contexts.

Therefore, this research aims to deepen understanding about the process of change in relation to VIG, still a relatively under-researched area. An individual case study methodology was employed, using a mixed method design to explore some of the key processes and link these to perceived outcomes for parents and their children.

**Paper 1** focused on exploring some of the key processes within the video intervention through an in-depth analysis of shared review sessions between parents and EPs. Discussions were found to be qualitatively different between cases. Parents also perceived VIG in different ways, which appeared to correspond with the nature and content of discussions in shared review sessions. Where parents were more often engaged in activating discussions (two out of four cases) they valued the space to reflect on interactions with their children and the non-directive approach used by EPs. Those that only experienced VIG as a method to demonstrate that their parenting was ‘good enough’ were more likely to be given information by EPs in the video review sessions and less likely to create new understanding about their individual situations.

**Paper 2** evaluated the perceived social, emotional and behavioural outcomes for parents and their children. There were some small gains in two out of four cases but these were largely not maintained over time. A secondary aim was to identify any barriers and enablers of the video intervention, as perceived by
parents and EPs. Key themes identified broadly related to client factors, the relationship between EP and parent, and factors specific to the intervention.

**Link between Paper 1 & 2** Findings from both papers together demonstrate that there was a complex interplay of factors within the process of VIG that may have increased or decreased the likelihood of change, depending upon individual circumstances. These factors related to parents' level of active engagement within the process of VIG, how parents' perceived the intervention and the relationship that developed between EP & parent. A set of guiding principles have been developed that could be applied to using VIG in practice contexts when working with families.

When conducting this type of research, it was important to position myself as a researcher, since my own personal experiences, views and constructs could implicitly affect the way in which others’ perceptions were understood and how information was interpreted and portrayed. I am a white, middle class female who has worked in educational contexts for the past eight years. I have been careful to reflect on my position as a Trainee Educational Psychologist throughout the research process, and the different backgrounds and experiences of the parents who took part in this study in relation to my own.
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Abbreviations and definitions

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