

Using video conferencing to deliver an ITT session

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Executive summary

This case study will explore the use of online learning for a pupil with autism. Due to the recent pandemic caused by COVID-19 several pupils were unable to access their school and education. Changes in routine can cause anxiety in people with autism as well as a lack of opportunities to continue their learning. Therefore, it was important to attempt to find novel ways in which we can teach our pupils and allow them to access education despite having to shield. The following case study will look at the methods introduced to help make the video call sessions successful and any barriers that were met.

Introduction

The subject of this case study is a 13-year-old boy in Key Stage 3 at school. He is non-verbal and uses Makaton sign to communicate. He is an intermediate learner who enjoys working and learning new skills. His Intensive Table Teaching (ITT) consists of tact, receptive id, intraverbal, reading and labelling numbers. He has a number of strong reinforcers, mostly of a social nature and is well paired with his tutors. He is very proficient with his mastered pile skills and enjoys doing his ITT work at school.

Due to COVID-19, the student has not been able to attend school for health reasons therefore has been out of education for most of the last year. After the summer holidays he returned to school from September to December. However, he started to shield again in January. This meant that he would not be receiving any kind of ABA input. Therefore, it was decided that ITT sessions would be attempted over video calls.

The aim of this case study is to look at whether we can use the skills that a pupil already has in their repertoire and deliver a virtual ITT session so that they can continue

to access education even when they are unable to attend face to face education/school.

Method

To help achieve a successful virtual ITT session, the principles of pairing were a priority. We used familiar tutors to him so that there was history of reinforcement and therefore he would be more likely to respond. The tutors leading the session were also able to deliver reinforcement that did not require to be delivered in person, for example social praise and clapping. Although in order to include reinforcement variety, the student's mother would also be prepared with a number of tangible reinforcers that were delivered when the tutor indicated.

Another method that was used in order to make the sessions a success were to start with short sessions and then begin to extend them once he was aware of what was expected of him in this time. The first session was only a few minutes of ITT which would then be extended to around 15 mins including a SaLT session by the end of the term.

A final method that was used to prepare him for his Zoom sessions was the use of a visual timetable. A visual was sent home for his parents to use to put a few usual activities on the timetable and include the Zoom session. This way he would know from the start of the day what was happening throughout the day and know the expectations for the Zoom call.

Results

18.01.21 - 3 mins - mastered pile
25.01.21 - 5 mins
01.02.21 - 7 mins
08.02.21 - 10 mins - with reading targets
22.02.21 - No data taken
01.03.21 - 10 mins
08.03.21 - 10 mins
09.03.21 - 8 mins (with dad)
10.03.21 - 12 mins
15.03.21 - 10 mins
17.03.21 - 14 mins - with tacts and reading targets
19.03.21 - 10 mins
22.03.21 - 15 mins
24.03.21 - 11 mins
26.03.21 - 12 mins
29.03.21 - 11 mins
31.03.21 - 10 mins

From the information given above it can be seen that as the sessions progressed the student was able to engage in the ITT session for longer. We were also able to work on targets such as sounding out and reading targets. Feedback from his mother also suggested that he was enjoying the sessions and would wait at the table for the sessions to begin.

The first few sessions were kept fairly short and the student's motivation and engagement assessed during the session. As he began responding better and was able to stay on task the session was run for longer. This can be observed by looking at the duration throughout the first few sessions.

During these first sessions different verbal operants and targets were tested to see how it worked out over the video call. It was found that receptive identification was difficult to include as the student did not have the resources in front of him which made responding difficult to assess by the tutor. Peterson, Piazza, Luczynski and Fisher (2017) also found this as a limitation due to information and resources that may be needed during the appointment may not be available at the site.

As from the 8th March, it was decided that the sessions would run 3 times a week. During that week, we ran the sessions consecutively, however the second session was shorter than the others due to poor engagement and distraction. Although there are a number of factors that could have affected this including the sessions running consecutively or that his father accompanied him during the session when it is usually his mother. After this, it was decided that the 3 sessions would run Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to see whether this had the same effect.

Labelling was then introduced after the 17th March in order to aid increasing the duration of the sessions. The student was able to remember his tacts and this addition had a positive effect on the sessions. By now, he was also improving on his reading targets and needed little prompting or error corrections.

In terms of the reading targets, they were presented at the beginning of the session and he was expected to imitate the sounding out of the word in order to make sure that he was using the correct cued articulation sounds. The words were then included in the session and taught, and error corrected as normal during an ITT session.

By the last session, he was able to read his target words independently and sessions were successfully running between 10 and 15 minutes. These sessions allowed him to master skills that he didn't have at the beginning of the sessions but also keep contact with his school whilst he was unable to attend. Video conferencing intervention with systematic acquisition of target behaviours could be successful in teaching daily living skills as well as achieving the effects of several face-to-face interventions (Ford, Wang, Koegel, Koegel and Fedders, 2020).

Discussion

From this case study we have learned that delivering ITT sessions can be effective through video conferencing. There are some barriers and limitations to this such as the pupil not having the resources in front of them, presenting certain verbal operants such as receptive identification (can you find the? Give me the?) Can be difficult as the tutor cannot see what is being touched on the screen. This can be alleviated by having a parent to confirm whether it was correct although this can interfere with the pace and flow of the session.

However, despite these limitations it would be worth looking at different ways that video conferencing can be used to teach other skills to our pupils. This can benefit them and their progress when faced with a situation where they cannot leave their homes or access face to face education. This is supported by Gibson, Pennington, Stenhoff and Hopper (2010) who found that 'videoconferencing has the potential to increase availability and frequency of educator support to enhance student success, however, it has received limited attention in literature'.

References

- Ford, K., Wang, M., Koegel, L.K., Koegel, R.L., & Fedders, A. (2020). Use of a Videoconferencing Intervention and Systematic Hierarchy to Teach Daily Living Skills to Young Adults With Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Journal of Positive Interventions*, 1-12.
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- Peterson, K. M., Piazza, C. C., Luczynski, K. C., & Fisher, W. W. (2017). Virtual-care delivery of applied-behavior-analysis services to children with autism spectrum disorder and related conditions. *Behavior Analysis: Research and Practice*, 17(4), 286-297.