Videotaped Case Presentation in Teacher Training

University faculty in special education often lack access to young children with disabilities and their families. Even when a family is able to bring their child to class, the child likely does not behave as he usually does in his natural environment. Additionally, it is difficult for an entire class to position themselves to see the child, and the students must rely on their ability to observe a myriad of behaviors during the brief time the child is present.

In order to provide students with real life examples of young children interacting with peers and parents and other familiar adults, instructional/demonstration videotapes were developed by a collaborative team of university and school personnel under a TTL grant to the George Washington University Department of Teacher Preparation and Special Education. A university professor of infant and early childhood special education, a doctoral student, a preschool teacher, and an infant special educator/physical therapist comprised the technology project team.

Infants and young children with motor disabilities were the subject of videotape case studies. A brief medical and educational history was constructed for each child and goals for the child and family were gleaned from the child’s IEP/IFSP. Taping of activities was guided by the objectives of the intervention/teaching session observed. The majority of the taping was done by a professional cameraman from the university with regular weekly taping of one child done by the doctoral student.

Edited videotapes included stand-up interviews of teachers and therapists, goals and objectives presented orally and in writing, and voice-overs during observation of the child and family during intervention/education. The objectives of the university professor using the videotapes in graduate classes were to have students document features of the child’s motor functioning and ways the motor disability was impacting learning in other developmental domains. Additionally, students identified strategies used by experienced educators, therapists, and parents facilitating the child’s participation in play and other learning activities. Videotapes were used during class sessions with the professor available to focus the class on specific behaviors and to answer questions. Out of class assignments using videotapes were also developed. This provided students the opportunity repeatedly watch children and families as they perfected their observation and assessment skills.

Videotaped case presentations are an effective way of linking theory to practice. They can be used in both pre-service training and in professional development workshop presentations. Videotaped cases can be especially useful in studying rare conditions and innovative intervention and education techniques.
Session Description

Use videotapes that match your lesson objectives. View videotapes of young children with motor disabilities during daily activities. Practice your observation skills using questions, cues and prompts in the videos.