

SSSC LEARNING LINKS

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VEO VIDEO LINKS



VEO in education



Paramedic training

INTRODUCTION

Most qualifications in the social service sector rely on practice assessment in the workplace by trained and suitably qualified assessors and practice educators. The availability of assessors to further assess the candidate via professional discussion and/or questioning to verify their understanding of key practice concepts is also important.

Where there is no assessor in the workplace these tasks are carried out by full-time, peripatetic assessors covering a number of workplaces. This arrangement is frequently used by small to medium sized employers.

The ability to engage in assessment securely, using mobile technology would resolve many of the logistical challenges in scheduling assessment and potentially reduce the costs involved.

This project involved two organisations delivering and assessing social service qualifications, HiMATS (Highland and Moray Accredited Training Services) and Harmeny Education Trust Ltd. They piloted and evaluated a technology designed to address remote assessment and helped the SSSC objectively assess the viability of using mobile technologies for assessment in the social service sector. Their evaluations form the core of this paper.

VEO (VIDEO ENHANCED OBSERVATION) ([HTTP://WWW.VEO-GROUP.COM](http://www.veo-group.com))

VEO combines video and data to support vocational learning, leading to improved child and social care. Learners and assessors can record, review and tag key moments of practice for use as learning points or evidence for assessments. The tags timestamp the video, allowing users to jump to key moments quickly and easily. At the same time, video review can occur on any web-connected device, so that practice can be quickly and easily shared with appropriate assessors, trainers or colleagues. This creates an efficient distance learning and assessment model, based on the practical development of learners. Videos can be re-tagged and commented on, building up a social/professional network focused on continuous improvement of care. All video is encrypted and sharing permissions are controlled in a closed network, so that video is only seen by the intended viewers, for the appropriate purposes.

The following benefits of using VEO have been identified across their current client base:



I just needed to upload the video and share it which my assessor showed me how to do - it was easy.



- Allows easily evidenced formative and summative assessment across a range of skills.
- Evidences and embeds practical learning via scalable tagged video records.
- Accelerates student learning, increasing their ownership of practice and flipping the classroom.
- Socialises and quantifies practical learning through intuitive sharing and statistics.
- Saves time and money by underpinning effective distance learning and assessment.

VEO is a spinout company from Newcastle University, growing quickly across sectors, with a strong desire to support vocational learning and CPD in child care and social care.



(click above to visit the HiMats website)

HIMATS

ABOUT HIMATS

Highland and Moray Accredited Training Services (HiMATS) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) delivering vocational training across Highland and Moray to the social service sector. We use a blended approach to training, making best use of ICT to augment our face-to-face support and best use our time and resources. We were delighted to participate in this project as it enabled us to explore another way of enhancing our work and engaging with our candidates and learners.

As our staff team of six assessors are located across the north of Scotland and Moray, we decided that two assessors, one internal verifier and 14 candidates (1/10) would be representative of our work. Of the candidates who participated, three worked in Gaelic-medium centres, three worked in large urban private day care centres, two worked in rural voluntary sector nurseries, three worked in small semi-rural private nurseries and two worked in local authority nursery classes, one candidate works in afterschool care. The candidates were located across Highland (Thurso, Helmsdale, Acharacle, Portree, Lochaline, Fort William, Inverness and Ross-shire area). They were all female and included young Modern Apprentices (age 16-25) and more mature practitioners (age 26-55) who were all working towards the Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF Level 7. They were all at different stages of their award, ranging from new candidates planning for their first direct observation through to candidates who were planning their final direct observation.

USING THE SYSTEM: GETTING READY

After our training/information day we worked together to create our own tags and grading criteria. Taking time to practise using our tags



Tags enable the assessor to insert positive comments about practice at the precise point that it occurs – or if necessary to insert a comment that supports personal development, and because it is at the exact moment in practice, and can be replayed as often as needed, it is less ambiguous than feedback given after a direct observation.



with a mock video was time well spent as we were able to fine tune our tags and consolidate our own understanding of the system before bringing the candidates on board.

We set up a Slack Channel (an online service for collaboration and communication - <https://slack.com>) so that we could carry on our conversation and share problems/ ideas /thoughts as we used the system, and we produced an information page for employers/ managers and a 'guide to getting started' for our candidates.

Each assessor spent time with their candidates individually in their workplace (as part of their SVQ support) explaining the system and helping them to download and use the VEO system, solving other ICT problems (eg downloading a video compressor app, providing a clamp for mobile phones etc) and planning the activity they would video.

ASSUMPTIONS

Whilst we were enthusiastic about this system we had our reservations about how candidates and employers would react to it.

We assumed there would be an 'across the board' embargo on videoing in childcare centres citing child protection and confidentiality, however very few centres chose not to be involved once we discussed the system with them. We think that this is because, over the last few years, video is being used more and more to show parents at the end of the day, to share with parents during the day and to post on social media such as Twitter etc. An example of this is 'Class dojo' (<https://www.classdojo.com/en-gb/>) which is being widely used by schools. In addition, where we thought we might have to provide video cameras, we found that nurseries were happier to use their own class tablet devices because they felt more in control.

We also assumed that candidates would not want to be recorded or to watch themselves on video. In fact, this did not appear to be a problem at all. However most still did not like listening to themselves (something we had discovered when using voice recorders in the past).

BENEFITS

- Having set our own tags meant we got up to speed more quickly than if we had used pre-set ones.
- The system produces charts based on how we (the assessor) used the tags and behaviour criteria. This is a very useful basis for discussion with candidates and allowed us to tease out some behaviours that are not so apparent when simply observing against performance criteria. For example, we were able to record on the



For us, at this time, VEO works best for small group activities where the camera can be set up to focus on the candidate and record the full activity eg story-time where the camera is mounted behind the children and focusing on the candidate facing towards the camera.



video where the candidate's practice was more or less child centred, where activities were adult directed etc.

- Tags enable the assessor to insert positive comments about practice at the precise point that it occurs – or if necessary to insert a comment that supports personal development, and because it is at the exact moment in practice, and can be replayed as often as needed, it is less ambiguous than feedback given after a direct observation.
- The system is also a very good reflective tool. Assessors and candidates can move from one tag to another very quickly and it is useful to talk through what the candidate was doing, or what they might want to re-visit and improve on. It was also useful for encouraging candidates to explain their rationale for their actions in practice.
- Using smart phones or tablets makes it really easy for candidates, and we didn't need to purchase equipment (although we did purchase mobile phone clamps/stands which we gave all candidates). We found that there were some everyday tasks that candidates could video that could cut down on visits, or enable us to use visits more effectively for other observations eg HandS procedures in the kitchen, preparing snack/food.
- Candidates were naturally self-evaluating their practice by either deciding they were pleased with their recording and sharing it with their assessor or re-doing a recording and making some changes to practice.
- Working within Gaelic medium settings, our assessor found the VEO very useful to watch again with the candidates who could summarise what they had been saying to the children and why.
- We work in some very small rural settings (two staff and under 10 children) and the VEO works very well in these settings where the camera captures the whole room and it is not 'crowded out' with another adult (assessor) in the room. Also, in such small settings we know that the presence of another adult upsets the dynamics between adult(s) and child(ren) - more so than in larger settings where the assessor is less 'obvious'.
- For us, at this time, VEO works best for small group activities where the camera can be set up to focus on the candidate and record the full activity eg story-time where the camera is mounted behind the children and focusing on the candidate facing towards the camera.

We think it would be a really good tool for peer-evaluation or for standardisation activities between assessors but have not used the system for this yet.



The reliability of internet connection did cause difficulties with uploading and also compressing for some users, though this is an issue for the workplace rather than the VEO system.



CHALLENGES

- The system takes a bit of getting used to and can be frustrating when things aren't saved that you thought had been saved. Without the time spent working together to set up our tags and other criteria, trialing them, and talking about the system together we would have had a very different experience.
- It takes a bit of trial and error to get your tags sets just how you want them but you cannot delete old ones although you can 'unpublish' them. It would be good to be able to tidy this up and delete unused tag sets.
- The restriction on the number of words you can use for each tag means that you have to be very sure about your own understanding of the standards being assessed and your 'shorthand' otherwise you will not be able to apply the tags correctly.
- The restriction on the number of tags (four on each side of the screen) again means that you have to be very sure about how you create your tags, and not being able to go back and add or delete a comment in a tag means you really just have one go at getting it right.
- Tagging whilst the video is still moving is a skill and focusing on the tags makes it difficult to remember to monitor the other criteria (engagement, behaviours) and if missed out, you have lost an important feature (charts) to share with candidates and use for discussion. This is something that will get easier with practice.
- The reliability of internet connection did cause difficulties with uploading and also compressing for some users, though this is an issue for the workplace rather than the VEO system.
- Working in local authority settings is problematic as they don't allow staff to use the internet for programmes that are not 'approved' and also their own equipment has proven to be too difficult to upload.
- Despite the fact that we found more centres open to the idea of using VEO than we thought we would, some managers did not allow us to do this or felt that they had to write to all parents to ask for consent which they were reluctant to do.
- The system, as it stands, is not good for outdoor filming or activities such as gym time as the background noise is distracting and the assessor cannot hear what the candidate is saying. Also, the candidates move in and out of view.
- We found the size of box for writing feedback is a bit small.
- The question/answer threaded discussion is useful but we would like to be able to cut and paste that somehow for SVQ evidence.



it was less obtrusive as when my assessor observed me it wasn't a problem at all but recording on the iPad meant that I could do it at a time that the kids wanted to as it is an after-school club. Also, there are sometimes only a few children are there and having a visitor sometimes changes how the children act.



- There is nowhere for the IV to give feedback to the Assessor or to indicate that the work had been sampled. (If being used for SVQ evidence which we are not specifically doing at the moment) •
- Assessors are not able to 'share' videos with the IV and have to remind the candidate to share it.

Our candidates' experience

Our candidates' opinions varied according to their work settings eg local authority staff found it more problematic than others. Internet connection and the speed at which candidates were able to compress and upload their videos affected their opinion of the systems' usefulness.

'we had to phone the technical support company to change to Chrome setting on the school computer to access the site properly. It took a while to upload from the video camera that I used, but it did work.'

'I had a lot of hassle as I could not upload through the school iPad so had to do it through a cable and via my computer. It did not compress the video as it would not allow me to download the compression tool because of the security. One of the videos took nearly an hour to upload and the other just seemed to get deleted from my computer. I don't think it was the VEO problem though'. I wouldn't have known what the 'share' icon was if my assessor hadn't shown me. A couple of the icons under the videos don't have any information when you hover the mouse over them so I don't know what they mean.'

'the security at school would not allow any downloads.'

'The process was easy enough, however I had some difficulties due to the fact that I did not know that I could shrink the video clips, so the first clip I uploaded took around two and a half hours to upload'.

'I had never used a site like this before and it took a little bit of getting used to.'

When it worked well, the candidate enjoyed the experience.

'Everything I wanted to do worked.'

'I did not have any problems.'

'there was very little to do apart from go onto the site and upload the video.'



I feel as though it was less invasive recording my practice on camera rather than having an observer in the setting because I basically forgot it was there where as I feel as though with an observer I would be constantly aware that they were watching and I would feel under pressure to make everything go smoothly.



'All I needed was on the screen when I logged on.'

'I just needed to upload the video and share it which my assessor showed me how to do it - it was easy.'

'everything worked really easily and the school iPad compressed the recording automatically and securely.'

Most candidates reported that they found the system and process useful:

'I could also record things a few times if I wanted to.'

'it was a bit weird seeing myself but it was good to go over it.'

'a member of the staff held the iPad which was fine.'

'it was good to look back on and make sure I was interacting with the children effectively.'

'I hated the sound of my own voice and think that I rushed the activity because it was being recorded but I think that I communicated well with the children and had their interest during the activity.'

'it was interesting to see myself and see areas in which I felt I needed to work on or maybe didn't go as planned.'

In general, candidates found the system less -obtrusive than a standard direct observation.

'there was no-one watching over me which can be nerve-wracking, I felt quite confident doing it.'

'not so much that it was less obtrusive as when my assessor observed me it wasn't a problem at all but recording on the iPad meant that I could do it at a time that the kids wanted to as it is an after- school club. Also, there are sometimes only a few children are there and having a visitor sometimes changes how the children act.'

'I feel as though it was less invasive recording my practice on camera rather than having an observer in the setting because I basically forgot it was there where as I feel as though with an observer I would be constantly aware that they were watching and I would feel under pressure to make everything go smoothly.'



with support I feel this could be a valuable tool. Once I got used to it, it was very easy to use.



When considering their own confidence and ability to tag themselves on the video (self-assessing), candidates had mixed views.

'I think so, but maybe I would either click too many or not enough points from the standards. I would need to practice it first I think with my assessor.'

'probably, if I had some instruction ... my assessor did show me the tags and how it worked from her end which was good.'

'I think so. Having an observation plan will help, but I would need my assessor to show me how to do it first.'

'I think I would because it is easy to see everything that was going on and what needs to be worked on or what went really well looking back on it. Sometimes it is hard to see that at the time.'

'Yes and no, as there were teething issues, such as the length of time it took to upload the videos etc. Plus, my new employer is not happy to allow filming in the building, so this obviously means it would not be possible. But with support I feel this could be a valuable tool. Once I got used to it, it was very easy to use. However, it was very time consuming, even with the possibility of shrinking the videos, it still took a substantial amount of time. A further issue is that of confidentiality, as this must be done on a work computer, which would take a full-time member of staff off the floor for prolonged periods (nurseries cannot allow the cameras to go home with staff members).'

Next steps

Our next step is to take this to the full team and begin using the system where we have identified it enhances our delivery. For example working with our candidates, particularly our MA's as a training/development tool, and for recording identified activities where it works well such as health and safety, small group activities etc – and then see where it takes us.



The system could also reduce travel time for assessors, as students could upload their presentation and the assessor can access this from a remote computer.



HARMENY EDUCATION TRUST LTD.

About Harmeny (<https://www.harmeny.org.uk>)

Harmeny Education Trust Limited is a charitable organisation, providing a range of high quality services in the areas of care, education, outdoor learning and staff development. We offer specialist education services, working with children and young people with complex social emotional and behavioural needs. Our aim is to work with children a safe, nurturing, caring and accepting environment to build on their strengths and develop the skills, resilience and behaviours.

Through building positive relationships, alongside strengths-based and solution focused approaches, we enable parents and carers to improve relationships with and contribute more fully to the care and education of their children.

Harmeny SQA Centre is a leading provider of quality training for professionals working in the care and education sectors. As a learning organisation, we are highly committed to ensuring our own staff group have the necessary skills, qualifications and support to effectively do their jobs. In addition, through the centre, we are able to offer a suite of qualifications to individuals and external organisations throughout Scotland.

Using the system

Harmeny offers a range of qualifications for internal and external staff through the SQA centre. The VEO system was trialled during the work based project presentation part of the HNC. Candidates presented



The assessors agreed that the system could be of great benefit. Candidates could record themselves presenting to the camera, reducing the stress and anxiety associated with being invited 'to present' to an assessor.



using PowerPoint slides and were filmed during their assessment. During the presentation assessors used approved marking schemes; the film of the presentation was later uploaded to the VEO system for an additional assessor to use for marking. Some feedback received at the ongoing meetings was the small number of characters allowed in the tags. The learning outcomes were then organised into titles and subdivisions.

In terms of an assessor using the system once the tags and uploading onto the system has been completed, we found that we had to stop, start and go back to listen again to the presentation to identify the correct part to tag, we were unable to tag the video while the video was paused. Sometimes the student had moved on to the next subject before we were able to tag the previous topic. There was a discussion about whether we would add the tag when the student started a particular topic or at the end, it was decided that it would be better to identify when the student started to talk about the particular subject. We found that we were unable to add comments when we were tagging the video, if this was available through the tagging, all the comments could be exported to a marking sheet to send back to the student. Once saved, it was easy and useful to see what we had tagged and at which part of the video via the timeline, however we discussed that it would be better to see the timeline as the marker was going through the video as they could check which tags had been used already. One of our assessors (MG) commented that they found the system really valuable and some of the issues we faced were due to lack of experience of the system.

Benefits

The assessors agreed that the system could be of great benefit. Candidates could record themselves presenting to the camera, reducing the stress and anxiety associated with being invited 'to present' to an assessor. The system could also reduce travel time for assessors, as students could upload their presentation and the assessor can access this from a remote computer.

Challenges

IT skills of relevant students and assessors, may require training on the system before they were able to use it. The method of assessing students is long established; there could be resistance from assessors about using the system. Another concern could be data protection and confidentiality, especially if children and young people are involved. It was reassuring to have a lengthy discussion during the pilot regarding data protection and confidentiality.

Next Steps

We would hope to roll the VEO system out across the HNC/SVQ programme and would consider using the system for internal training with Harmeny.



With some forethought and planning, ensuring that the camera is focused on the candidate rather than the service user(s), combined with the security features of the platform itself, concerns regarding confidentiality can be effectively addressed.



Conclusion

The use of video in assessment of practice has, in the past, been seen as something which is either too technical; too risky (in terms of service user confidentiality) or too difficult to audit for assessment and verification purposes.

This pilot project has allowed social service organisations to explore the potential of an emerging technology to address all of these issues and provide an accessible and effective platform which could streamline assessment of practice in the workplace.

Since the pilot came to an end, VEO have taken the feedback from HiMATS and Harmeny and are actively working on the following points they raised:

introducing the ability to add comments while tagging to improve the efficiency of this process.

- increasing the length of the names that are possible with tags.
- improving instructions on features within the system.
- organising regular (bi-weekly) online training webinars.
- creating an assessment portfolio feature to enhance communication between learners, assessors and IVs.

The capabilities of modern mobile phones negate the need for specialist camera equipment and the only 'specialist' equipment needed to use the system featured in this project was smartphone stands costing a few pounds each.

With some forethought and planning, ensuring that the camera is focused on the candidate rather than the service user(s), combined with the security features of the platform itself, concerns regarding confidentiality can be effectively addressed. More importantly the developers are keen to evolve their system to meet the needs of sectors where such issues are paramount.

Like all technological solutions, this is not a 'magic bullet' which will resolve all of the logistical issues around managing assessment where assessors are not widely available. However, used well, it could offer a means of reducing delays in award completion associated with scheduling observations of practice, and address the logistical and financial challenges associated with providing peripatetic assessment.

If you would like to discuss the issues detailed in this paper, please contact the SSSC Digital Learning Team at learntech@sssc.uk.com.