

**No:** P58  
**Title:** Making a video diary to see if the digital blue camera as a tool for self expression can have an impact on a child with Asperger's Syndrome  
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### **Background**

Child M has used the digital blue camera before in a group setting, but the whole session produced very silly behaviour. He would either disrupt the lesson by putting his face up against the camera whilst others were filming, or display inappropriate actions.

Child M has a very vivid imagination and talks about himself "having glass hands", "water in his veins" and that his father has a laboratory in their house. In ordinary conversation he is unable to externalise his feelings and so I decided to see what would happen if he was given the camera and allowed time to do some filming without others in his peer group.

### **Research in action**

Video diary part 1

I told child M, that he would be making a diary about things in the past and that a good place to start would be the school Nursery. I gave him the camera and stood back all of the time that he was recording. It wasn't until afterwards when I looked at the footage did I know what he had said. The ownership of the tool was very powerful indeed. He gives a very good description, there is clear and concise vocabulary and he has expressed himself in ways that no one has ever heard him do so before.



Commentary from the video: "These are the cars. I loved playing the cars – they are fun. The yellow ones – the ones with the yellow tops were my favourite"

He seems to have understood the task, talking about his time in the Nursery, but it is the technology that allowed (or stimulated) him to do this. I do not feel that I would get any response at all if I asked him to talk to me in the same way so that I could record it in written form.

I didn't tell him that I would be looking at the footage and I have not shown it to him as yet. For the next step, I want to repeat the exercise, but I want to make sure that he understands that there will be an audience looking at his work this time

Then I want to compare the filming to see if there is a significant difference between the two pieces of work.

### **Gathering evidence of change**

I have shown the first video to the class teacher and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and asked them to comment on the following:

1. What insights does it give us?
2. What do we find surprising/enlightening?
3. Is it worth developing – if so where and why?

a) The class teacher's replies were:

1. That the behaviours M displays are not necessarily a reflection of how he is feeling. That M is extremely wary of showing how he really feels.
2. It was surprising how calmly, almost sadly, and reflectively M talked about his time in the Nursery. He would never have been able to be this honest in a dialogue with others.
3. It is certainly worth developing with children that have difficulty expressing their feelings. If we can see past the behaviour to the child we would be able to help them more effectively.

b) The SENCO's replies were:

- 1 That M's public and private persona is very different
2. I first heard the video, from another room, with no pictures to distract from the dialogue and one part in particular sounded very earnest. Usually M's responses are more calculated or affected.
3. For children like M, where we are trying to find out what he really feels and thinks, what his motivators are etc. it could provide a stimulus and opportunity for us to support and move them on from where they are at developmentally.

### **Reflections on this initial research**

My own personal view is that I would never, in ordinary conversation with the child, have gained so much information as to how he really felt about his time in school. Although it appeared that he didn't enjoy his time in the Nursery, in fact we now appreciate that he wished he could still be there, playing with the toys. It was wonderful to hear him expressing himself this way and to know that behind the barrier that is often presented, there is a way through. I think that the video camera is an excellent piece of technology that we can use with children with behavioural and perhaps communication problems. I also think we should try to use it at an earlier age, so that we can target problems sooner rather than later.

### **The next step**

I have now shown child M the first video. He was rather embarrassed about the comments he had made especially those in the Nursery. He said "I wish I hadn't said that now". I explained to him that he was much younger then and that was what all the children did at that age. I praised his work and said that it was some of the best video work and commentary I had ever seen in the school. He responded well to this and so I thought this was a good time to ask him if he would like to do some more camera work. I told him that I would be looking at his work afterwards. Off we went to Reception and the Year One classes. I still waited outside as before and let him carry on. There was one class in Year One where he was a bit unsure of the teacher, "because she is strict"; however this was where he had most success. When I looked at the filming he had done the second time, some of it was a bit silly. I think it was because he had recently viewed the footage from the Nursery.

He wasn't keen to do any more in school, so I suggested that as I was so happy with the first video he could take the camera home to do some filming. He was happy to do this, "because it would be better there".

I think that this has been a great success and I am glad that I was able to carry out this activity and I have learnt and gained experience from using this valuable piece of technology.