

# The “Tools” of Visual Training

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# “Tools”

- The roots of the word refer to an "instrument, implement used by a craftsman or laborer, weapon," 1
- So, it is easy enough to consider the various pieces of equipment used in VT as tools.
- With a slight change of context, we might use “tools” to refer to procedures we cobble together using that equipment.
- With another change of context, “tools” might be more of a metaphor referring to concepts we use to structure and manipulate our equipment and procedures.

# “Tools”

- Mostly, all of us began to learn about VT by being presented with specific equipment and specific procedures using that equipment.
- The practically universal impression this creates is that each procedure utilizes specific equipment as tools to affect or modify a specific piece of the visual system or modify a specific visual function.
- I deliberately left the “patient” out of this description because, at this point in the development of VT, the patient is fairly incidental in the conceptual organization

# The Tools of VT

- With this in the background, I would like to suggest that VT utilizes 3 basic tools.
  1. Lenses,
  2. Our personal understanding of the visual process, and
  3. Ourselves

### 3) Using “Ourselves”

- There are many physical aspects of our “communication” with patients that we can manipulate.
  - a) Our voice,
  - b) Our gestures, and
  - c) Our visage

## 3a) Using Our Voice

- Sr. Barbara at the NOEL Center taught me that teachers' voices were one of their most powerful tools. One of her biggest gripes were teachers who she dubbed "screamers."
- She saw the negative effects in the visual performance of elementary students.
- She worked with teachers under her supervision to either eliminate the screaming, or the teacher.

## 3a) Our Voices

- Did she mean that a teacher should always be soft-spoken?
- I don't think so. While screaming may be off one end of the spectrum, there are many tones that we can adopt and adapt to different patients and different situations, depending on the short term needs and the longer term goals.

## 3b) Our Gestures

- Gestures mostly seem to spill out of us fairly naturally. They may generally seem to be unnecessary because we may expect that the words alone communicate the message.
- We recognize that a gesture might be used to emphasize a point, but we may think that it is redundant because the point is made by the words.
- However, when these things are studied, it seems that there can be information communicated in gestures which is nowhere in the verbal presentation.
- There might also be gestures that seem to contradict the words.



## 3c) Our Visage

- Obviously, we communicate with our facial expressions (and there are times that the facial expression is part of a whole body reaction).
- Certainly, we appreciate a welcoming smile and we can become concerned by a scowl.
- Again, there are a broad range of facial expressions that one might use to communicate with a receiver. What is the purpose of the communication if not to influence the behavior of the receiver?

## 2) Our Understanding of the Visual Process

- It takes little understanding of the visual process to use a piece of equipment. The concepts involved are fairly basic.\*
- Organizing and sequencing procedures requires a little broader understanding of the pieces and parts of the visual system. We develop concepts that allow us to sort procedures into functional groups and grade them according to one criterion or another.\*

## 2) Our Understanding of the Visual Process

- Experience can bring further development of our VT concepts as the patients we work with demonstrate that the primary purpose of the visual process is to direct action and that the visual process is a pervasive aspect of human behavior.\*
- Our concepts become more abstract and less rigid, changing how we view equipment and procedures. The totality of the patients' interactions begin to take center stage.

# 1) Lenses

- “It's not what a lens does to a person, but what a person does with a lens.”(2)
- The meaning of this compact and pithy statement is often assumed to be obvious, but it may need some discussion to properly situate it in our understanding of the visual process.
- The quote suggests that there are two ways to look at the situation.
  - I see and hear more than a few descriptions which sound like “what the lens does to the person.”
  - I see and hear only a few descriptions which seem to begin with the notion of “what the person does with a lens.”

# 1) Lenses

- A lens has a consistent (and therefore somewhat predictable) effect on the visible feedback from the lighted environment.
- We each generate individual, habitual patterns of movement, completing actions based on our prediction of the consequences of those actions, developing feedback of the effectiveness of that action.
- Within the visual process we see the feedback. The effect of a lens lies within the habitual relationship between the predicted consequences of action and the visible feedback.

- We each predict the consequences of our actions and generate patterns of movements. These complex movement patterns can seem so automatic that we rarely question their individual and habitual nature. and our own habitual movements based on the feedback from the environment movements based on our

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The End