

The Effectiveness of the Pragmatic Skills Intervention for Young Adults with Mild Intellectual Disability (with or without co-morbid Autism Spectrum Disorder).

Wendy Yeo Su Fen

Abstract

Background: Trainers and teachers provided feedback that students with Mild Intellectual Disability (with and without co-morbid Autism Spectrum Disorders) faced challenges demonstrating the pragmatic skills necessary for them to be work ready. These students were studying in a special needs vocational school for students, aged between 17 to 21 years old. A pragmatic skills programme was developed and dovetailed into their work skills training lessons.

Purpose: This study explored the effectiveness of the pragmatic skills intervention.

Methods: In a single group observational study using pre/post-test design with a three-month follow-up, six students received pragmatic skills intervention during their WST lessons once weekly for four months from a Speech and Language Therapist (SLT). Beyond SLT's presence, teacher and trainers would also request the students for the targeted pragmatic behaviours during their WST lessons.

Results: All students utilised more pragmatic skills at post-test and 3-month follow-up, with notable improvements observed for the ability to initiate a simple speech act. When students showed regression in their scores at 3-month follow-up compared to their post-test scores, they were still an improvement from their pre-test scores. The prevalence of students regressing in their newly learnt behaviours of nonverbal communication and speech intelligibility were much lower compared to speech acts at 3-month follow-up. Achieving significant improvement in a new skill might diminish skill regression.

Conclusions: All students utilised more pragmatic skills behaviours after the programme. Dovetailing the programme in the natural learning environment with constant attention on requiring targeted pragmatic behaviours were possible attributing factors.

Keywords: Mild Intellectual disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder, pragmatic skills, workforce ready.

Citation: Yeo, W.S.F. (2018). The Effectiveness of the Pragmatic Skills Intervention for Young Adults with Mild Intellectual Disability (with or without co-morbid Autism Spectrum Disorder). *ACE 2018 Official Conference Proceedings ISSN: 2186-5892*. (pp. 167-177). Tokyo, Japan: IAFOR. Retrieved from http://25qt511nswfi49iayd31ch80-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/papers/ace2018/ACE2018_42244.pdf