

# **The Effectiveness of the Pragmatic Skills Intervention for Young Adults with MID (with or without co-morbid ASD) and comparison of data from two cohorts.**

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## **Abstract**

Educators provided feedback that students aged between 17 to 21 years old with Mild Intellectual Disability (with and without co-morbid Autism Spectrum Disorders) have challenges demonstrating the pragmatic skills necessary for them to be work ready. A pragmatic skills programme was developed and incorporated into their Work Skills Training (WST) lessons.

This study explored the effectiveness of the pragmatic skills intervention over two cohorts.

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).

Enhanced milieu teaching (EMT) approach, Direct instruction (DI) teaching approach and Prompting were used in pragmatic skills programme. Variables assessed included nonverbal communication, speech intelligibility, and speech acts.

Regardless of the student's baseline before the programme and how divided their baselines were as a class, students in both cohorts showed improvement in their use of pragmatic skills after the programme.

Our data from 2017 & 2018 confirmed that the students were able to acquire the use of pragmatic skills independently, at times requiring only gestural reminders after the programme.

The three key factors that led to the positive outcomes of the pragmatic skills programme for the two cohorts were: Using direct, systematic and sequential instruction with students; Conducting the programme in the natural setting where students need to exhibit the target pragmatic behaviours; Providing as many natural practice opportunities as possible consistently and constantly.

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