

Critical Appraisal Form

Date: 16-Mar-22

Members in Discussion: 2

Article:

Bambara, L. M., Cole, C. L., Telesford, A., Bauer, K., Bilgili-Karabacak, I., Weir, A., & Thomas, A. (2021). Using Peer Supports to Encourage Adolescents With Autism Spectrum Disorder to Show Interest in Their Conversation Partners. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research : JSLHR*, 64(12), 4845–4860

Summary: In a high school setting, 3 students with ASD were trained to use partner focused (PF) communication strategies in conversation with trained neurotypical peers, then untrained peers. **Method/Results:** Multiple baseline design across participants. Participants were adolescents (ages 16, 16, 20) with ASD and without an intellectual disability. PF communication skills trained were: Conversation initiation with a PF question, PF follow-up questions, and making positive PF comments. After each conversation, a self-reflection cue sheet was administered. 10 neurotypical peers were trained to support conversation and the 3 students' use of target skills. Observations of the student conversations took place in the cafeteria (Northeastern United States). Observers transcribed and coded the conversations into C-Unites and used Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts Software. A generalization probe was conducted on untrained peers. Results suggest that peer training alone had little impact on communication skills; Peer training in combination with direct instruction and use of skills were needed for intervention effectiveness. The PMI was effective at increasing the partner-focused skills of all of the students; Generalisation of skills occurred for all students with varied results.

Strengths and Limitations of research article:

- Thoroughly described method and supplementary material for practical SLP use
- Small sample size of 3; training done by special education doctoral students (reduced replicability)

	Compelling	Suggestive	Equivocal/Uncertain
Validity		x	
Clinical importance		x	

Clinical Implications/Discussion:

- Members agreed that the clear descriptions of procedures and included supplemental documents made for excellent potential for replicating this intervention in SLP practice
- Members are both private practice SLP's and discussed barriers to opportunities for group interventions with neurotypical peers. Play dates or combining students in the clinic or home setting were discussed.
- Members would like to see longer term follow up, a larger participant group, and peer blinding with future related research.
- Members recognised that personalization of the intervention for each student, as was part of this study, was often a key part in effective social skills intervention
- Members felt positive about the described outcomes of this study from the students' perspectives, particularly examples where neurotypical peers reported increased perception of positive affect in trained ASD students