Peer Mediated Intervention and Instruction: Mutually Beneficial Throughout the Lifespan

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“In a review of more than 4,500 studies on autism interventions published between 1980 and 2011, Vanderbilt University researchers found just 32 focused on therapies for people ages 13 to 30… according to… the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality” (Diament, 2012).

**Resources**


**What is MOSSAIC?**

MOSSAIC originated in 2012 and is a free program for UM and Missoula College students with autism, related disorders or organizational/social challenges. MOSSAIC supports students through peer mediated intervention and instruction (PMII). Participants meet once or twice a week with mentors, undergraduate students in CSD, to address organization, time management, self advocacy, social support, and other relevant issues.

**Peer Mediated Intervention and Instruction: Mutually Beneficial Across the Lifespan**

**By:** Lacey Kvam, Communicative Sciences and Disorders

**Research Design:** Case studies were conducted through structured interview. Subjects included two MOSSAIC mentors, one current and one from 2012-2013, and their mentee, a MOSSAIC participant. The questions were directly related to the MOSSAIC experience.

**Hypotheses:**

1. Participating in MOSSAIC as a mentor is a positive experience for undergraduates in the UM Communicative Sciences and Disorders program.
2. Peer-Mediated Intervention and Instruction (PMII) is a positive experience for mentees seeking to improve social skills and organizational skills, and results in increased inclusion of students with autism spectrum disorder on the UM or Missoula College campus.

**MOSSAIC MENTOR INTERVIEW RESULTS of SELECTED QUESTIONS**

1) What are some of the personal skills you have developed from working with your client?

**Subject 1:**

“I feel like the biggest thing that I learned is to be able to sit back and wait and be a support instead of just trying to fix everything. I also learned to be flexible and roll with the things that he needed to work on and change dates of our meeting times.”

**Subject 2:**

“Flexibility is one that I’ve been able to use because we are structured in how we meet…. I also learned organization because the first semester I worked with him on staying organized, but the second semester I did everything he does with my folders and binders.”

2) What are some of the clinical skills you have developed from working with your client?

**Subject 1:**

“I’ve learned a lot about autism and Asperger’s as well as executive functioning; I’m still very interested in it. I’ve mainly learned how that affects his life and what that means…… Having the opportunity to be in a clinic-like setting also helped me to feel more comfortable as a first year graduate student.”

**Subject 2:**

“Definitely the confidentiality is new. Learning the regulations of the clinic and our program, confidentiality and reporting has all been new. I think as a clinician it’s been fun to work and see someone experience those dry spells and then see those moments where things are clicking and he’s doing things on his own.”

3) Has being a mentor increased your knowledge of working with people with disabilities?

**Subject 1:**

“Absolutely, being a mentor increased my knowledge of autism, Asperger’s, and executive functioning. As well as the way life skills are affected. The class allowed me to see different mentees and reinforced the idea that once you’ve met one person with autism, you’ve only met one person with autism.”

**Subject 2:**

“Yeah, definitely, it makes you more aware and when you’re going around campus it makes you not so quick to judge. You think about what things other people may be going through.”

4) In what other ways has being a mentor impacted you if any?

**Subject 1:**

“Being a mentor helped me gain connections and gave rise to new opportunities like going into the schools and bringing our information to other people.”

**Subject 2:**

“Me and my client have become pretty close friends. It’s been fun to help him and see him progress, but also sit down without school work and talk about anything he may be struggling with in life.”

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**Resources:**