2021 SOARS Vignettes
Table of Contents

SOARS PROJECT VIGNETTE

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Student Name(s):
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Project title:
Use of Humor Among a Group Young Adults with ASD

The purpose of this project was to identify what kinds of joking/teasing happened during the conversations, and to investigate the link between use of humor and bonding/relationship development.

To accomplish this, we investigated how other research has analyzed the use of humor during different types of interactions. We used this information to create a coding system to identify different types of humor (i.e., teasing, joking, self-denigrating) and responses to humor (i.e., continue, end, neutral, ignore, respond with a joke, respond with a tease). We applied this coding system to 6 x 30-minute conversations from the beginning and end of when this social skills group started meeting.

With the following interesting results… we are still working on coding another 2 sessions, but our analysis will provide information about who engaged in what types of humor and how they responded to others' humor. We will be able to talk about how the types of joking changed from the beginning to the end of the group (the group met for 3 months). It seems like in the beginning, joking was used more for relationship development, whereas at the end it was used more as a tool to express opinions or have fun/play during the interaction (although this has yet to be confirmed through formal analysis).

I anticipate this activity will enhance student retention and increase student success because I think it helps build important skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and organization. In addition, a better understanding of research and the research process is important as students move forward to engage in evidence-based practice.

As a faculty mentor, I incorporated the following characteristics of guided mentorship:
- **Establish Expectations**—I supported Rachel in establishing a timeline for her project, and helped her adjust as needed throughout the summer.
- **Provide Regular Meetings**—Rachel and I met once a week over the summer and have continued to meet each week during the fall semester.
- **Offer a Collegial Type Environment**—While working on developing the coding system, Rachel directed the content of the code definitions based on her research. My role was to help her determine how to further differentiate the codes when we were having agreement problems, and help her set up the coding spreadsheets to ensure they would meet her future data analysis needs. Now that we have a working coding system, Rachel has taken charge of managing her own project. As her reliability agent, she provides me with data that are ready to be coded and tells me how far she would like me to go before our next meeting.

My mentoring supported the following student learning outcomes (SLO) (per Rachel these are the two areas she feels showed the most growth):
- **Critical thinking, Reflective thinking, and Effective Reasoning**—Rachel effectively synthesized information from the literature about conversational interaction and used it to develop codes that she then applied to her data. She developed a working coding system that we have both been able to apply with fidelity.
- **Understanding and appreciation of cultural and human differences and Social responsibility**—Rachel reported that she feels she has increased her understanding of the various ways language can be used and that people can communicate. Our analysis required exploration of a variety of subtle differences in language use to understand what was and was not intended as joking or teasing.

In the future, I (we) hope to build on this project by applying the coding system to other types of conversations (e.g., dyad vs. group) to compare the results.