

MENTORING FOR RECENT GRADUATES IN SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY: PARTIAL FINDINGS FROM AN ACTION-BASED PARTNERED RESEARCH

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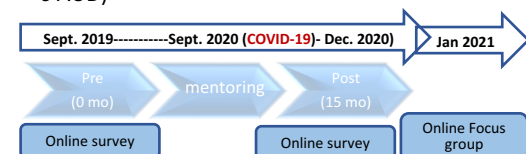
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BACKGROUND

- Mentoring is recognized for supporting professional development and assisting in the transition to practice (Burgess et al., 2018; Ragins & Kram, 2007).
- While much of the research focuses on formal mentoring programs within organizations, little has focused on the mentoring offered by regulatory bodies.
- In October 2019, the Ordre des Orthophonistes et Audiologistes du Québec launched a mentorship pilot project to support recently graduated speech-language pathologists and audiologists in dealing with the complexity and uncertainty associated with their professional transition into practice.
- This partnered evaluative research aimed to measure and further describe the impacts of the mentoring program on: a) professionalization (i.e. appropriation of professional culture (norms/rules), development of professional skills and construction of professional identity) and b) the sense of self-efficacy of recently graduated speech-language pathologists (SLP) and audiologists (AUD).

METHODS

- Organizational participatory research (Bush et al., 2018)
- Mixed methods (explanatory type) (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017)
- Participants: 20 mentors & 20 mentees (34 SLP; 6 AUD)



- Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, paired t-tests and their non-parametric equivalents.
- Analysis of qualitative data was conducted using thematic analysis.

RESULTS

Quantitative results: pre-post survey

Overall, there is a statistically significant difference in the mentees' pre and post scores on all **three major dimensions of professionalization (Table 1)**, as well as in their sense of **overall self-efficacy at work (Table 2)**.

Table 1. T-test results comparing pre and post overall mean scores for dimensions of professionalization among mentees

Dimensions of professionalization (Bélisle, 2017)	Mentees (n=18)				t	p (0,05)
	Pre Mean	Pre SD	Post Mean	Post SD		
Professional culture	3.03	0.50	3.44	0.40	-4.95 (0.91)	< 0.001*
Professional identity	2.91	0.40	3.46	0.32	-8.60 (1.52)	< 0.001*
Professional competencies	2.83	0.53	3.47	0.38	-6.79 (1.39)	< 0.001*

* Statistically significant differences. Effect sizes (Cohen's d) are large.

Table 2. T-test results comparing pre and post mean scores for the components of the work self-efficacy scale among mentees

Work Self-Efficacy (Raelin, 2010)	Mentees (n = 18)				t	p (0,05)
	Pre Mean	Pre SD	Post Mean	Post SD		
1. Learning	3.97	0.46	4.29	0.54	-2.18 (0.64)	0.044*
2. Problem Solving	3.34	0.66	3.77	0.62	-3.63 (0.67)	0.002*
3. Pressure	3.13	0.86	3.63	0.58	-3.25 (0.68)	0.005*
4. Role Expectation	3.65	0.66	4.24	0.47	-5.18 (1.03)	< 0.001*
5. Team Work	3.49	0.42	3.88	0.42	-3.69 (0.93)	0.002*
6. Sensitivity	3.96	0.46	4.36	0.37	-4.68 (0.96)	< 0.001*
7. Work Politics	3.22	0.72	3.63	0.56	-3.03 (0.64)	0.007*
8. Overall Work Self-Efficacy	3.52	0.49	3.96	0.35	-4.74 (1.03)	< 0.001*

* Statistically significant differences. Effect sizes (Cohen's d) are moderate to large.

Qualitative results: focus group

In general, during the **focus groups**, mentoring was recognized as a non-judgmental and non-evaluative space - different from the performance culture at work or the supervision context - that leaves room for the whole person and allows mentees to express themselves without a filter about their doubts or questions regarding their professional development.

The added value of mentoring in relation to **professional culture** was that mentees benefited from the sharing of similar experiences by the mentor in order to find solutions to obstacles faced in practice. Some mentees also reported that they benefited from the concrete help they received to be more efficient in their record keeping, while others were reassured and validated that their ethical and deontological questions were legitimate.

Regarding **professional identity**, the mentees noted that the discussions with their mentor, unlike the quick exchanges with their colleagues at work, allowed them to highlight and value their personal and professional strengths and to identify objectives to work on. They mentioned that this quality time facilitated a deeper reflection on their professional values and philosophy of practice.

When compared to other professional experiences contributing to their **professional competency development**, mentees mentioned that mentoring allowed them to access a more global space for reflection guided by the mentor and this resulted in better clinical judgment in their practice. This reflection also helped to reduce their high expectations about their professional roles and competencies.

CONCLUSION

- In sum, this mentoring pilot project generated short-term beneficial effects on recently graduated SLP and AUD professionalization and sense of self-efficacy.
- The findings of this study provide evidence that could be of value to speech-language pathology and audiology accreditation bodies, professional associations and academic institutions for formulating standards and recommendations with respect to mentoring program implantation and evaluation.
- Further research is warranted to investigate the links (e.g. potential moderators) regarding the impact of mentoring on recently graduated SLP and AUD professionalization and sense of self-efficacy.

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