



***Ethical Discussions:
Factors that Influence Decision
Making***

Carol C. Dudding, James Madison University
Filip Loncke, University of Virginia

ASHA Code of Ethics

...to assure the “preservation of the highest standards of integrity and ethical principles vital to the responsible discharge of obligations by speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and speech, language, and hearing scientists.” (ASHA, 2005).

Standards for Accreditation of Graduate Education Programs in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology

Graduate programs must offer “academic and clinical education that provides students with learning experiences that orient them to providing services in an effective, ethical, legal, and safe manner.”

ASHA 2005

Always do what is right. That will satisfy most people and astonish the rest.

Mark Twain

What works: A Review of the Literature

- Ethics training/coursework
 - Kenny, Lincoln and Reed
 - Pannbacker, Lass and Middleton
 - Young
- Case studies
 - Gonzales and Coleman
 - Urofsky and Sowa

What works: A Review of the Literature

- Self-efficacy
 - Haidt
- Emotional Impact of the Dilemmas
 - Haidt

Our research aim...

- Examine the parameters that impact changes in ethical decision making using a case study method in an online discussion forum



Methodology

- 29 graduate students in CSD
- Randomly assigned to group
- Discuss ethical dilemmas within online asynchronous discussion forum
- Developed high and low impact dilemmas
- Instructed to post min. of three times per week
- After one week, change dilemma

The dilemmas

- #1 A parent of one of your clients wants you to try a new approach to treat their child with autism. The treatment approach is not yet proven to be fully effective and is somewhat controversial. But the parents of your client are convinced it will work and so are some of your colleagues. The parents have offered to pay for you to be trained in the technique. You are not sure. Evidence from the literature is inconclusive. Your professional organization recommends caution but does not recommend the practice. What should you do?

Low Impact

The dilemmas

- #2 You have been working with Dominic for a while. He has cerebral palsy and no functional speech. The AAC assessment that you have requested have proposed the use of a speech-generating device for Dominic. His trial with the communication device has opened up a new world for him! For the first time he is able to communicate with others using speech output. It will allow Dominic to say and ask everything he wants and greatly add to his independence. While in the early stages of learning to use the device, Dominic accidentally hits the speech buttons and generates speech that is often irrelevant, too loud, and, frankly, disruptive for the class. One of the teachers routinely has another child turn off Dominic's communication device during instructional times. Several of the teachers question whether Dominic really needs it. They believe he can learn as much just by listening and have the speech output turned off, and we should not use the device at all. That makes administrators question whether the expense of the device is worthwhile. As the speech language pathologist, what should you do?

High Impact

The dilemmas

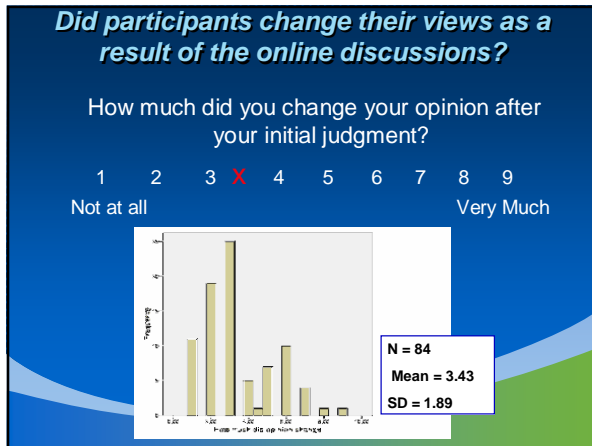
- #3 You and your clients are asked to participate in an experiment. The experiment is harmless (IRB approval etc.) but it takes away considerable time from the treatment that you have planned for your clients. Still, you feel that your participation will lead to a better understanding of the nature of the disorder and that, in the long run, more clients will benefit from this. What should you do?

Low Impact

Results

- 1. Did participants change their views as a result of the online discussions?
- 2. What parameters impacted the change in views?
 - emotional impact of the dilemma
 - self-efficacy
 - impact of facilitator
 - postings of other participants





What parameters impacted the change in views?

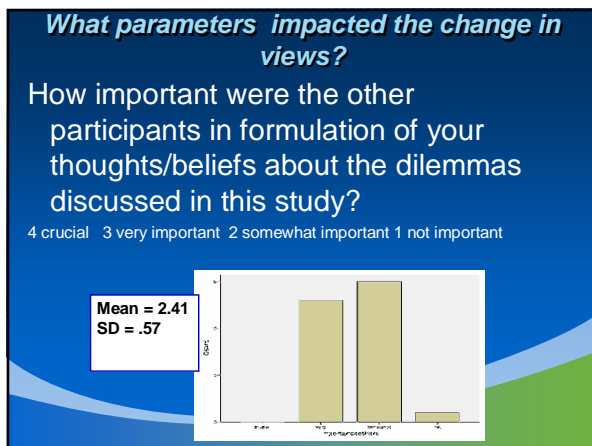
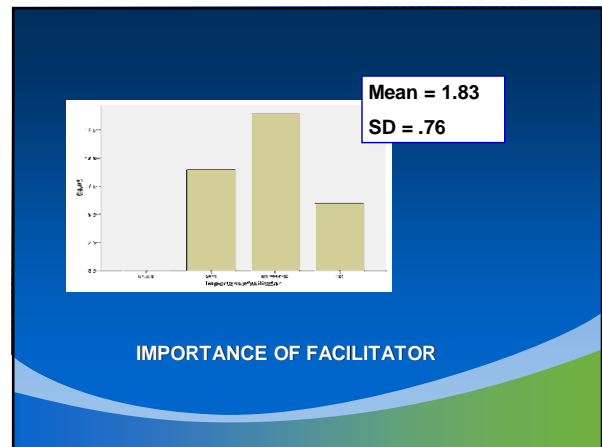
Emotional Impact of Dilemma
r = -.007 p = .938
no significant correlation

Self-efficacy
r = -.299 p = .001
*significant negative correlation

Kendall's Tau; two tailed

What parameters impacted the change in views?

- How important was the facilitator in formulation of your thoughts/beliefs about the dilemmas discussed in this study?
4 crucial 3 very important 2 somewhat important 1 not important
mean = 1.83 sd = .76
- Correlation
r = .175 p = .039
* significant positive correlation
Kendall's Tau; two tailed



In summary...

- Limited degree of change as a result of participation in the online discussion.
- No significant correlation between emotional impact of the dilemma and the degree of change in thinking.
- Little reported impact of the postings of other participants
- Small significant positive correlation between the impact of the facilitator and the degree of change in thinking
- Medium significant negative correlation between self-efficacy and the degree of change in thinking.

Implications

- When employing case discussions,
 - Employ cases that lacked a clear cut solution
 - Consider a priori beliefs
 - Encourage open-mindedness
- When implementing ethics training/education case study discussions may not be enough. Consider inclusion of:
 - Education of code of ethics
 - Decision making models
 - Case study analysis

Future Research

- Survey graduate programs' current methods of ethics training
- Compare discussions that are of a professional versus non-professional (political, social, moral) nature
- Continue to examine online versus face to face formats for ethics training/education
- Examine various formats (role playing, fictional case study, multimedia components) of ethics training

Contact us...

Carol C. Dudding,
James Madison University
duddincc@jmu.edu

Filip Loncke,
University of Virginia
ftl4n@virginia.edu

References

- ASHA, Standards and Implementation for the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology, 2005.
- Gonzalez, L.S., & Coleman, R.O. (1994). Students prefer case study approach. *ASHA*, 36(8), 47-48.
- Haidt, J. (2001) The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment. *Psychological Review*, 108 (4), p. 814-834.
- Kenny, B., Lincoln, M. & Reed, V.. (2003) proceedings.
- Pannbacker, M., Lass, N.J., & Middleton, C.F. (1993). Ethics Education in Speech Language Pathology and Audiology Training Programs. *ASHA*, 35(4), 53-55.
- Phillips, K. (2005). Ethical decision making in speech language pathology: faculty and student perceptions. Retrieved from http://www.speechpathology.com/articles/pf_article_detail.asp?article_id=284. Retrieved 2/25/07.
- Urofsky, R., & Sowa, C. (2004, October). Ethics Education in CACREP Accredited Counselor Education Programs. *Counseling and Values*, 49, 37-47.
- Young, J. (1994). *Ethics Education in programs accredited for the preparation of speech language pathologists and audiologists*. (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Georgia, 1994). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 55-09A, 2707.