



Effects of Small-Group Behavioral Skills Training with Peer-to-Peer Practice to Teach Interview Skills to Adults with Developmental Disabilities

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INTRODUCTION

Individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) are often unemployed or underemployed.Few studies have evaluated group training or individually tailored employment goals for prevocational skills for individuals with DD.

Purpose:

Systematically replicate and extend Roberts et al. (2021) to evaluate interview skills aligned with employment interests using group Behavioral Skills Training (BST) with peer practice and feedback.

Independent Variable:

Group, Peer-to-Peer, and Individual BST (see Figure 1)

Target Skills:

- *Answering questions* (% appropriate answers)
- *Asking questions* (# appropriate questions)
- *Body language* (% appropriate question intervals)

Interobserver Agreement (IOA): Trial-by-trial IOA for 30% - 35% of all participant sessions. Mean IOA was 94.74% (range, 78.26% - 100%).

Procedural Fidelity: All-or-nothing by component checklist for 30% of individual and group instruction sessions. Mean fidelity for interview probes was 91% (range, 75% - 100%) and individual practice sessions was 98% (range, 91% - 100%)

Social validity evaluation:

- Intervention goals: Semi-structured interview
- Intervention methods: Post-intervention survey with participants
- Intervention outcomes: Post-intervention survey with participants and unfamiliar professionals

Design:

Multiple-probe design across target three skills

Pre-Experimental Procedures

1. Goal selection/ identification of employment goal

- Individual interview: Review individual strengths, previous work, and internship experience

2. Interview question development

- LinkedIn and industry websites relating to career interest identified

METHOD

Participants:

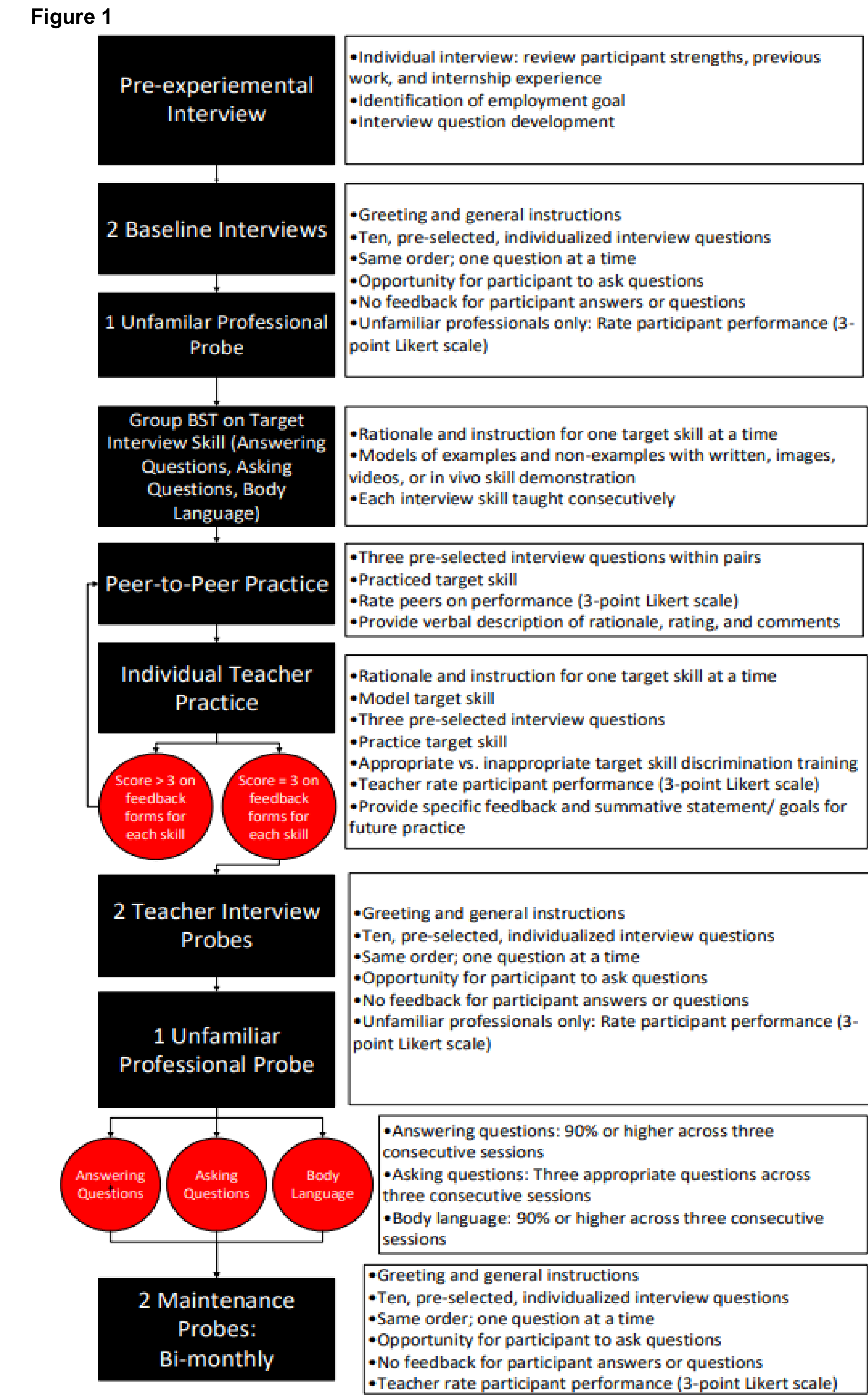
Four adults with DD: Edward (26; Information Technician), Hanna (21; Librarian), Natalie (22; Babysitter), Raul (21; Undecided)

Setting:

- Transition support program at a university-based autism center
- Group classroom, conference room, individual office

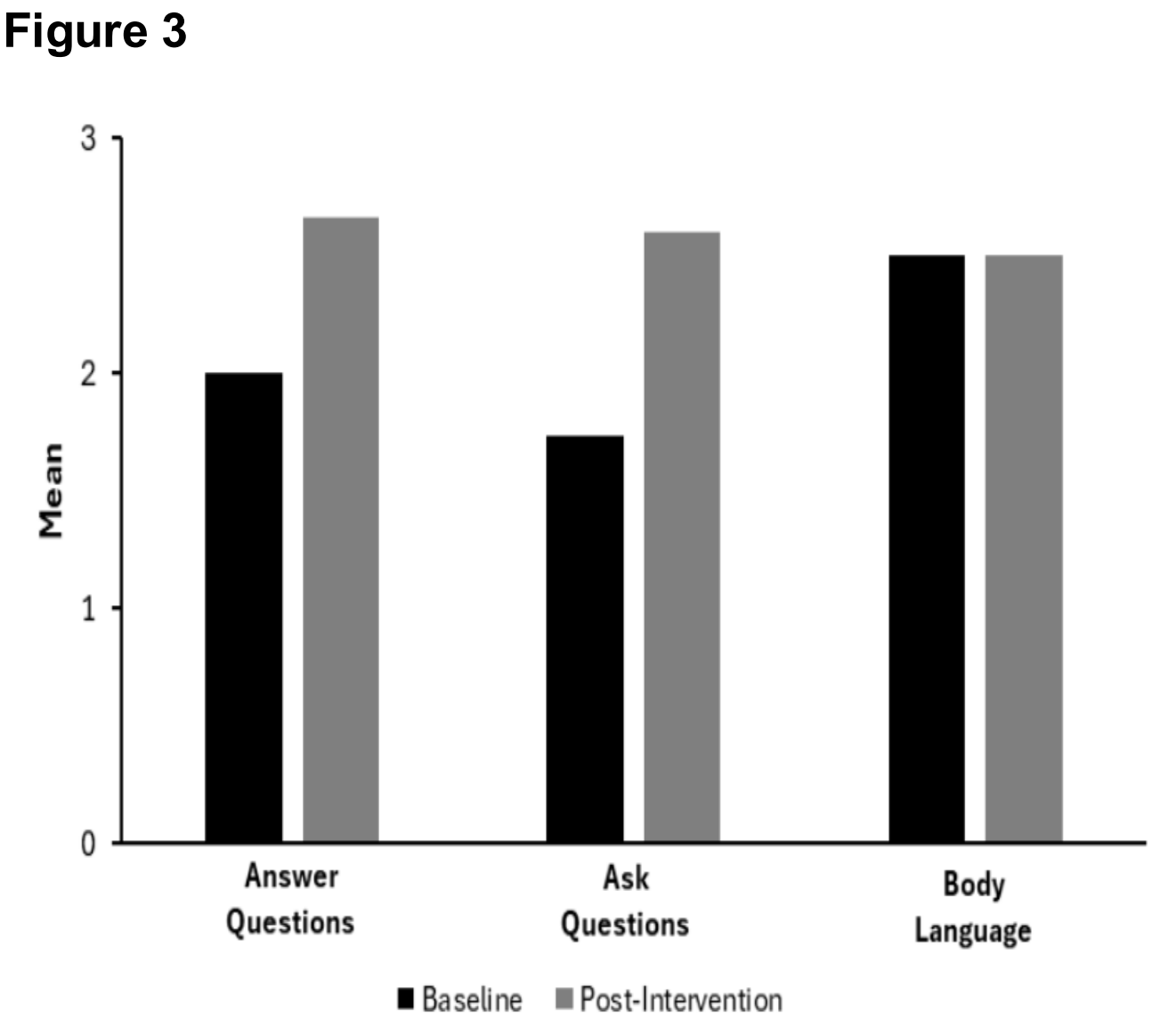
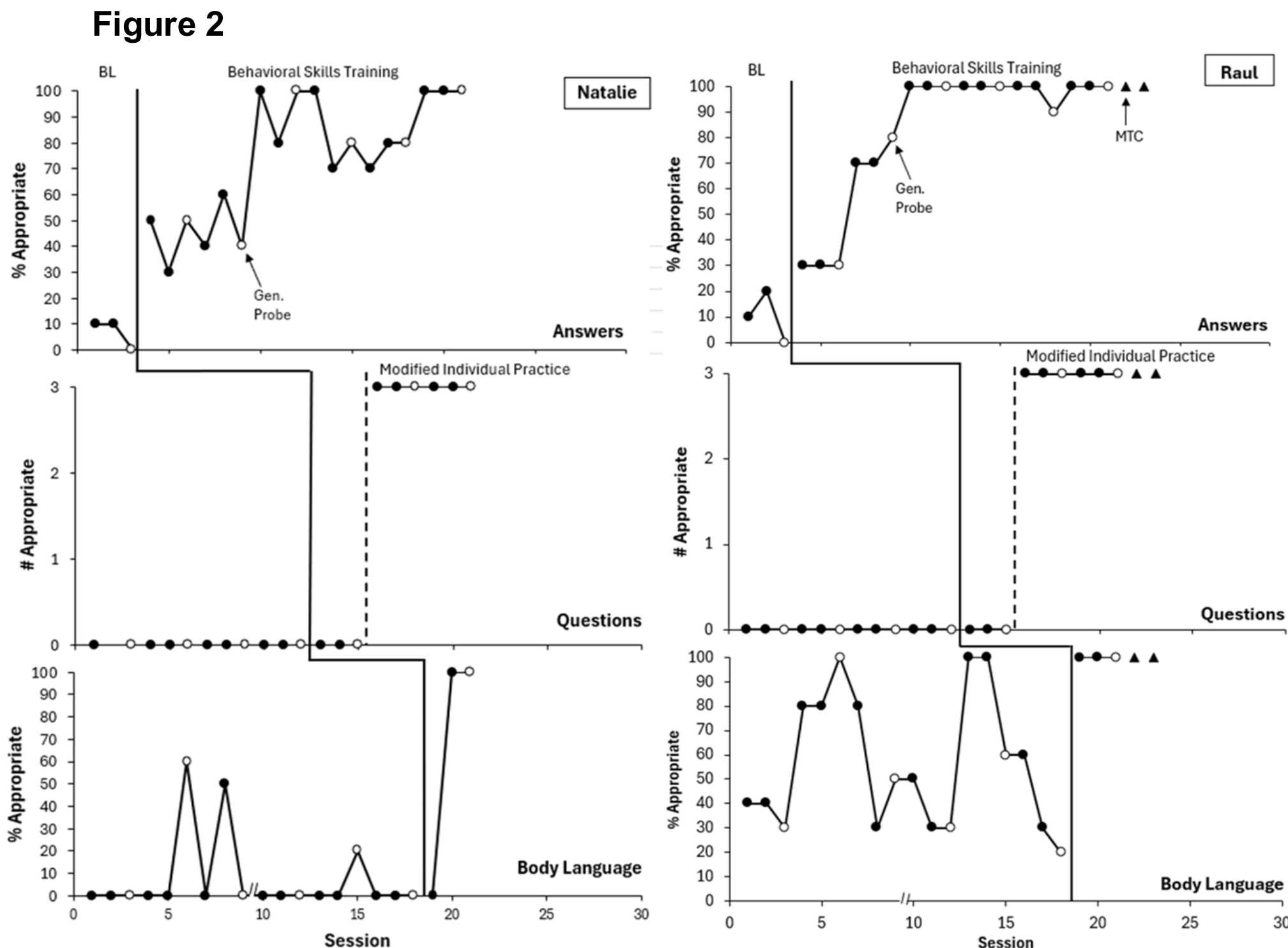
Materials:

Projector with PowerPoint, whiteboard with dry-erase markers, individual worksheets and interview questions, evaluation forms, camcorder on a tripod, digital timer, paper-pencil data sheets

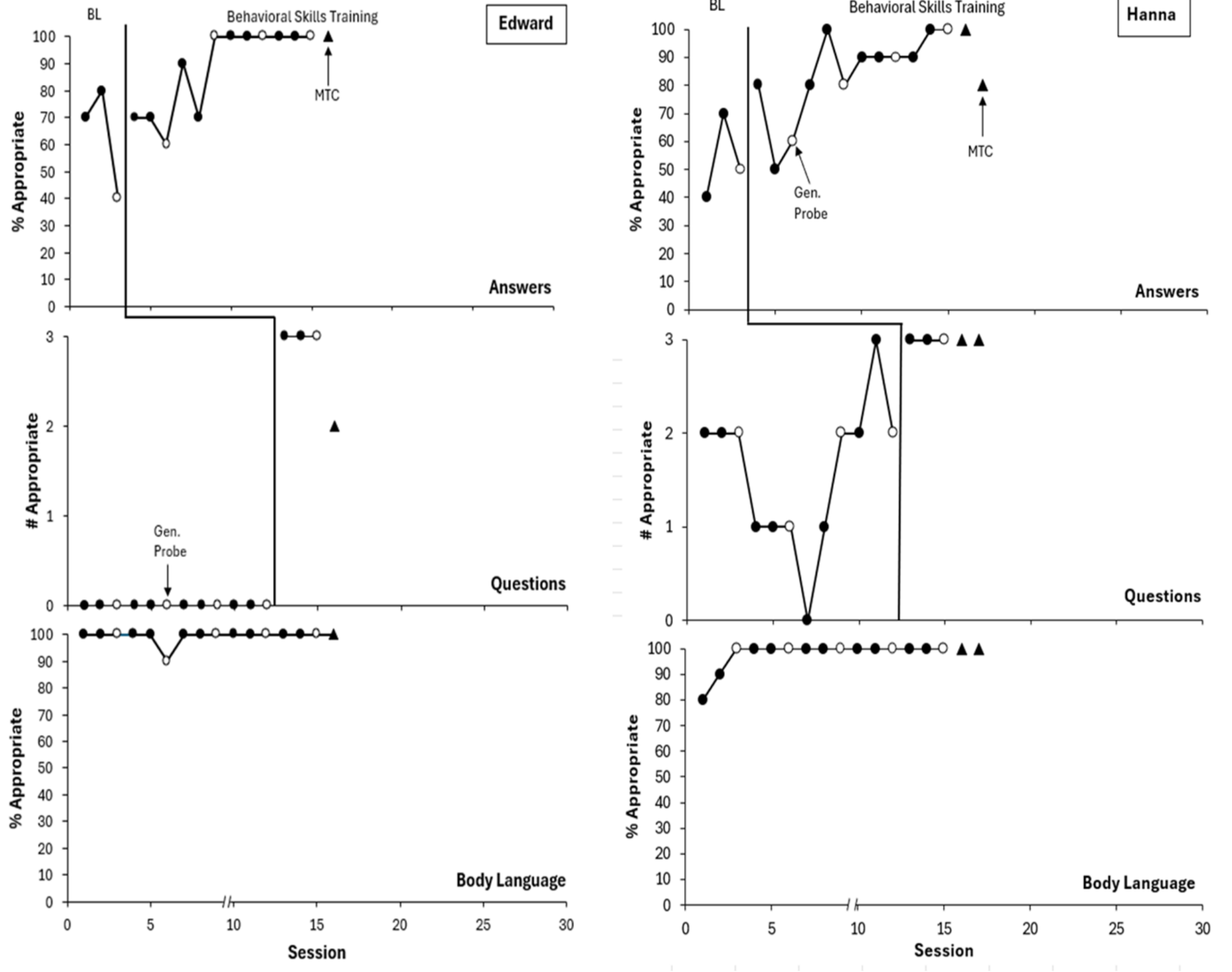


Note. Procedure for teaching interview skills across individual instruction, small group instruction, and generalization probes across three interview skills. The asterisk indicates when an individual modification was made in the protocol.

DATA ANALYSIS/RESULTS



Note. Group mean performance rating across target skills by unfamiliar professionals during baseline and post-intervention generalization probes. 1= Unacceptable, 2 = Needs Improvement, 3 = Outstanding.



Question	Mean score
I liked learning how to do job interviews.	4.75
The lessons helped me understand what to say and do in a job interview.	4.75
I feel more confident about doing a real job interview now.	4.5
The way the lessons were taught was helpful.	4.5
I liked practicing interview questions with a peer (another intern).	4.25
Practicing with another person helped me learn better.	4.5
The feedback I got from my peer was helpful.	4.5
I felt comfortable practicing with a peer.	4.75
I believe my interview skills improved because of these lessons.	4.75
I feel more ready to do a real job interview now than I did before.	4.75
I think I could help someone else now who is learning interview skills.	4.75

Note. Participants rated post-social validity ratings on a 5-point Likert scale. 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree

Figure 2. Percentage of questions answered appropriately (top panel), total count of appropriate questions (middle panel), and percentage of questions answered with appropriate body language (bottom panel) for Edward, Hanna, Natalie, and Raul during sessions in baseline, intervention, and maintenance. Interview probe sessions are shown with closed circles, generalization probes (Gen. Probe) with open circles, and maintenance (MTC) sessions with closed triangles. The asterisk indicates when an individual modification was made.

DISCUSSION:

- All participants acquired target skills and maintained them at bi-monthly maintenance probes. Two participants required procedural modifications to meet mastery criterion.
- The social validity questionnaire indicate participants rated the methods and outcomes of the procedure as acceptable, and unfamiliar professionals indicated improvements in participants' ability to answer and ask questions.
- Two participants are actively employed following this training, and one participant has volunteered to help future cohorts.

Limitations:

- We did not include interviews with novel professionals. We did not collect fidelity data on peer practice sessions. Some participant responding was variable during baseline. Using a 3-point Likert scale may have masked improvements in participant performance.

Future research:

- Researchers should replicate these procedures to identify effective and socially valid methods to teach pre-vocational skills, apply them to different career goals and include long-term employment outcomes for participants.

