The Three Ws of Pragmatics: What, Where, and When

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Agenda:

• Meet your Presenters
• Purpose
• What are pragmatic skills?
• Where can pragmatic skills best be learned?
• When can pragmatic skills be taught?
• Questions
• Review
Your Presenters:

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  • Speech Language Pathologist @ Marengo Elementary School, SPUSD

• Angelique Burzynski
  • MA in Mild-Moderate Disabilities/Educational Therapy
  • Specializing in Reading and Language Development
  • Special Education Teacher for 18 years
Purpose:

• Help professionals, parents, para-professionals, administrators, OK, everyone – understand the weird world of “pragmatics”

• *Language vs. skills?*

• Offer alternative strategies and settings for learning pragmatic skills

• Offer *alternative ideas as to where and when pragmatic skills instruction can take place*
What Are Pragmatic Skills?

The **HIDDEN RULES** of language

Pragmatic skills show that we can effectively *use and adjust* communication messages for a *variety of purposes* with *different partners* in *diverse dynamic daily interactions*

• **WHAT** we say
• **HOW** we say it
• Our body language **WHILE** we say it
• Is it **APPROPRIATE** for that situation and person?
How is **Pragmatics** Different than Social Skills?

• **Pragmatics** are a *subgroup* of *social skills*

• Pragmatics are centered around *communication abilities*

• Social skills are centered around *behaviors* that have *social meaning* but are *NOT language based*, such as:
  • Appropriate *attire* for a given situation?
  • Knowing when to *use* casual vs. formal language
  • How do you *act* in a given situation?
Still Confused?

• Everyone is not born with this ability
• Requires skills that are often impaired in individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder or other developmental disabilities (also ELL, DHH)
• Skills are developmental and require multiple learning and practice opportunities across diverse environments

GENERALIZATION!
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned?

• Traditional Model:
  
  • *Pull-out sessions*: child removed from the classroom
  
  • *Isolated setting*: separate, small setting
  
  • *Individual or small group*: limited number of students
  
  • *Contrived activities*: social stories, role playing, books, picture boards, “what if” situations
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

• Traditional Model – Results

  • **Pull-out sessions:**
    • child associates pragmatic skills with events outside the classroom

  • **Isolated Setting:**
    • child associates pragmatic skills with a setting other than their natural school setting
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

• Traditional Model – Results (cont)
  
  • Individual or small group:
    • child associates pragmatic skills with only a few others, in an isolated setting
  
  • Contrived activities:
    • child associates pragmatic skills with the activities presented, not with real-world situations.
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned?

• The Need for Discrete Instruction & Modeling
  • Some students, especially in younger grades, benefit from direct practice of targeted skills in a separate, small setting . . . at first
  • Short-term, specific
  • Purposeful toward “group-think” behaviors
  • Generalization to the classroom as soon as possible
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

• Generalization to the Classroom
  - The Big Move:

• Where else should pragmatic skills be learned?
  - in the classroom
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

**The Classroom Model:**

*Reduced Pull-out:*

- Child *stays* in the natural, heterogeneous group of the classroom
- Child *associates* pragmatic skills *with the classroom setting*
- Higher likelihood skills *will generalize* to other classrooms
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

**The Classroom Model** (cont)

**Reduced Isolated Settings:**

- child *stays* in the natural, *whole-group* setting of the classroom
- child *associates* pragmatic skills with the *whole-group setting*
- higher likelihood skills *will generalize* to other whole-group settings
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

• **The Classroom Model** (cont)
  • *Embedded, varied groupings:*
    • child *stays* in the natural, *whole-group* setting of the classroom
    • child *associates* pragmatic skills with *whole-group, small-group, and individual* interaction
    • higher likelihood skills *will generalize* to other whole-group settings
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

• **The Classroom Model** (cont)
  • Reduced *Contrived Activities*:
    • child *stays* in the *natural* classroom setting; activities are *normalized*
    • child *associates* pragmatic skills with *normalized, day-to-day* activities
    • higher likelihood skills *will generalize* to other settings – *school, community, home*
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

• The Classroom Model - Strategies

  • How do I teach pragmatic skills in the classroom?

  • Good News – easily added to what you are already doing!
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

The Classroom Model - Strategies (cont)

• **Daily Greetings:**
  - Greet your pragmatics learners with a *personal greeting* and a *hand shake*
  - *Model* this same greeting/hand shake *with other students*
  - *Alternate* students (a few one day, a different few another day)
  - Provide *feedback/instruction as needed*

• *(appropriate, expected interaction when first seeing someone – verbal & non-verbal)*

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The Three Ws of Pragmatics
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

The Classroom Model - Strategies (cont)

• **Daily Dismissals:**
  - Dismiss your pragmatics learners with a **personal farewell** and a **hand wave**
  - **Model** this same farewell/hand wave **with other students**
  - **Alternate** students (a few one day, a different few another day)
  - Provide **feedback/instruction as needed**
  - *(appropriate, expected interaction when departing – verbal & non-verbal)*
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

The Classroom Model - Strategies (cont)

• **Seating:**
  - Arrange desks *in pairs*
  - *Assign seats* in pairs of *least-familiar* to each other
  - *Alternate groupings* across the semester – pairs, three, four
  - Provide *feedback/instruction as needed*

• *(proximity training: appropriate, expected interaction when seated next to someone – verbal & non-verbal)*
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

The Classroom Model - Strategies (cont)

• **Pair-Share:**
  • *Assign numbers* to each student in the pair (1 & 2)
  • *Assign time limit* for each speaker
  • *Assign* who is *to speak first* (1 or 2)
  • Student *must wait his/her turn*, or must begin over
  • Students *write down* three things his/her *partner said*
  • *Alternate who begins*
  • Provide *feedback/instruction as needed*

• *(appropriate, expected turn taking, waiting, impulse control, listening to speaker, topic maintenance)*
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

The Classroom Model - Strategies (cont)

• Context Cueing:
  • Cue behaviors you want the students to eventually do independently
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

The Classroom Model - Strategies (cont)

• **Context Cueing** (example)
  
  • **Teacher:** “I am walking to the front of the class now. What does this mean?”
    
    *(call on students to answer)*
  
  • **Students:** ready for instruction, paper/pencil, textbooks, homework ready to be collected, no more talking

  • *(observing surroundings, interpreting surroundings, appropriate/expected behaviors in response to environmental stimuli)*
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

The Classroom Model - Strategies (cont)

• **Context Cueing** (example)
  • *Teacher*: “We are about to start an art project. What do we need?” *(call on students to answer)*
  • *Students*: desk covers, glue, scissors, colored paper, crayons, markers . . .
  • *(predicting need, listening to speaker, appropriate/expected behaviors in response to environmental stimuli)*
**Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)**

**The Classroom Model - Strategies (cont)**

- **Visuals:**
  - **Posters** of desired and targeted behaviors
  - **Graphically organize** pragmatic concepts
  - **Color code**
    - Expected/unexpected
    - Emotions
    - Positions
    - Opinions
  - Use **gestures**
  - **(non-verbal language, making inferences, connecting ideas)**
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

The Classroom Model - Strategies (cont)

• **Within the Curriculum:**

• **English/Language Arts:**
  • “How does Mr. Pitters *feel* when Ms. Woggles *ignores* him?
    • How do you know?
  • **Explain the relationship** between Lucie Manette and Sydney Carton.
    • Are their feelings *mutual*?
    • How do you know?

• (*identifying feelings, identifying the cues for these feelings, perspective taking*)
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

The Classroom Model - Strategies (cont)

• **Within the Curriculum:**

• **Social Studies:**
  
  • “What do **neighbors** do to **get along**?
  
  • What **might** General Washington **have said to his troops** before going to war?
  
  • What **negotiating skills** do people need when negotiating a **peace settlement**?
  
  • How would **you solve** (this) problem?

• **(observing surroundings, interpreting motives, perspective taking, appropriate/expected behaviors dictated by situation)**
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

The Classroom Model - Strategies (cont)

• **Within the Curriculum:**

• **Mathematics:**
  - “When we **add**, does our group of friends get bigger or smaller?”
  - When we **lose** (subtract) a friend, how do we **feel**?
  - Let’s **divide ourselves into equal** groups.
  - How is **algebraic equality** similar to **social equality**?

• (connecting concepts, generalizing)
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

The Classroom Model - Strategies (cont)

• **“In the Moment”**
  - Calling people names
  - Interrupting, not taking turns
  - Calling out in class
  - Touching other people without permission
  - Touching other students’ things without permission
  - Over-reacting or under-reacting
  - Missing environmental cues
  - Difficulty with transitioning

• *(Immediate connection to individual behavior, perspective taking, expected vs. inappropriate responses)*
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

The Classroom Model - Strategies (cont)

• As much as possible, handle situations in the moment:
  • The most natural timing of an intervention is when a behavior takes place
Where Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned? (cont)

The Classroom Model - Strategies (cont)

• As much as possible, handle situations in the moment:
  • The most natural consequence has the highest retention
    • What would naturally happen after behaving this way?
    • How would people feel after this happens?
  • What is the appropriate behavior?
  • Students immediately practice replacement behavior.
When Can Pragmatic Skills Best Be Learned?

- Everyday
- Morning, noon, and night
- 364-1/4 days per year
- 24 hours per day
- 7 days per week
- Embedded in classroom instruction
- Embedded in curriculum lessons
- As situations present themselves
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• Let’s Review:
  • Pragmatics is a **SKILL** in which you effectively *use and adjust* communication messages for a *variety of purposes*
  • **Traditional Models** of delivery have *not* shown maximal effectiveness
The Three Ws of Pragmatics: What, Where, and When

• **Let’s Review:**
  • **Classroom Models** consider the multiple elements of intervention *(Beverly Vicker: University of Indiana, Bloomington)*
  • Why? Pragmatic skills are best learned and practiced in the *natural setting* in which they are needed
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• **Resources:**
  - http:carolgraysocialstories.com
  - www.socialthinking.com
  - www.autismclassroomresources.com
  - National Autistic Society– Classroom and Playground PDF
  - Autism Speaks Community School Tool Kit
  - National Profession Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorder – *Evidence-Based Practices*
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Bozena and Angelique say: