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:

- Bozena Barton
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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?

Turn Allocation

Register Variation

Presupposition

Making Comments

Asking Questions

Discourse Management

Topic Shifts

Negotiating

Persuading

Joint Attention

Perspective Taking

Social Interest

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 <u>behaviors</u> that have **social meaning** but are **<u>NOT</u>** *language based*, such as:
    - Appropriate <u>attire</u> for a given situation?
    - Knowing when to <u>use</u> casual vs. formal language
    - How do you <u>act</u> 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

- 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**

- 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

- **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

- *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

- *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*

•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)*

- <u>**Daily Greetings:**</u>
  - 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)*

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)*

- ## Seeting:
  - 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)*

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

- <u>**Context Cueing:**</u>
  - **Cue behaviors you want the students to eventually do independently**

*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)*

*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)*

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

- <u>**Within**</u> **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)*

- <u>**Within**</u> **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)*

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

- <u>**Within**</u> **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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- **<u>Let's Review</u>**:
  - 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

- **<u>Let's Review</u>**:
  - **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*

The Three Ws of Pragmatics: What, Where, and When
Bozena and Angelique <u>say:</u>