

"Get In The Zone": Social Language and Pragmatic Therapy

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Identify The Problem

- Standardized Assessment
 - Many students with pragmatic language deficits "test well" and score within an average range on standardized measures of pragmatics. Therefore, they rarely qualify for school-based services.
 - Standardized pragmatic measures assess the *recall* of acquired knowledge... a memory skill, not an application skill.
 - Standardized tests of pragmatic language often provide weak information for goal writing relative to pragmatic needs in the school environment.

Identify The Problem

- Authentic Assessment
 - Assessment of "*fluid knowledge*" (the ability to use and apply knowledge in novel ways) more accurately reveals *performance* deficits in the use and application of pragmatic language.
 - Checklists and observation tools that assess students over time, across environments and by a variety of observers are more apt to provide a more accurate assessment of pragmatic deficits.
 - In schools, use curricular work samples to look at adverse academic effects...

Writing:

- output amount
- organization
- content
- syntax
- vocabulary
- sequence skills
- figurative language
- writing for an audience
- generating of ideas
- word usage
- writing to explain and/or inform
- development of a central idea
- application of background and prior knowledge

Core Curriculum:

- answering detail questions
- understanding main idea
- comparing and contrasting
- predictions
- inferences
- summarizing
- fact vs. opinion
- analyze cause and effect
- understanding of point of view
- application of background/prior knowledge
- answering questions in complete sentences
- knowledge of relationships between character, setting, situations
- understanding of figurative language...
 - idioms,
 - metaphors,
 - similes,
 - slang,
 - sarcasm,
 - hyperbole,
 - personification,
 - homonyms

Classroom Observations

- initiating/ending conversation
- asking for help
- working in a group
- responding in complete sentences
- asking questions
- following directions
- working independently
- active listening/listening for meaning
- conversation/small talk
- independent problem solving
- coping skills
- negotiation skills
- body/spatial awareness
- understanding "vague and subjective" language
- Interpreting charts, graphs, etc.
- emotional labeling/emotional control
- perseveration
- interrupting/impulse control
- answering questions when called on
- ability to give brief presentations in class
- responding to questions orally with brevity/getting to the point
- use of respectful and polite language
- organization of self, materials, space, assignments
- non-verbal body language use/understanding
- self-monitoring

Eligibility (school setting):

Eligibility for speech therapy services is determined by the IEP Team via the (multi-disciplinary team report) after reviewing evaluation results

The team must answer 3 questions...

1. Is there a disability?
2. Does the disability adversely affect educational performance and attainment of educational goals?
3. Does the student require "special education"?

Eligibility (contd.):

- If Student Does NOT Meet Criteria...
 - Give consideration for adverse affects (refer to state standards and authentic assessment results from curricular work samples)
 - *If already enrolled in special education... could consider speech as a related service or supplementary service*
 - Consider a 504 plan if there is another handicapping condition
 - Consider other "informal" methods of assistance
 - Consultation with teachers
 - In-service training for parents and teachers
 - Consultation/collaboration with guidance counselors and/or other school personnel

Eligibility (contd.):

- IEP Team Determines Services
 - Services should be flexible to "ebb and flow" with needs of the student
 - Talk about "the need to increase and decrease services" as needed at the **initial** IEP meeting
- Team Training...
 - Social interactions happen everywhere, with everyone... therefore, everyone MUST play an active role!
 - Parent Education
 - Teacher Education

Begin With The End In Mind

- Dismissal: "The goal of public school speech-language pathology services is to remediate or ameliorate a student's communication disorder such that it does not impede academic achievement and functional performance. When this goal is met, the student should be dismissed from speech-language pathology services."
 - *Statement taken from 7/15/09 "Implementing IDEA 2004 Part 1: Conducting Educationally Relevant Evaluations, Technical Assistance for SLPs: Eligibility Decisions and Dismissal vs. Continued Eligibility" (ASHA)*

Begin With The End In Mind

- "The SLP should make the goals of services clear to parents and teachers which is...
 - to determine if the student's communication disorder adversely affecting academic achievement and functional performance?
 - to provide intervention for those communication disorders that are adversely affecting academic achievement and functional performance, specifying goals leading to specific criteria for dismissal
 - to dismiss students from speech pathology services once the criteria for eligibility are no longer met"

Pragmatics and SC

ELA State Standards:

- K-1.1 Summarize the **main idea** and details from literary **texts** read aloud.
- K-1.10 Explain the cause of an event described in stories read aloud.
- 1-1.10 Explain cause-and-effect relationships presented in literary **text**.
- 1-2.2 Analyze informational **texts** to draw conclusions and make **inferences** during classroom discussions.
- 1-2.3 Distinguish between facts and opinions.
- 1-5.3 Create written pieces that describe personal experiences, people, places, or things and that use words that appeal to the senses.

Pragmatics and SC ELA State Standards:

- 2-C1.2 Demonstrate the ability to **initiate conversation**.
- 2-C1.3 Demonstrate the ability to **respond in complete sentences**.
- 2-C1.4 Demonstrate the ability to **participate in conversations** and discussions **by responding appropriately**
- 2-1.4 Find examples of devices of **figurative language** (including simile) and sound devices (including onomatopoeia and alliteration).
- 2-C1.9 Demonstrate the ability to **retell stories** and events in logical order.
- 2-2.5 Use headings, subheadings, and **print styles** (for example, italics, bold, larger type) to gain information.

Pragmatics and SC ELA State Standards:

- 2-C2.3 Demonstrate the ability to **listen for meaning in conversations** and discussions.
- 2-C2.4 Demonstrate the ability to **focus attention on the person who is speaking and listen politely without interrupting**.
- 2-3.4 Identify **idioms** in context.
- 2-4.1 **Generate ideas for writing** using prewriting techniques (for example, creating lists, having discussions, and examining literary models).
- 2-4.3 Create a **paragraph that follows a logical sequence** (including a beginning, middle, and end) and uses transitional words.
- 2-C1.12 Demonstrate the ability to **summarize conversations** and discussions

Pragmatics and SC ELA State Standards:

- 3-1.4 Distinguish among devices of **figurative language** (including simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole) and sound devices (including onomatopoeia and alliteration).
- 3-4.3 Create **paragraphs that include a topic sentence with supporting details and logical transitions**.
- 3-5.2 Create narratives that include **characters** and **setting** and follow a logical sequence.
- 4-1.5 Analyze the impact of **characterization** and **conflict** on plot.
- 4-4.3 Create **multiple-paragraph** compositions that include a **central idea** with supporting details and use appropriate transitions between paragraphs.
- 5-C1.1 Demonstrate the ability to face an audience, make eye contact, and use the appropriate voice level; begin using appropriate gestures, facial expressions, and posture. when making oral presentations.

Thinking About Goals

What targets would help the student meet curricular standards and make progress in the general curriculum?
(refer back to data collected from standardized AND authentic assessment)

How will progress be monitored?

What is achievable in a year's time?

- Begin with teaching skills that...
 - improve behaviors that are highly visible or overtly stand-out
 - basic social rules
 - most improve ability to function in school setting
 - have a direct academic effect
 - have a positive emotional effect
 - eliminate frustration/replace negative behaviors with positive behaviors

Key Terms:

- **Executive Function** = brain processes that allow flexible thinking, decision making, error correction, planning, inhibition, mental imagery and sorting through appropriate sensory input (fluid knowledge)
- **Working Memory** = the ability to store and manipulate information at the same time

Key Terms:

- **Theory of Mind** = knowledge that others have thoughts and feelings that are different from mine... *the basis of social development.*
- **Central Coherence** = being able to “get to the point”, concept formation (not just facts)



Fundamentals

- Aim to teach “social **thinking**” NOT... an isolated “social **skill**”
- Teaching a social “action” (a.k.a. skill) can only go so far
 - teach the “why” of what we are asking them to do. This improves...
 - Generalization
 - theory of mind (“other people may think or feel differently than I think or feel”)
 - executive function skills... “flexible thinking”
 - self-awareness/self-evaluation

Social Thinking Top 10

1. Why/What are “Social Skills”
2. Social Expectations... “The Zone”
3. Humor
4. Planning
5. Self Talk
6. Central Coherence
7. Writing
8. Polls/Surveys
9. Small Talk
10. Emotions/Personality Characteristics

Therapy: Integrating the Curriculum

- Writing
- Comprehension
- Figurative Language
- Test Taking Skills
- Homework Planning
- Organizational Skills

Bullying - Strategies

- Bullying is about *humiliation* and a willing audience is needed in order to make that occur.
- Bullies want a reaction... work on NOT giving a reaction.
 - No reaction = no power to the bully
 - Strong reaction = tendency to increase frequency and intensity of bullying
 - Count to ten, walk away, smile, deep breaths, etc.
 - Do not IGNORE the bully, but minimize to the greatest extent possible the reaction to the teasing

Bullying – Strategies (contd.)

- Agree with the bully
 - Reverses the “balance of power”, element of surprise
 - Ex. “You’re right. I wear glasses. It is sort of like I have four eyes.”
 - Ex. “These may look like weird shoes. I’ll have to give that some thought.”
 - Reply unemotionally, use the same statement for every time the same teasing occurs.
 - Bully will tire of this and bullying decreases

Why...

Why not?