

# Importance of pragmatics in communication skills education essay

[Education](#), [Importance of Education](#)



I teach special education and most of the students that I service are with me for reading and written expression. I have several English language learners and many of them are at different levels of language acquisition. However, I have had some difficulty differentiating their instruction to address their specific language levels until I took this course. Being a special education teacher implies that I am inherently able to differentiate student instruction. However, before taking these two classes, I lacked specific training in strategies for English language learners. These courses jogged my memory as to the vast aspects of simply learning any language. My special education coursework included the reading, writing, listening, and speaking domains of language, but most of the special education instruction focused heavily on reading and writing instruction, with less emphasis on speaking and listening.

## **First Idea**

The first idea that I found insightful was the importance of pragmatics in communication skills. I did not spend a lot of time thinking about the use of language in social situations and the specific function of how language may be used. The critical aspect of proximity was informative. That teachers should plan activities to teach English learners the appropriate distance for conversation with adults was novel to me, as I was not actually aware that in the United States conversational distance is one arm's length apart.

## **Second Idea**

The second idea that I gained from this course is the significance of semantics in language and how that relates to English language learners

understanding of specific words and their relationship in overall language acquisition. In my classroom instruction I have struggled with the denotation and connotation of words. I find that students often have difficulty with words that have two or more meanings and it is especially difficult for them to remember to use the word in the appropriate context when speaking or discussing a story or specific topic.

### **Third Idea**

The third idea that I gleaned from this course was about specific strategies for English language learners to develop Tier III vocabulary. I knew little about cognates and their use in teaching with shared Latin and Greek rooted vocabulary. I am already using bilingual dictionaries in my class, however the word-books are a strategy that I was unfamiliar with and have recently implemented in my reading and writing instruction.

### **Fourth Idea**

Ideas regarding idiomatic language and the effective strategies to teach idioms to English language learners were very helpful. The highlighting activity as well as the Loop games that allow English learners to practice appropriate idiom usage are informative and I found both strategies resourceful.

### **Fifth Idea**

The fifth idea I found significant involved equality versus equity and the Supreme Court case Lau vs. Nichols which refined the definition of equitable education for students specifically for English language learners. The video

explained the concept of equality as each student being given the same facilities, curriculum, textbooks, and teachers does in no way provide a meaningful education to English learners. However, with the concept of equity, every student may not receive the same thing, but instead their education is tailored to meet their specific needs. This court case appears to have paved the way for differentiated instruction.

## **Why Identified Ideas are Important to My Teaching Assignment**

All of the ideas I identified are important to being an effective teacher. Lau vs. Nichols is fundamentally significant for not only English language learners, but for students receiving special education services. Equity is the foundation of differentiated instruction, which I practice daily as all of my students are at different instructional levels and it is essential to develop effective lessons that address academic deficits for each individual student.

Idioms are also quite difficult for students with learning disabilities and by learning strategies and activities to enhance student understanding of idiomatic language will undoubtedly increase overall comprehension. English language learners with learning disabilities will require the necessary knowledge to navigate and understand the vast amount of words or phrases that have multiple meanings.

Ultimately, my goal as a special education teacher is to help students develop vocabulary and many of the Tier III vocabulary strategies and activities will assist students with learning disabilities learn new vocabulary in the same way that English learners will learn new words.

## **How to Implement Three Ideas into Current Teaching Assignment**

Three ideas I plan to initially implement are either individually or in a small group setting. First, during reading instruction and writing instruction it will not be difficult to introduce the word books to enhance deeper vocabulary understanding among my students with learning disabilities that are also English learners. Several of my students enjoy drawing and art and by allowing them to take ownership of their word books through the use of illustrations, pictures and photos, I think this can be a fun hands-on activity that will be ongoing throughout the rest of the school year. I am still teaching at a year round school and this is a good time to implement not only word books, but several other strategies that I learned in this course.

Now that I have a deeper understanding of pragmatics in language acquisition, I plan to teach specific social communication skills and proximity through direct instruction, modeling, and role-playing various scenarios. Many of my students stand too close to their teachers, peers, and other staff members. I hope that by specifically making it a point to teach appropriate proximity to English language learners, they will be able to see immediate success.

I have already begun teaching idiomatic language to several students by highlighting phrases I have found in required reading materials. Also, the Loop games are planned for this week and I hope the games will enhance overall understanding of several frequently used idioms.

## **Expectations and Immediate Results of Implementation of Specified Ideas**

By implementing the aforementioned ideas, I certainly expect my students to increase Tier III vocabulary, idiomatic language activities and pragmatics involving proximity training. Additionally, by increasing my instructional focus on providing the English language learners diagnosed with learning disabilities not only speaking and listening opportunities, but incorporating new activities with writing applications and written expression from the very beginning of reading instruction. Also by previewing key vocabulary before listening and cueing the students more pointedly on what to listen for during an audio-taped story or text, I expect a more favorable outcome necessary for them to learn not only appropriate English communication skills, but moreover a deeper understanding of vocabulary word meaning.

Furthermore, since I have taken this course, I began having my students keep their own personal word book with their choice of illustrations, photos, and/or icons in conjunction with their own short definitions to assist them in recalling the meaning of a word. By giving students additional writing practice with the word book, I hope to improve their overall writing ability.

Recently, I began to review the required stories from the curriculum that my English language learners use and highlight any idiomatic phrases or expressions that the students may be struggling with on the overhead projector in a small group setting where I can discuss and probe them for understanding.

## **Long Term Results of Implementing Specified Ideas**

With the mandate of No Child Left Behind, schools are under extreme pressure to demonstrate that all students will make adequate yearly progress toward prescribed educational goals. As a highly qualified teacher, I am responsible for delivering meaningful instruction that meets the needs of all students. By implementing specified ideas, strategies, and activities the long term results will be that all students will have a purposeful education leading them to a productive and prosperous life, as well as being able to communicate effectively across a variety settings.