

Pragmatics | Instructors' Bulletin

Pragmatics is an important part of teaching learners in the LINC program, yet it is also an area that instructors have difficulty navigating and learners find difficulty in mastering. Luckily, there are many readily available resources at your fingertips to help in planning lessons that incorporate pragmatics.

What does 'Pragmatics' mean?

NOUN [UNCOUNTABLE] LINGUISTICS /præɡ' mætɪks/
 "the ability to use appropriate language in a given communicative situation and comprises functional and sociolinguistic knowledge"

CLB Support Kit, p. 71

"the ability to use language appropriately in a given communicative situation"

CLB Support Kit, p. 97

"the study of how language is used in particular situations to express a meaning or attitude that may not be obvious from the actual words"

The Macmillian Dictionary

"the appropriate use of language in conducting speech acts such as apologizing, requesting, complimenting, refusing, thanking"

the CARLA website

Two important elements include the concepts of *pragmalinguistics* (linguistic) and *sociopragmatics* (context).

Pragmalinguistics (language-focus): the use of appropriate grammar and typical expressions in a particular context

CLB Support Kit p. 97

Sociopragmatics (culture-focus): the use of an appropriate speech act in a particular situation (including tone, volume, and stress, which can be taught as aspects of pronunciation)

CLB Support Kit p. 97

Teaching Resources

Lessons on pragmatics normally focus on the areas of apologies, feedback, complaints, compliments, and requests, excuses, invitations, and refusals. Common tasks include a task analysis, whereby learners review and analyze spoken/written language samples. Awareness raising is another useful activity for honing students' ability to understand nuance of speech acts.

Online Resources

Norquest College has some excellent materials from a project "Pragmatic Patterns for Business: Professional Language Competencies" including the following:.

- **Instructor Resources:** (lesson plans, audio, handouts) <http://bit.ly/22uvmBq>
- **Learner Resources** (self-study, audio, handouts) <http://bit.ly/1Reufyl>
- **Pragmatics Game** (downloadable dice and scenario cards) <http://bit.ly/1UiRZ7x>

Note: Order high-quality copies of the Dice Game directly from Norquest.

The **CLB Support Kit**, section II "Helping Learners to Communicate Effectively" has two chapters devoted to pragmatics: "Incorporating Pragmatics in a CLB-Based Program" (pp. 71-82) and "Sample Tools for Incorporating Pragmatics in a CLB-Based program" (pp. 83-98). Available for download at bookshelf.language.ca.

The chapters includes lesson plans for CLB 2 and 6 as well as sample task analysis, charts of pragmatic elements of CLB competencies, considerations for adapting resources, designing and selecting materials, assessment considerations, a grid of speech acts aligned to CLB levels, assessment rubrics, a pragmatics glossary, and helpful resources (print and online).

MacMillian Dictionary offers 11 lesson plans, as well as recommended blog posts, on pragmatics on their website at www.macmillandictionary.com.



