

## **PRAGMATIC SKILLS OF STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS**

Lee Pei Teng

The objective of this study was to profile the pragmatic skills exhibited by students with learning disabilities in mainstream schools. A total of three pairs of students (in which a pair of subject is constituted by a student with learning disabilities and a control student) aged between 10 and 12 years old were selected to participate in this study. There were four group learning activities designed to simulate the topics and motives for interaction. The responses of the subjects were recorded, transcribed and categorized according to three specific classifications, which are Communicative Functions, Response to Communication, and Interaction and Conversation (Dewart& Summers, 1995). The outcome of this study showed that students with learning disabilities demonstrated poorer usage of pragmatic skills than control students in the small group learning/interaction sessions. Among them, there were four main problematic components in the use of pragmatic skills, which reduced the ability of the students with learning disabilities to interact in a small group learning/interaction session. These four components were abilities in attention directing, requesting, narrative, and presupposition and shared knowledge. Results of this study highlight the importance of establishing speech-language therapy services in schools, as well as consolidating collaborations among teachers, speech-language pathologist and other parties in order to help the students with learning disabilities.

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