8-2011

The Effects of Teacher Nonverbal Immediacy and Teacher Confirmation on the Affective Learning of Students with Special Needs

Jacquelyn R. Rex
University of Texas-Pan American

THE EFFECTS OF TEACHER NONVERBAL IMMEDIACY AND TEACHER CONFIRMATION ON THE AFFECTIVE LEARNING OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

A Thesis

by

JACQUELYN R. REX

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Texas-Pan American
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August 2011

Major Subject: Communication Studies

THE EFFECTS OF TEACHER NONVERBAL IMMEDIACY AND TEACHER CONFIRMATION ON THE AFFECTIVE LEARNING OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

A Thesis
by
JACQUELYN R. REX

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Dora Saavedra
Chair of Committee

Dr. Tim Mottet
Committee Member

Dr. Jeffery McQuillen
Committee Member

August 2011

ABSTRACT

Rex, Jacquelyn R., The Effects of Teacher Nonverbal Immediacy and Teacher Confirmation on the Affective Learning of Students with Special Needs. Master of Arts (MA), August, 2011, 66 pp., 2 tables, references, 61 titles.

This study investigated the effect of teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation on the perceived affective learning of students with special needs. A 2 × 2 factorial design was utilized, with teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation as independent variables. Two research questions asked whether students with special needs could accurately rate the immediacy and confirmation levels of teachers when exposed to manipulated stimuli. H_1 and H_2 predicted that nonverbal immediacy and confirmation, respectively, would positively influence the affective learning of special needs students. H_3 predicted that special needs students would report greater levels of affective learning when exposed to nonverbal immediacy regardless of level of confirmation. Thirty-one secondary students were exposed to one of four immediacy-confirmation conditions and then completed McCroskey's (1994) Affective Learning Scale. Results suggested that students with special needs can accurately rate different levels of immediacy and confirming messages. All three hypotheses were supported.

DEDICATION

To start with, I would like to express my gratitude to my family. The completion of my Master's degree would not have been possible without their love and support. Thank you to my father, Bayardo Rex, my mother, Thelma Rex, and my sister Jocelyn Rex for always believing in me even when I did not quite believe in myself. Also, a huge thank you to my students at Geraldine Palmer Elementary for teaching me that a quality education is a child's right and inspiring me to work to reform Special Education for all children with special needs in this country. Thank you all for challenging me to be the best I can be.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank all those who have inspired and helped me throughout this journey, especially my family, advisors, friends and students. Without them, I could not have completed this project. First, I would like to thank my parents, Bayardo and Thelma Rex for instilling in me a strong work ethic and personal expectation of nothing less than my best. I would also like to thank my sister, Jocelyn Rex, for always being my best friend and closest confidant.

Second, I would like to thank my committee team for their dedication. I will be eternally grateful to my committee advisor Dr. Dora Saavedra for her initiative and guidance as my thesis advisor. I thank you for your commitment and guidance as a mentor. I would also like to acknowledge my thesis committee members, Dr. Tim Mottet and Dr. Jeffery McQuillen. You lead by example with poise, solid work ethic, and a sincere commitment to the communication field. Thank you for your continuous enthusiasm, encouragement, and willingness to help.

Third, I would like to acknowledge my graduate cohort, who made this experience most memorable. Thank you for continuous support, understanding, and friendship throughout this journey. I leave graduate school with a Master's degree in Communication as well as a collection of lifelong friends.

Finally, I must thank my students, who continuously teach me that my job as a teacher is not complete until their lives have been changed. You have made me a better teacher, and as a result, a better person. I remain forever grateful to all of you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Page

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For years, critics have argued that the educational system in the United States needs immediate reforming. Each year, 1.2 million students drop out of school before graduating high school ("Obama Takes Aim," 2010), and while students in the United States have made modest progress on an international exam, they continue to perform below their peers from other industrialized countries ("American Teens Trail Global Peers," 2010). Despite these results, current economic trends have resulted in the proposed trimming of the educational budget.

State legislators and district administrators are now being faced with difficult decisions regarding the future of education, both at the state and local levels. Because teacher salaries make up the bulk of education budgets, some states have considered making cuts to teacher salaries and benefits or laying off teachers in an effort to reduce capital spending ("Teacher pay needs to be on the table," 2011, "School board may cut teacher pay," 2010, "Legislature is cutting teacher pay," 2011, "Groups attacks salary cut proposals," 2011). With fewer teachers to be placed in classrooms across the United States, schools will most likely see an increase in the number of students enrolled in each class. Part of that increase in student numbers will result from students with disabilities who are being further integrated into the general education classroom to be educated alongside their non-disabled peers when they had not previously been so.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Before 1975, public schools in the United States educated only one out of five children with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education). Until that time, many states had laws that explicitly excluded children with certain types of handicaps, and as a result, there existed a tendency to relegate special student populations to separate educational programs or to deny disabled children a free public education ("Back to school on civil rights," 2000).

These practices inspired the creation of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975, which was later renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990 (Pub. L. No. 101-476, 104 Stat. 1142).

On June 4, 1997, amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) became law. These amendments introduced new concepts for classroom teachers in how they were to treat and handle the education of students with special needs. Part of the new amendments stipulated that special student populations be further integrated into the general education setting. Advocates for the disabled argued that research showed that the inclusion model benefitted students with special needs because disabled students profited both academically and socially by being taught alongside typical students (Berry, 2006; Geisthardt & Munsch, 1996).

The national push for greater inclusion as spelled out in the IDEA amendments would mark the slow end of the "pull-out" systems that had dominated special education up to that point. The previous special education model, which called for students with special needs to be pulled out of the regular classroom for 15-30 minutes a day to work with a special education teacher before returning to the regular classroom, hindered long-term significant academic changes (Montgomery, 2007, p. 118). In addition, Montgomery (2007) argued that the deficit-

driven model of teaching, which focused on what special needs students could not do rather than what they could, needed to be changed, with general and special education teachers working together for the benefit of special needs students. Furthermore, Montgomery argued that the purpose of any school was to enrich the brains of children by knowing what it was that personally motivated students instead of viewing students merely as a "disability." Specifically through the use of (1) genuine emotional support, especially hope; (2) complex, low stress challenging environments; and (3) specific skill building in key areas for 30 to 90 minutes a day (Montgomery, 2007, p. 119), students with special needs would be fully integrated in a general education setting with maximum results.

In summary, the guiding assumption leading up to the 1997 amendments was that special education teachers could support the introduction of accommodations and modifications in the general education setting to help the general education teacher best meet the needs of students receiving special education services. Together, general and special education teachers would not only share teaching time but also a structured goal toward improving and enriching the education of all students they served.

Lack of Attention on Special Student Populations

Since the introduction of amendments to IDEA, the practice of integrating, or mainstreaming, students with special needs into the general education setting and developing curriculum and pedagogy that meets the unique needs of all students has remained a major theme of ongoing debate and policy development in the area of special education (Croll & Moses, 1998).

According to an article published by United Press International ("14 percent," 2008), 14 percent of U.S. children (more than one-fifth of U.S. households with children) have been

diagnosed as having a special need. Despite the significant numbers of special needs children, special education has remained low profile in education policy making and public awareness. Research by the Audit Commission ("Special education needs," 2002) found that national studies fail to reflect schools' work with special needs students, who typically make up no more than three percent of any given public school district.

Although amendments have stipulated for the further inclusion of students with special needs into general education classrooms, the academic and behavioral challenges often posed by disabled students have created a readiness among educators and some parents to exclude children from general education classrooms and their non-disabled peers and instead place them in the more-restricted environments of special classes or schools ("Parents of disabled children," 2007). The existence of separate special education programs and their reputation as a placement rather than a service, may have unintentionally allowed the needs of special student populations to be viewed as different and perhaps even secondary to the core concerns of a school's mission.

Costs for Educating Students with Special Needs

As mentioned earlier, special needs students typically make up no more than three percent of any given school district, but these students require much higher levels of spending per capita than do non-disabled students. According to a report by the Special Education Expenditures Program ("Total expenditures for students," 2003), the cost of providing education to disabled students ranges from $10, 558 for students with special learning disabilities to $20,095 for students with multiple disabilities. The cost of educating disabled students, then, is between 1.6 and 3.1 times higher than educating non-disabled students.

As the costs for special education programs and equipment increase and the national education budget (for which teacher salaries makes up the greatest percent) decreases, school

districts may make the choice to lay off teachers and place more students, including those with disabilities, into general education classrooms. Doing so would mean that general education teachers would not only be educating greater numbers of students at a time, but also a more heterogeneous group of students than many previously have experience doing. Most recently, educating large numbers of students with a variety of educational and cognitive levels has become more challenging for teachers who, because of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, must ensure that all children pass a state standardized exam.

Problems with No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

In an effort to set high standards and establish measureable student learning outcomes, the No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2001, mandated that all states develop assessments in basic knowledge and skills to be given to students in particular grades of both primary and secondary education (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). The success of students on those state-created standardized assessments would be directly related to the funding that each public school received.

Critics argued that because school districts rely heavily on state funding, they had strong motivation to manipulate teaching strategies in order to create the impression of student success. For this reason, "teaching to the test" became a major concern in the level of rigor in the classroom and the standard of education being delivered to students. Researchers have found that teaching to the test hinders student learning outcomes because standardized tests often only focus on basic skills and neglect high-order thinking and problem solving that students need for higher education (Herman, 1992; Sacks, 2000).

Standardized Testing and Students with Special Needs

Federal officials have acknowledged that in the past, special student populations had been excluded from many schools' reports of school progress, on the grounds that these students only accounted for a small portion of a school's enrollment. For other schools' special student populations were often given separate modified or accommodated tests that were excluded from state accountability systems, and as a result, school funding ("School achievement reports exclude disabled," 2004; "Measuring school performance," 2005). Even though all state-mandated objectives were present in the modified and accommodated tests given to special populations, the vocabulary of questions presented was often simplified and answers choices on multiple choice exams were often decreased in number to accommodate the special needs of test takers. Because modified and accommodated tests did not factor into accountability systems and because objectives tested were presented in a simplified manner, the level of educational rigor for disabled students fell behind that of their non-disabled peers, who themselves were often spending the majority of their instruction time learning how to pass a state test. Students with special needs, then, were not only receiving an education based on passing a simplified test but were also faced with schools that would not be penalized for failing to improve the scores of their students in special education programs.

Changes in State Standardized Testing

As students in the United States continue to be outperformed by their peers in other industrialized countries, efforts to increase rigor and enhance educational achievement have come to the forefront of educational debate.

One way that state legislators have proposed improving education is by increasing the level of rigor of state standardized exams. Texas, for example, has proposed a new standardized

test to assess the academic readiness of students in grades 3-12. The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) will be piloted in the 2011-2012 school year, but unlike its predecessor, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), the STAAR's modified version (given to special needs students) will be used in state-accountability systems, and as a result, the test scores will be factored into the funding received by public schools. Past concerns that special student populations were not being educated as rigorously as their non-disabled peers are now being addressed, as public schools must ensure that *all* students, regardless of disability, pass the state-mandated assessments.

Difficulty Integrating Special Student Populations into General Education Classrooms

Amendments to IDEA stated that in order to accommodate students with special needs in the classroom, "the child's [Individualized Education Program] IEP team must consider, when appropriate, strategies, including positive behavioral intervention strategies and supports, to address that behavior" (Sugai et al., 1999, p. 3). But schools have found this to be easier said than done. Taylor-Green et al. (1997) found that special needs students diagnosed as emotionally disturbed, for example, may represent only 1 to 5% of a school enrollment but can account for more than 50% of the behavioral incidents handled by teachers and office personnel. These behavior incidents not only eat up administrators' time but the teaching time in a general education classroom as well, despite the presence of a special education teacher.

Many parents of special needs students are also concerned with the inclusion of their children in general education settings. In an article published by the *Wall Street Journal* ("Parents of disabled children," 2007), a mother from New Jersey explained that upon entering a general education kindergarten class, her daughter, who was diagnosed with autism, disrupted

class, ran through the school's hallways, lashed out at others, and at one point, gave her teacher a black eye.

Despite the challenges that students with special needs may pose, advocates continue to support that disabled students benefit both academically and socially from placement in general education settings with non-disabled peers. Advocates argue that when in a general education classroom, special needs students are exposed to appropriate behavior and learn how to best interact with others – something they would not otherwise get in special self-contained units or separate schools. A big push for inclusion also comes from legislative bodies who state that mainstreaming is not only academically beneficial for disabled students but also cost-effective for taxpayers ("Parents of disabled children," 2007; "Schools accused of pushing mainstreaming," 2007).

The problem facing many educators today is not that they lack a desire to educate students with special needs but rather that they lack the training, the resources, and the time to provide the specialized instruction and give the individualized attention that severely disabled students require (Baines, Baines, & Masterson, 1994). Because many general education teachers lack special training, school personnel are finding themselves unable to successfully implement the inclusion model described in the amendments to IDEA. Perhaps more than any other issues, classroom teachers are finding it difficult to mesh inclusion practices with general education teaching strategies in a way that accommodates disabled students and yet does not take away from the educational growth of their non-disabled peers.

Integrating entirely new teaching strategies into classrooms with already established teaching practices has proven problematic as well, as general education teachers find it time consuming and not necessarily beneficial to general education students to restructure whole

content units and alter pre-determined curriculum and assignments to solely fit the unique needs of students with special needs in an effort to include them in all classroom activities (Smelter, Rasch, & Yudewitz, 1994). There are also those who fear that placing students with disabilities in general education classrooms will negatively affect the educational growth of non-disabled students because more instructional time will need to be given to students with special needs (Brown, et al., 1989).

Moreover, when general education teachers have not been trained to deal with specific disabilities and the IEP requirement of accommodating and modifying mandated curriculum, these teachers often find it challenging to address the unique learning styles or academic and cognitive limitations of students receiving special education services *in* a general education setting. For many teachers, it is easier to send special needs students to a "pull-out" setting, such as Resource (daily pull-out) or Content Mastery (pull-out when needed), where they believe teachers who specialize in special education can present academic content in a more comprehensible way. However, Kauffman, Bantz, and McCullough (2002) find that because special education programs are seen as "special" or "different," they inevitably result in classroom settings that stigmatize children and separate them from their peers without disabilities. Kauffman et al. (2002) explain that special education programs are defective in structure because they are a *separate* system, and only when such programs are seen as a *service* rather than a *place* will radical improvements begin to occur (p. 150).

The solution to the problem of integrating students with special needs in the general education classroom, while at the same time catering to their non-disabled classmates appears to be solely in the hands of the teachers, whose classrooms have become a melting pot of students with and without disabilities. Regardless of whether teachers serve non-disabled or special needs

students, the goal for educators is to communicate content and structure instructional environments in a way that increases student educational motivation and enhances the learning outcomes of all students.

Teacher Behaviors and Student Learning Outcomes

According to Nussbaum (1992), there exist specific teacher behaviors that are directly related to increased student learning outcomes and student motivation. Perhaps the most influential teacher behavior researched is teacher immediacy (Richmond & McCroskey, 1992). The application of immediacy behaviors in educational settings introduced the idea that a teacher could lessen the distance between himself and his students and thereby influence certain classroom outcomes, namely student learning, through predetermined body cues and expressive vocal inflections (Allen, Witt & Wheeless, 2006).

In addition, teacher confirmation represents another teacher behavior that has been shown to positively affect student behavior and learning outcomes (Goodboy & Myers, 2008). According to Ellis (2000), the presence of teacher confirmation messages, which communicate to students that they are valuable individuals, enhances the student-teacher relationship, which as a result, influences affective learning, cognitive learning and motivation. Teacher confirmation has been shown to offer students the fundamental validation they need in order to strive for greater personal and educational success by using messages to demonstrate to students their value and significance as individuals (Buber, 1988; Laing, 1961).

Currently, research on the effects of teacher immediacy and teacher confirmation on student learning outcomes and motivation has focused on students in the general education setting, from the primary and secondary stages of education and on through higher education. Research on the effects of specific teacher behaviors (i.e., teacher immediacy and teacher

confirmation) on the student learning outcomes and motivation of students with special needs, however, appears to be excluded from most research on the overall effects of teacher behaviors in the classroom.

Statement of the Purpose

As budget cuts continue to affect education on a national level and as school districts move away from pull-out systems and insist on further integration of special populations, teachers will have no choice but to work around the inevitable issues surrounding meshing general-education teaching strategies with proposed inclusion models of teaching.

If it could be determined, however, that particular teacher behaviors (i.e., teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation) positively affect the learning outcomes of students with special needs, a system of time effective behaviors to be simultaneously used in the classroom with both general and special education students, could be taught to educators in order to not only enhance teacher likelihood of improving the academic and behavioral achievement of special needs students, but also increase the standardized test scores of *all* students and, as a result, decrease administrative worry about the state-funding allotted to public schools.

The goal of this study, then, was to determine whether or not teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation messages positively affected the level of affective learning of students with special needs as measured by McCroskey's (1994) Affective Learning Scale. For the purpose of this study, the phrase "student with special needs" is defined as any student with a diagnosed disability documented in an IEP, for which that student receives individualized services within a school setting (i.e., for specific learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, mental retardation, ADHD). Affective learning is defined as a student's ability to value and

internalize knowledge and includes student feelings and emotions toward particular subject matter (Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia, 1964).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The previous chapter offered the basic conceptualizations of teacher nonverbal immediacy, teacher confirmation, and affective learning. Within this chapter, in-depth explanations of each of these concepts will be discussed using existing literature from both the educational and instructional communication fields.

The Teacher-Student Relationship

The primary role of the teacher is to communicate educational content and manipulate instructional environments in a way that enhances student learning by making information meaningful to students (Richmond, Lane, and McCroskey, 2006). Although the teaching process has occurred for several thousand years, there is still debate on what instructional behaviors constitute an effective teacher. In schools across America, administrators and educators widely accept that education is an interactional process where both teachers and students communicate with one another to facilitate the learning process and increase student learning outcomes. In fact, American teachers are often evaluated on their ability to engage students in learning and promote participation in class discussion. Perhaps the two biggest misconceptions of teachers, however, is that teacher and student communication in the classroom only manifests itself in verbal form and that all classroom communication serves the sole purpose of communicating state-mandated academic content.

Instructional Communication: Rhetorical and Relational Communication Processes

The field of instructional communication has been greatly influenced by two processes coming from two different traditions: Rhetorical communication processes and relational communication processes (Mottet & Beebe, 2006). The rhetorical perspective examines the idea that teachers use both verbal and nonverbal messages in order to communicate academic content and the importance of education to students. The relational perspective, which serves as the foundation for this study, examines how teachers and students *mutually* create and use verbal and nonverbal messages for the purpose of developing a relationship with one another. Part of developing this teacher-student relationship, then, must focus on the emotions that both parties bring to the relationship. According to McCroskey and Richmond (1996), the relational approach of instructional communication grounds itself in the idea that communication is transactional or co-orientational, where teachers and students expect learning to be mutually beneficial. When teachers and students interact with one another on a more authentic level (as relational perspective suggests), teachers become more motivated to teach and students become more motivated to learn.

Influence of Teacher Immediacy on Student Learning

The majority of research from the relational perspective of instructional communication focuses on teacher and student nonverbal messages because nonverbal messages have been shown to stimulate the majority of the emotional and social meaning in messages. According to Burgoon (1994), approximately 60-65% of social meaning is derived strictly from nonverbal behaviors. Research also suggests that people tend to rely more on nonverbal communication when sending positive and negative messages *to* relationship partners and rely more on nonverbal communication when interpreting positive and negative messages *from* relational

partners (Noller, 1984). It follows, then, that in the teacher-student relationship, both parties acquire the majority of their emotional and social meaning from nonverbal behaviors and messages. These nonverbal behaviors and messages can then create motivation for teaching and learning and enhance learning for students.

Arguably, one of the most influential teacher behaviors is teacher nonverbal immediacy. According to Nussbaum (1992), the most effective teachers employ a variety of specific teacher behaviors that increase student learning and create positive student evaluations of teaching and education.

In the field of instructional communication research, teacher immediacy is considered one of the most well-researched and influential behaviors of effective instructors (Richmond, Lane, & McCroskey, 2006). Mehrabian (1969) defines teacher immediacy as classroom behaviors that create a perception of physical or psychological closeness between teacher and student and therefore decrease the psychological distance between two people. Furthermore, Mehrabian (1969) contends that immediacy causes individuals to become closer to those they evaluate positively. It follows then that the immediacy behaviors employed by classroom teachers through student interactions and communication acts result in positive perceptions from students, who in turn, are more likely to become closer to and value those teachers who engage in high levels of immediacy. Allen, Witt & Wheeless (2006) found that positive perceptions of teachers may be seen as rewarding, and rewarding behaviors may serve as reinforcement for the attentive interactions and willingness to engage in educational tasks that are critical for learning to occur.

One of the most controversial aspects of immediacy, however, is the extent to which teacher immediacy, both verbal and nonverbal, affects student learning (Witt, Wheeless, and

Allen, 2004). Verbal immediacy includes the manner in which individuals use words and language to express interest in another (Gorham, 1988), while nonverbal immediacy includes the behaviors that individuals use (such as vocal expressiveness, eye contact, smiling, and gesturing) to convey similar interest (Andersen, 1979). According to Christophel (1990), nonverbal immediacy is considered to be more important than verbal immediacy in improving three aspects of student learning outcomes: affective learning, educational motivation, and cognitive learning. Of these three, only affective learning and educational motivation will be discussed.

Affective learning. Affective learning involves the ability to value and internalize knowledge and includes student feelings and emotions toward particular subject matter (Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia, 1964). With regard to communication in the classroom, nonverbal messages convey relational meanings, and as a result, cater more to affective aspects of learning. Although there is some debate on the level of teacher immediacy best suited to generate optimal levels of student affective learning (Witt and Wheeless, 2001; Comstock, Rowell & Bowers, 1995), more researchers have consistently reported that teachers who employ higher levels of immediacy increase affective learning more than those teachers who employ low levels of immediacy. What is also known is that teacher immediacy increases student motivation and increased levels of motivation increase student learning.

Student Educational Motivation. Immediacy has been found to be positively correlated with student motivation, which in turn best explains why students exposed to high levels of immediacy report increases in affective learning. Teachers, then, who engage in certain instructional communication tactics are more likely to increase the educational knowledge gained by their students. Allen et al. (2006) found that competent teachers use a variety of communication methods with the expectation that students respond in such a way that results in

greater motivation and increased learning outcomes. According to Rodriguez, Plax, and Kearney (1996), nonverbal teacher immediacy increased student affect for a subject and the teacher, which resulted in positive student motivational outcomes. It follows that high immediacy increases student motivation, which in turn, enhances student learning. Teacher immediacy, then, represents a set of behaviors that a teacher can be trained to employ in order to increase student motivation and affective learning. The goal for educators is to present information in such a way that it is understood, practiced, and committed to long-term memory. According to Mottet, Richmond, & McCroskey (2006), nonverbal immediacy has been shown to affect students' learning.

As stated earlier, the goal of this study was to determine whether or not teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation messages positively affected the level of affective learning of students with special needs as measured by McCroskey's (1994) Affective Learning Scale. This study relied heavily on the assumption that disabled students are as capable as their non-disabled peers at accurately rating immediate and non-immediate instructors when exposed to them before adjusting their level of affective learning accordingly. For this reason, the following research question was posed in order to check out the assumption:

RQ_1: Does teacher nonverbal immediacy affect special needs students' perceptions of their affective learning as tested using photographic stimuli?

The previous section addressed the research findings related to the effects of teacher nonverbal immediacy on student affective learning. None of the studies cited were specifically devoted to the special needs population. The next section of this chapter will address the research on the effects of teacher confirmation on affective learning.

Influence of Teacher Confirmation on Student Learning Outcomes

Ellis (2000) defined teacher confirmation as "the process by which teachers communicate to students that they are valuable, significant individuals" (p. 265). Teachers who actively engage in confirmation messages, then, communicate to their students that they should believe in themselves and value their own self worth. Confirmation messages also provide for high-order thought processes and greater value for learning, which helps students combat negative outside influences and instead be guided by positive values and attitudes, regardless of their academic past (Krathwohl et al., 1964; Burleson & Goldsmith, 1998).

According to Ellis (2000, 2004), teacher confirmation enhances the internalization needed for affective learning, and because individuals have a fundamental need to be validated in order to strive for greater personal (and arguably educational) success (Buber, 1988; Laing, 1961), confirmation messages offer the validation that students, especially those with special needs and a history of academic struggles, need in order to increase their learning outcomes. It reasonably follows that special needs students who receive confirming messages from their teachers will strive for greater educational success and enhance their own learning outcomes, namely affective learning.

The second focus of this study was to investigate the effects of teacher confirmation messages on the affect learning of students with special needs. As in the case of nonverbal immediacy, this study relied heavily on the assumption that students with special needs can accurately identify the presence or absence of teacher confirmation messages when exposed. For this reason, the following research question was also posed:

RQ_2: Does teacher confirmation affect special needs students' perceptions of their affective learning as tested using audio scenarios?

Rationale and Hypotheses Tested

This chapter has reviewed the current literature pertaining to teacher nonverbal immediacy, teacher confirmation messages, and the effect that both variables have been shown to have on the learning outcomes of students enrolled in general education settings.

Research has shown that teacher nonverbal immediacy is one of the most effective behaviors teachers can employ in the classroom because nonverbal immediacy promotes student perceptions of closeness with their teacher and as a result, enhances student willingness to engage in educational tasks and increases student affective learning (Mehrabian, 1969; Richmond, 1990).

The use of teacher confirmation has been shown to increase student learning outcomes of students as well. Confirmation messages provide for the higher-order thought processes needed for academic success and offer students a sense of validation that is needed in order to strive for greater personal success, especially among struggling learners (Ellis, 2000, 2004; Buber, 1988; Laing, 1961).

Taking into consideration what past research has shown about the effects of teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation on the affective learning of students without disabilities, the following hypotheses were posed:

H_1: Teacher nonverbal immediacy will positively influence the affective learning of secondary students with special needs.

H_2: The presence of teacher confirmation messages will positively influence the affective learning of secondary students with special needs.

Research from the relational perspective of instructional communication focuses on teacher and student nonverbal messages because the majority of social and relational meaning is

derived strictly from nonverbal behaviors (Burgoon, 1994). Because teachers and students acquire most of their emotional and social meaning from nonverbal behaviors, it follows that nonverbal behaviors can create motivation for teaching and learning and therefore enhance affective learning for students.

Taking into consideration what past research has shown about the nature of nonverbal communication and its possible effects on student motivation and student learning outcomes, an additional hypothesis was posited:

H_3: Students with special needs will experience greater levels of affective learning when exposed to teacher nonverbal immediacy, regardless of their exposure to teacher confirmation.

This chapter has reviewed what current literature has found regarding the effects of teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation on affective student learning. In summary, research (Allen, Witt & Wheeless, 2006; Witt, Wheeless, & Allen, 2004; Christophel, 1990; Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964; Witt & Wheeless, 2001; Comstock, Rowell & Bowers, 1995) has shown that greater levels of nonverbal teacher immediacy increase student motivation, which in turn, may account for increases in student affective learning. Research (Ellis, 2000, 2004; Krathwohl et al., 1964; Burleson & Goldsmith, 1998; Buber, 1988; Laing, 1961) has also shown that teacher confirmation enhances student self-perceptions and internalization which leads to greater levels of affective learning as well. This research, however, has only been conducted on students in general education settings. What research has failed to address is how that same usage of nonverbal immediacy and confirmation messages may affect the student learning outcomes in *special* student populations such as students with special needs.

The next chapter describes participants, survey instrumentation, and procedures used to test the hypotheses and to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This chapter reviews the research sites and participants used in this study, followed by the procedures and research design utilized to test the relationship between the effects of teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation on the affective learning of students with special needs. Manipulation checks for teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation and the procedures used to answer the research questions are also discussed.

Research Sites

This study was conducted in general education classrooms and self-contained classrooms drawn from three high school campuses of an independent school district located in South Texas. Institutional review board (IRB) approval was obtained, as was permission from the district's superintendent, each campus' administration and Special Education department heads, and the parents of all participants.

Participants

The purposive sample for this study included thirty-one special needs students in the ninth through twelfth grade levels of three high school campuses of an independent school district. To ensure the safety and rights of all subjects in this study, parental consent was obtained for all participants. Consent was also obtained from the students themselves. Students whose cognitive disabilities hindered their ability to give written, verbal or nonverbal consent were excluded from this study.

The participants chosen for this study were purposefully selected on the basis of their enrollment in special education programs within their campus and their special education classification within the school district. While students' special education disability classification is based on referral to a Student Assistance Team (SAT) and state mandated special educational psychological examination scores administered by district diagnosticians, information regarding each participant's specific disability was not collected due to legal constraints of the public school system and the legal rights of disabled individuals.

The plan for this study involved collecting affective learning data from groups of students classified as having specific learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, mental retardation, Down syndrome, and autism. While specific information regarding participant disabilities was not collected, campus personnel stated that of the thirty-one students used in the study, all were classified as having a specific learning disability, an emotional disturbance, ADD/ADHD, or a combination of those disabilities. Demographic information, such as participant grade-level classification, sex, and ethnicity was also collected.

Procedures

After receiving approval from the institutional review board and permission from all district, administrative, campus special education personnel, and all parents and guardians, students with special needs were recruited as survey participants.

Students were surveyed during the last week of their spring semester. Research participants were randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions (labeled A, B, C, and D) described in the table below:

	Confirmation present	Confirmation absent
Non-immediate	(A) Immediate Confirmation present	(B) Immediate Confirmation absent
Immediate	(C) Non-immediate Confirmation present	(D) Non-immediate Confirmation absent

For each condition, the researcher used scripted instructions to inform students that they were about to be shown a picture of a teacher giving a lesson to her class (see Appendix A). The picture was projected on the wall of each classroom. While the picture was being projected, the students were told to pretend that the teacher in the picture was one of their teachers. The students were then told that they were about to listen to a story about the teacher in the picture and how she taught her class. The students were then asked to keep in mind how they would feel if the teacher in the picture and described in the audio scenario were their teacher.

After students had been exposed to the picture and they had listened to the corresponding audio scenario, the researcher again used scripted instructions to inform students that they would now be given 15 minutes to complete a short test about the picture they had just seen and the story they had heard. Students then completed an adapted version of McCroskey's (1994) Affective Learning Scale (ALS) (see Appendix D). Scores recorded were used to determine the level of student affective learning with regard to the behaviors displayed by the teacher in each experimental condition. Participant exposure to visuals and audio clips and the completion of the ALS took approximately 30 minutes from the time the researcher began setting up to when the researcher exited the classrooms. After all the ALS forms had been collected from every student and secured by the researcher, the students were thanked for their participation and cooperation with the study.

Research Design

This study utilized a 2 × 2 factorial design, with teacher nonverbal immediacy (immediate/non-immediate) and teacher confirmation messages (present/absent) serving as the independent variables. Student affective learning served as the dependent variable for this study.

In order to test the hypotheses, participants were randomly assigned to one of two visuals designed to represent either immediate or non-immediate behavior paired with one of two audio scenarios designed to represent either the presence or absence of teacher confirmation. In all, four different immediacy-confirmation conditions were utilized for this study. Because the majority (77%) of secondary special education teachers in the United States are female (Crutchfield, 1997), a female teacher was shown in both immediacy visuals and described in both teacher confirmation scenarios in order to enhance the ecological validity of the all visuals and scenarios.

The first independent variable was teacher nonverbal immediacy and was operationalized as immediate or non-immediate by using a specific set of nonverbal behaviors displayed in two still images. The nonverbal behaviors photographically captured in both the immediate and non-immediate conditions were modeled after the characteristics described in the immediacy scenarios developed by Thweatt and McCroskey (1998). To create the immediate visual, a female teacher was photographed teaching a classroom of high school students. The visual showed the teacher standing in front of the student desks, leaning forward slightly, her hands outstretched and positioned on a student's desk as if emphasizing a point in her lesson. The teacher was also shown smiling and making eye contact with the student in the desk directly in front of her. In the non-immediate condition, the teacher was shown in the same classroom of students; however, she was standing at the front of the classroom, leaning on her own desk. The

teacher had one hand holding a paper she was completely engaged in and the other placed on her desk, used as support. The teacher was shown giving no eye contact to the students in the classroom. She was also not smiling. These visuals can be found in Appendices G and H.

The second independent variable, teacher confirmation, was operationalized in audio scenarios as the presence or absence of messages that communicate to students that they are significant individuals valued by their teacher. The teacher confirmation behaviors described in both the present and absent scenarios were modeled after the four general categories of teacher behavioral patterns used to communicate confirmation developed by Ellis (2000). These scenarios can be found in Appendices B and C.

Manipulation Checks

Because teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation conditions were created to meet the unique needs of students receiving special education services, separate manipulation checks were conducted for each independent variable.

Teacher nonverbal immediacy independent variable.

In order to assess the manipulation for teacher nonverbal immediacy, a convenience sample of seventy non-disabled student participants from a local high school in South Texas were asked to rate the level of nonverbal immediacy behavior in one of four photos. Permission to survey non-disabled students was received from the institutional review board, as was permission from all district, administrative, and campus personnel, as well as from all parents and guardians and participants themselves.

Each of the four photos (labeled A, B, C, and D) presented to students displayed a teacher employing the same set of nonverbal behaviors in a different manner (i.e., teacher location in classroom, facial expression of teacher, proximity to students). Photos A and B were designed to

represented an immediate teacher, while photos C and D were designed to represent a non-immediate teacher. Students were randomly placed into groups and presented with one of the four photos for rating.

After viewing one of the four photos, each participant was asked to complete the Nonverbal Immediacy Scale (NIS) (Richmond, McCroskey, & Johnson, 2003) (see Appendix E), modified to exclude questions regarding the vocal variety and touching behaviors of the teacher. The NIS had a range of 18 to 90 and a midpoint of 54. Students exposed to photo A reported an average total NIS score of 71.84 (*SD* = 9.48), while those exposed to photo B reported an average total score of 67.80 (*SD* = 7.31). Students exposed to photos C and D reported average total NIS scores of 46.74 (*SD* = 5.84) and 50.64 (*SD* = 10.98) respectively. Photo A, which reported the highest average total score from student participants, was then paired with photo C, which reported the lowest average total score, in order to assess the manipulation of the nonverbal immediacy variable. Students exposed to immediate photo A (*M* = 71.84, *SD* = 9.48) perceived significantly more nonverbal immediacy behaviors than students exposed to non-immediate photo C (*M* = 46.74, *SD* = 5.84), t (2, 36) = 9.831, $p < .000$. Reliability statistics showed a Cronbach's alpha of .88. These results indicated that the immediate and non-immediate conditions were operationalized correctly. These two photos were then employed in the current study.

Teacher confirmation independent variable.

A manipulation check was also performed to check the validity of the teacher confirmation measure. Again, a convenience sample of seventy non-disabled student participants from a local high school in South Texas was recruited to rate two audio scenarios for their presence or absence of teacher confirmation. After listening to each scenario, each

participant was asked to complete an adapted version of Ellis' (2000) Teacher Confirmation Scale (TCS) (see Appendix F), modified to exclude the "teaching style" construct. The TCS had a range from 0 to 44 and a midpoint of 22. Students exposed to the confirmation present scenarios (M = 37.89, SD = 5.13) perceived significantly more teacher confirmation messages than students exposed to the confirmation absent scenarios (M = 8.94, SD = 4.34), t (2, 67) = 24.946, $p < .000$. Reliability statistics showed a Cronbach's alpha of .82. These results indicated that the teacher confirmation present and absent and conditions were operationalized correctly.

Dependent Variable and Survey Instrumentation

The dependent variable in this study was student affective learning. To measure affective learning as a function of teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation, students were asked to complete a modified version of McCroskey's (1994) Affective Learning Scale.

The 16-item measure was modified by removing all questions regarding affect toward instructor from the scale, leaving twelve questions for students to respond to. Because some students' Individualized Education Programs (IEP) listed "oral testing" as a modification for student success, all students had the ALS read aloud to them. The researcher ensured that the ALS was read in a neutral tone so as not to influence student scores.

Scoring for the ALS was based on the sum of scores for two categories: (1) Affect toward content and (2) affect toward classes in the same content (as discussed in both audio scenarios) to determine student affective learning. The reliability for the affect for content measure has historically ranged from .85 to well above .90. The other three measures have consistently yielded alpha reliability estimates above .90 (McCroskey, 1994).

Analysis of the results of the ALS in the present study involved comparing composite ALS scores to the level of teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation found to exist in each experimental condition, as determined by separate manipulation checks. Affective learning, with a range of 12-84, yielded a mean of 48.81 ($SD = 4.76$, $\alpha = .82$).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation on the affective learning of secondary students with special needs through the use of visuals and audio scenarios.

This chapter reviews the results that explored the research questions and tested the hypotheses for this thesis. The research questions were tested using two separate independent t-tests with nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation serving as the independent variables and student affective learning serving as the dependent variable. The hypotheses were tested using a univariate analysis of variance, again with nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation serving as the independent variables and student affective learning serving as the dependent variable. The univariate ANOVA test employed analyzed the differences between participants exposed to each research condition on the composite score of the twelve affective learning questions asked on McCroskey's (1994) Affective Learning Scale.

The first research question asked if teacher nonverbal immediacy affected special needs students' perceptions of affective learning as tested using photographic stimuli. Accurate ratings of the immediate or non-immediate nonverbal behaviors of the teacher were determined by the mean scores collected from McCroskey's ALS. Level of affective learning with regard to teacher nonverbal immediacy was defined as the composite score of each participant's responses on the ALS. Lower scores indicated lower affective learning, while higher scores indicated

higher affective learning. An independent t-test showed that students exposed to the immediate stimuli (M = 49.44, SD = 2.87) averaged higher ALS scores than students exposed to the non-immediate stimuli (M = 48.13, SD = 6.22), t (2, 29) = .757, $p < .007$. Based on these results, the first research question was answered positively, as data suggest that despite having a disability, students with special needs can accurately identify the immediate and non-immediate nonverbal behaviors of teachers and adjust their level of affective learning accordingly.

The second research question asked if teacher confirmation affected special needs students' perceptions of affective learning as tested using audio scenarios. Accurate ratings of the presence or absence of teacher confirmation messages were determined by the mean scores collected from McCroskey's ALS. Level of affective learning with regard to teacher confirmation was also defined as the composite scores of each participant's responses on the ALS. Again, lower scores indicated lower affective learning and higher scores indicated higher affective learning. A second independent t-test showed that students exposed to the confirmation present audio scenario (M = 50.13, SD = 5.61) averaged higher, but not statistically significant, ALS scores than students exposed to the confirmation absent scenario (M = 47.40, SD = 3.27), t (2, 29) = 1.638, $p < .271$. Based on these results, the second research question was answered negatively, however, as no significant relationship was found to exist between the composite ALS scores of students exposed to the present and absent confirmation scenarios. The data suggest that students with special needs do not perceive their affective learning to be affected by teachers' confirmation messages.

Three hypotheses were also posed as the basis for this study. The first hypothesis predicted that teacher nonverbal immediacy will positively influence the affective learning of secondary students with special needs. Based on the results of RQ_1, H_1 was supported, as data

showed that despite any disability, students with special needs averaged higher ALS scores when exposed to the immediate stimuli (M = 49.44, SD = 2.87) as opposed to students exposed to the non-immediate stimuli (M = 48.13, SD = 6.22), t (2, 29) = .757, p < .007. These results suggest that disabled students adjust their level of affective learning in accordance with the immediacy behaviors employed by their teachers.

The second hypothesis predicted that the presence of teacher confirmation messages will positively affect the affective learning of secondary students with special needs. Based on the results of RQ_2, H_2 was not supported, as data showed that no significant effect existed between students exposed to the confirmation present (M = 50.13, SD = 5.61) and absent (M = 47.40, SD = 3.27) audio scenarios, t (2, 29) = 1.638, p < .271, despite the fact that students exposed to the confirmation present scenario averaged higher ALS scores than students exposed to the confirmation absent scenario. These results suggest that disabled students cannot accurately identify the presence and absence of confirmation messages and adjust their level of affective learning to a significant degree.

The third hypothesis predicted that students with special needs will experience greater levels of affective learning when exposed to teacher nonverbal immediacy, regardless of their exposure to teacher confirmation. This hypothesis was supported. When the two independent variables (nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation) were subjected to an analysis of variance, with student affective learning serving as the dependent variable, the analysis revealed a significant interaction effect, F (1, 30) = 4.23, p = .05, in support of H_3. Results for the analysis of variance are reported in Table 1. Main effects for both nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation were revealed to be non-significant. Means and standard deviations for H_3 are reported in Table 2. The data suggest that while teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher

confirmation are non-significant indicators of increased levels of student affective learning by themselves, together the two variables interact to increase affective learning in students with special needs, accounting for 14% of the variance.

Table 1 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects – Analysis of Variance for Teacher Nonverbal Immediacy and Teacher Confirmation on Student Affective Learning

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Immediacy	13.168	1	13.168	.678	.417
Teacher Confirmation	59.404	1	59.404	3.060	.092
Immediacy*Teacher Confirmation	82.035	1	82.035	4.225	.050
Error	524.232	27	19.516	54	2.0
Total	678.839	30			

Table 2 Means and Standard Deviations for the Effects of Teacher Nonverbal Immediacy and Teacher Confirmation on Student Affective Learning

		CONFIRMATION	
		Present	Not Present
IMMEDIACY	Immediate	51.00 (1.558)	49.63 (1.558)
	Non-Immediate	49.25 (1.558)	44.86 (1.665)

Note. Numbers in parentheses denote standard deviation.

The data in Table 2 show that an interaction effect was found between immediacy and teacher confirmation, and that different levels of immediacy and confirmation correspond to similar levels of student affective learning. Students with special needs experienced the highest levels of affective learning when exposed to nonverbally immediate teachers who employed teacher confirmation messages than any other combination of the two variables. The data also showed that ALS scores were more similar in the immediacy condition with and without confirmation, but significantly different in the non-immediacy condition with and without confirmation. Condition A resulted in the highest student ALS scores, followed by conditions B, C, and D.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to show that teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation influence the affective learning of secondary students with special needs both individually and together. According to Mehrabian (1969), the use of nonverbal immediacy behaviors in the classroom causes students to become closer to and positively evaluate their teachers, which as a result, increases student affective learning (Witt and Wheeless, 2001; Comstock, Rowell & Bowers, 1995). According to Ellis (2000, 2004), the use of teacher confirmation messages in the classroom communicates to students that they are valuable, significant individuals, which enhances educational internalization and personal validation, and as a result, increases student affective learning.

The data from this study provide some support for the hypotheses posed; however, results of the study were contingent upon whether students with special needs could accurately rate the immediate or non-immediate nonverbal behaviors of their teachers as well as the presence or absence of teacher confirmation messages employed by their teachers as asked in two separate research questions that began this study.

With regard to RQ_1, the previous chapter stated that level of affective learning with regard to teacher nonverbal immediacy was defined as the composite score of each participant's responses on the ALS, with lower scores representing lower affective learning and higher scores representing higher affective learning. Results showed that when students were exposed to the

visual stimulus showing a teacher employing immediate behavior, students averaged higher affective learning scores than students exposed to the visual stimulus showing a teacher employing non-immediate behavior. The data suggest, then, that despite having a disability, teacher nonverbal immediacy behaviors affect students with special needs' perceptions of their affective learning. This data also supported H_1, which stated that teacher nonverbal immediacy will positively influence the affective learning of students with special needs.

The second research question asked whether students with special needs could accurately rate the presence or absence of teacher confirmation in a given audio scenario. Although students in the confirmation present condition averaged higher scores on the ALS than students in the confirmation absent condition, the difference in scores was not statistically significant. Thus, the answer to this research question was that students in this study were unable to rate teacher confirmation accurately to a significant level. Because of the results of RQ_2, H_2, which stated that teacher confirmation will positively influence the affective learning of students with special needs, was not supported. Again, level of affective learning with regard to teacher confirmation was defined as the composite ALS score of each participant, with lower scores representing lower affective learning and higher scores representing higher affective learning. Results showed that students with special needs cannot accurately identify the presence or absence of confirmation messages employed by teachers, as no significant relationship was found between students exposed each confirmation condition.

While teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation both represent message systems teachers may use to communicate with their students, nonverbal immediacy is a *relational* communicative system, while teacher confirmation is a *verbal* communicative system. According to Burgoon (1994), approximately 60-65% of social meaning is derived strictly from

nonverbal behaviors. Research also suggests that people tend to rely more on nonverbal communication when sending positive and negative messages *to* relationship partners and rely more on nonverbal communication when interpreting positive and negative messages *from* relational partners (Noller, 1984). This research may help explain why students with special needs are able to accurately identify immediate and non-immediate behaviors and adjust their affective learning according but cannot accurately identify the presence or absence of teacher confirmation messages. While certain disabilities may render students unable to comprehend the verbal nuances of teacher confirmation or engage in verbal communication themselves, a wide range of nonverbal behaviors remains available to disabled students, who may therefore be better equipped to comprehend or make meaning of the nonverbal behaviors employed by their teachers.

Results showed that levels of teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation alone were not found to be linked to the affective learning of students with special needs, suggesting that the cognitive disabilities experienced by students are impairing enough to cause misconceptions of the perceptions disabled students have of the immediacy behaviors and confirmation messages employed by the personnel educating them. While students exposed to the immediate visual stimulus and confirmation present scenario reported higher scores of the ALS than students exposed to the non-immediate visual stimulus and confirmation absent scenario, non-significant main effects were found for both teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation.

The data did, however, demonstrate that when nonverbal immediacy and confirmation messages interact, students with special needs are able to accurately identify the immediacy behaviors and confirmation messages employed by educators. In support of H_3, the data from

Table 2 reveal that while different levels of immediacy and teacher confirmation correspond to similar levels of student affective learning, students with special needs experience the highest levels of affective learning when exposed to nonverbally immediate teachers who employ teacher confirmation messages (condition A) than any other combination of the two variables. The current study found students with special needs were able to more accurately perceive nonverbal immediacy than teacher confirmation, as evidenced by students exposed to condition B averaging the next highest affective learning scores, followed by conditions C and D. While all four conditions resulted in different ALS averages, a more significant difference in ALS scores was found in the non-immediacy condition with and without confirmation (conditions C and D) than in the immediacy condition, with and without confirmation (conditions A and B). For conditions C and D, immediacy was not present, and therefore, students were not exposed to the immediacy variable for increased affective learning. Students, however, were exposed to different levels of teacher confirmation, with students exposed to the present condition averaging higher ALS scores than students exposed to the absent condition.

As stated earlier, Noller (1984) found that the majority of people (65%) rely on nonverbal behaviors for communication; and data from the current study found that students with special needs perceive higher levels of affective learning when exposed to nonverbally immediate teachers, perhaps because some disabilities may render students unable to verbally communicate themselves. Noller's (1984) research, then, would help explain why students exposed to condition A averaged higher ALS scores than students exposed to condition B, with little difference between the two conditions.

However, not all disabled students are unable to communicate verbally or understand and interpret verbal nuances, and as a result, teacher confirmation offers these students another

aspect of teacher behaviors that can affect their own affective learning. It stands to reason, then, that while not all students benefit from or are able to interpret teacher confirmation messages, those students who do, use these messages to better interpret the behaviors of their teachers and adjust their affective learning accordingly and to a higher degree. This reasoning would help explain why students exposed to non-immediate teachers employing teacher confirmation messages (condition C) averaged significantly higher ALS scores than students exposed to non-immediate teachers employing no confirmation messages (condition D). Without the presence of the immediacy variable, students exposed to non-immediate teachers were left to rely solely on teacher confirmation to affect their perceptions of affective learning. Students exposed to the teacher confirmation present condition averaged significantly higher ALS scores than students exposed to the absent condition, possibly because teacher confirmation was more salient for conditions C and D.

Regardless of the specific differences between conditions, the data from this study provide support that nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation interact to increase the affective learning of students with special needs but do not increase affective learning independently from one another.

This study represents a step in altering the perceptions educators have of students with special needs and the type of classroom behaviors that can be employed to enrich and increase student affective learning. Research from this study supports that students with special needs experience greater levels of affective learning when exposed to immediate teachers who use confirming messages. For this reason, it can be argued that while disabled students may derive the majority of social meaning from nonverbal behaviors, teacher confirmation also plays a role in the level of affective learning experienced by disabled students. For students who have a

cognitive disability that limits their understanding of spoken words or verbal nuances, nonverbal immediacy may represent the only communicative system for which these students grasp any influential meaning. For students whose disabilities do not impede their understanding of spoken language (i.e., physical disabilities), teacher confirmation messages may offer these students another type of teacher behavior that influences their own affective learning. However, because research shows that nonverbal immediacy is a more pervasive teacher behavior in influencing student affective learning, teachers should employ as many nonverbal immediacy behaviors as possible in an effort to increase the affective learning of their students.

The ability to accurately identify and be influenced by teacher behaviors is of benefit to disabled students because, as prior research has demonstrated, student affective learning is directly related to the level of nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirming messages employed by educators. It follows, then, that because students with special needs are influenced by the actions of their teachers, teachers should engage in nonverbally immediate behavior and use teacher confirmation messages in an effort to increase the affective learning of special needs students.

The findings of this study provide evidence that despite a "special education" classification, students with special needs possess a cognitive ability to detect immediacy behaviors and teacher confirming messages that are being used (or not) by teachers during instruction. As a result, teachers should be aware of their own behaviors in class and leverage those behaviors to increase the affective learning of their students.

Limitations of Study

Although the findings of this study were consistent with the proposed rationale, these results and interpretations must be considered with regard to the limitations associated with this study.

First, a very small sample size was used to collect the data for this study, thus the results are not generalizable. Due to the constraints of the public school system and the legal rights of disabled individuals, the researcher was unable to collect sufficient parental permission to test the hypotheses with a larger, more generalizable sample size and explore the research questions. Many parents and guardians expressed concern regarding how participation in the study might affect the special services given to their children inside and outside of school and whether confidentiality of individual student disability could be guaranteed given that students were to be called out of heterogeneous classrooms to report to a separate classroom for participation in the study.

Second, because of the legal rights of disabled students, the researcher was unable to collect information regarding the specific disabilities of research participants and instead related all research findings to a general category of "students with special needs." Within the special education classification system, students are classified as having particular disabilities, but the degree to which these disabilities are present in students is not clear. Some students may also be classified as having multiple disabilities for which they receive services, but the combination of several disabilities was not known to the researcher. Because the degree to which a given disability presents itself in students varies and the fact that some students may have multiple disabilities for which services are granted to them, results from this study may not accurately reflect how students with special needs interpret and are thus influenced by teacher nonverbal

immediacy and teacher confirmation. For this particular study, the researcher was only able to confirm that generally, the research participants were classified as having specific learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, ADHD and mental retardation. Whether students had multiple disabilities was unknown. More specific information regarding each participant and his/her disabilities would provide greater insight into how to interpret research results or go about collecting data in the first place.

A third concern was the artificial nature of the experimental condition and the fact that the use of hypothetical situations may have affected the final results. Because visuals and scenarios were used to expose students with special needs to different levels of nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation, all results indicated how students *thought* they would feel if in the classroom of the teacher portrayed in the visual and described in the scenario. Efforts need to emphasize the development of research methods that have students with special needs sit through real lessons conducted by teachers employing different levels of nonverbal teacher immediacy and teacher confirmation. Doing so would test for *actual* feelings of student affective learning and increase the ecological validity of the study.

Another concern regarding the use of the audio scenarios is the potential level of immediacy present in the vocal quality of the speaker narrating the scenario. The narrator was instructed to read each scenario in a neutral tone for the recording; however, her personal level of immediacy may have leaked through into the audio, and as a result, caused students to rate each audio scenario more favorably than they might have had true neutrality been present.

A fifth concern with this study was the use non-disabled high school students as participants for the nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation manipulation checks. It is possible that non-disabled students are better able to read the nonverbal behaviors and interpret

the verbal nuances of people better than students with disabilities. If this is the case, then the manipulation of both independent variables used in this study may have catered more to non-disabled students and, as a result, led to incorrect interpretations from students with special needs.

A final concern involved the demographic characteristics of the sample itself. Because students were selected from campuses in South Texas, ethnic variability was not present. For this reason, generalizability is limited to only South Texas populations where the overwhelming majority of students are of Hispanic descent.

Recommendations for Future Research

Keeping in mind the limitations outlined above, several suggestions for research addressing the effects of nonverbal teacher immediacy and teacher confirmation on the affective learning of students with special needs are offered. First, the study should be replicated with a larger and more ethnically representative sample. A broader sample of students from a larger and more ethnically diverse population would perhaps provide different results regarding the effects of immediacy and teacher confirmation on student affective learning.

Second, research aimed at testing the effects of nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation on the affective learning of specific subsets of students with disabilities (i.e., those diagnosed as having an emotional disturbance, ADHD, autism, or multiple disabilities), as opposed to a variety of disabilities as a whole, could shed greater light on the individualized techniques that need to be employed in classrooms to optimize affective learning. However, future research may also need to focus on achieving confidentiality for disabled minors in a manner that satisfies public school administrators and parents before determining ways to identify and test individual subsets of disabilities.

Third, greater emphasis should be given to conducting experiments aimed at testing for actual as opposed to perceived student affective learning. An experimental element used to test for the behavioral implications of affective learning would better address whether or not students with special needs are influenced by different levels of teacher nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation in the same way non-disabled students have been found to be influenced.

Another area for future research concerns using disabled students for the manipulation check of independent variables. Non-disabled students may be better cognitively equipped to read nonverbal cues and verbal distinctions, and as such, their participation in a manipulation check may not garner the same results that disabled students would provide. Assigning students with special needs to participate in manipulation checks would provide greater insight into whether the independent variables have been manipulated in a manner that allows these students to accurately rate each variable as the researcher intends.

Fifth, because students whose cognitive limitations impaired their ability to give written or verbal consent were excluded from this study, future research should focus on designing measurement techniques that cater to individuals with more severe cognitive impairments, as educating those individuals is oftentimes more difficult than educators have the training for (Baines, et al., 1994).

Moreover, educational research may benefit from studying the effects of nonverbal immediacy and teacher confirmation on the affective learning of disabled students at the primary level. Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) build upon each other as students transition from the primary through secondary grades, and understanding how students learn at primary levels of education would provide insight to secondary teachers working with newly transitioning disabled students.

Finally, further research on the educational standards of students with special needs, with concentration on in-class/positive behavior support systems, is crucial to further improving the standard of education for all students with special needs.

REFERENCES

14 percent of U.S. kids with special needs. (2008, Mar 5). United Press International < http://www.upi.com/Health_News/2008/03/05/14-percent-of-US-kids-with-special-needs/UPI-93651204755296/>.

Allen, M., Witt, P, & Wheeless, L. (2006). The role of teacher immediacy as a motivational factor in student learning: Using Meta-Analysis to Test a Causal Model. *Communication Education, 55(1),* 21-31.

American Teens Trail Global Peers in Math Scores. (2010, Dec 6). *The Wall Street Journal* <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703471904576003842497574526.html>.

Andersen, J. F. (1979). Teacher immediacy as a predictor of teaching effectiveness. In B. D. Ruben (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook* (Vol. 3, pp. 534-559). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.

Andersen, J. F., & Withrow, J. G. (1981). The affect of lecturer nonverbal expressiveness on improving mediated instruction. *Communication Education, 30,* 342-3 53.

Back to School on Civil Rights: Advancing the Federal Commitment to Leave No Child Behind, A report published by the *National Council on Disability* on January 25, 2000.

Baines, L., Baines, C., & Masterson, C. (1994). Mainstreaming: One school's reality. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76,* 39-40, 57-64.

Berry, R. A. W. (2006). Inclusion, power, and community: Teachers and students interpret the language of community in an inclusion classroom. *American Educational Research Journal, 43,* 489-529.

Bloom, B. S., Hastings, J. T., & Madaus, G. F. (1971). *Handbook on formative and summative evaluation of student learning.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Brown, L., Long, E., Udvari Solner, A., Schwarz, P., VanDeventer, P., Ahlgren, C., Johnson, F., Gruenewald, L., & Jorgensen, J., (Eds.). (1989). Should students with severe intellectual disabilities be based in regular or in special education classrooms in home schools? *The Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 14(1),* 8-12.

Buber, M. (1988). *Knowledge of man: Selected essays*. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books.

Burgoon, J. K. (1994). Nonverbal signals. In M. L. Knapp & G. R. Miller (Eds.), *Handbook of interpersonal communication* (2nd ed., pp. 229-285). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Burleson, B. R., & Goldsmith, D. J. (1998). How the comforting process works: Alleviating emotional distress through conversationally induced reappraisals. In P. A. Andersen & L. K. Guerrero (Eds.), *Handbook of communication and emotion: Research theory, applications, and contexts* (pp. 245-280). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Christensen, L. J., & Menzel, K. E. (1998). The linear relationship between student reports of teacher immediacy behaviors and perceptions of state motivation, and of cognitive, affective, and behavioral learning. *Communication Education, 47,* 82-90.

Christophel, D. M. (1990). The relationship among teacher immediacy behaviors, student motivation, and learning. *Communication Education, 39,* 323-340.

Comstock, J., Rowell, E., & Bowers, J. (1995). Food for thought: Teacher nonverbal immediacy, student learning, and curvilinearity. *Communication Education, 44,* 251-266.

Croll, P., & Moses, D. (1998). Pragmatism, ideology and educational change: The case of special educational needs. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 46,* 11-25.

Crutchfield, M. (1997). Who's teaching our children with disabilities? *National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY), 27,* 1-24.

Ellis, K. (2000). Perceived teacher confirmation: The development and validation of an instrument and two studies of the relationship to cognitive and affective learning. *Human Communication Research, 26,* 264-291.

Ellis, K. (2004). The affect of perceived teacher confirmation on receiver apprehension, motivation, and learning. *Communication Education, 53,* 1-20.

Geisthardt, C, & Munsch, J. (1996). Coping with school stress: A comparison of adolescents with and without learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 29,* 287-296.

Goodboy, A. K., & Myers, S. A. (2008). The effect of teacher confirmation on student communication and learning outcomes. *Communication Education, 57,* 153-179.

Gorham, J. S. (1988). The relationship between verbal teacher immediacy behaviors and student learning. C*ommunication Education, 37,* 40-53.

Group attacks Sandoval's teacher salary cut proposals. (2011, Feb 24). Las Vegas Review-Journal < http://www.lvrj.com/news/group-attacks-sandoval-s-teacher-salary-cut-proposals-116887828.html>.

Hackman, M. Z., & Walker, K. B. (1990). Instructional communication in the televised classroom: The effects of system design and teacher immediacy on student learning and satisfaction. *Communication Education, 39,* 196-206.

Herman, J. L. (1992). What research tells us about good assessment. *Educational Leadership, 49,* 74-78.

Kauffman, J., Bantz, J., & McCullough, J. (2002). Separate and better: A special public school class for students with emotional and behavior disorders. *Exceptionality, 10(3),* 149-170.

Krathwohl, D. R., Bloom, B. S., & Masia, B. B. (1964). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: Handbook II: Affective domain*. New York: Longman.

Laing, R. D. (1961). *The self and others*. London: Tavistock Publications.

Legislature is cutting teacher pay to cover its mistakes. (2011, Feb 5). Atlanta-Journal Constitution < http://blogs.ajc.com/get-schooled-blog/2011/02/05/legislature-is-cutting-teacher-pay-to-cover-its-mistakes/>.

McCroskey, J. C. (1994). Assessment of affect toward communication and affect toward instruction in communication. In S. Morreale & M. Brooks (Eds.), 1994 SCA summer conference proceedings and prepared remarks: Assessing college student competence in speech communication. Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association.

McCroskey, J.C., & Richmond, V. P. (1996). Human communication theory and research: Traditions and models. In M. B. Salwen & D. W. Stacks (Eds.), *An integrated approach to communication theory and research* (pp. 233-242). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Measuring School Performance and Efficiency: Implications for Practice and Research. (2005). American Education Finance Association. NY: Eye on Education, Inc.

Mehrabian, A. (1969). Some referents and measures of nonverbal behavior. *Behavioral Research Methods and Instrumentation, 1,* 203-207.

Montgomery, J. (2007). Maximizing the potential of learners with special education needs. *Communication Disorders Quarterly, 28(2),* 117-120. Retrieved from Communication & Mass Media Complete database.

Mottet, T. P, & Beebe, S. A. (2006). Foundations of instructional communication. In T. P. Mottet, V. P. Richmond, & J. C. McCroskey (Eds.), *Handbook of instructional communication: Rhetorical and relational perspectives* (pp. 3-32). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Mottet, T. P., Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (Eds.). (2006). *The handbook of instructional communication: Rhetorical and relational perspectives.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Noller, P. (1984). *Nonverbal communication and marital interaction*. Oxford, UK: Pergamon.

Nussbaum, J. F. (1992). Effective teacher behaviors. *Communication Education, 41,* 167-180.

Obama Takes Aim at School Dropout Rates. (2010, Feb 24). *The Wall Street Journal* < http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/03/01/obama-takes-aim-at-school-dropout-rates/>.

Parents of Disabled Children Push for Separate Classes. (2007, Nov 27). *The Wall Street Journal* < http://online.wsj.com/article/SB119610348432004184.html>.

Richmond, V. P. (1990). Communication in the classroom: Power and motivation. *Communication Education, 39,* 181-195.

Richmond, V. P., Lane, D. R., & McCroskey, J. C. (2006). Teacher immediacy and the teacher-student relationship. In T. P. Mottet, V. P. Richmond, & J. C. McCroskey (Eds.), *Handbook of instructional communication: Rhetorical and relational perspectives* (pp. 167-193). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C., (1992). Increasing teacher influence through immediacy. In V.P. Richmond and J. C. McCroskey (Eds.). *Power in the classroom: Communication, control and concern*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Richmond, V. P., McCroskey, J. C., & Johnson, A. E. (2003). Development of the Nonverbal Immediacy Scale (NIS): Measures of self- and other-perceived nonverbal immediacy. *Communication Quarterly, 51,* 502-515

Rodriguez, J. I., Plax, T. G., & Kearney, P. (1996). Clarifying the relationship between teacher nonverbal immediacy and student cognitive learning: Affective learning as the central causal mediator. *Communication Education, 45,* 293-305.

Sacks, P. (2000). Predictable losers in testing schemes. *School Administrator, 57,* 6-9.

Schools Accused of Pushing Mainstreaming to Cut Costs. (2007, Dec 14). The Wall Street Journal < http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB119758950772128219.html >.

School Achievement Reports Often Exclude the Disabled. (2004, Aug 30). The New York Times < http://www.nytimes.com/2004/08/30/education/30special.html>.

School board may cut teacher pay, middle school athletics. (2010, Apr 7). *Savannah Morning News* < http://savannahnow.com/latest-news/2010-04-07/school-board-may-cut-teacher-pay-middle-school-athletics>.

Smelter, R. W., Rasch, B. W., & Yudewitz, G. J. (1994). Thinking of inclusion for all special needs students? Better think again. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76,* 35-38.

Special education needs: A mainstream issue. (2002). Audit Commission.

Sugai, G., Horner, R., Dunlap, G., Hieneman, M., et al. (1999). Applying positive behavior support and functional behavioral assessment in schools. *OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support: Technical Assistance Guide*, 1-24.

Taylor-Greene, S., Brown, D., Nelson, L., Longton, J., Gassman, T., Cohen, J., Swartz, J., Horner, & R. H., Sugai, G. (1997). School-wide behavioral support: Starting the year off right. *Journal of Behavioral Education, 7*, 99-112.

Teacher pay needs to be on the table. (2011, Feb 20). The Wichita Eagle Editorial Department Blog < http://blogs.kansas.com/weblog/2011/02/teacher-pay-needs-to-be-on-the-table/>.

Thweatt, K. S., & McCroskey, J. C. (1998). The affect of teacher immediacy and misbehaviors on teacher credibility. *Communication Education, 47*, 348-358.

Total expenditures for students with disabilities, 1999-2000: Spending variation by disability. (2003). Special Education Expenditure Project, American Institutes for Research.

United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. History: Twenty-Five Years of Progress in Educating Children With Disabilities Through IDEA. Date of Publication Unknown. <http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/leg/idea/history.pdf>

United States Department of Education. (2001). No Child Left Behind Act < http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/index.html>.

Witt, P. L., & Wheeless, L. R. (2001). An experimental study of teachers' verbal and nonverbal immediacy and students' affective and cognitive learning. *Communication Education, 50*, 327-342.

Witt, P. L., Wheeless, L. R., & Allen, M. (2004). A meta-analytical review of the relationship between teacher immediacy and student learning. *Communication Monographs, 71*, 184-207.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

RESEARCHER INSTRUCTIONS FOR VISUALS AND AUDIO SCENARIOS

(All needed technology will be set up before instructions are read to participants.)

Good morning (afternoon), everyone. Today you are going to see a picture of a teacher giving a lesson to her class. While you are looking at the picture, I want you to pretend that the teacher in the picture is one of your teachers. This is the picture (*display picture on wall/screen in classroom*). Take a few seconds to look at the picture and see what the teacher and students are doing.

You are now going to hear a story about the teacher in the picture and how the teacher teachers her class. While you are listening to the story, think about how you would feel if the teacher in the picture were your teacher (*play audio scenarios*).

Now that you have seen a picture of the teacher and heard a story about how she teaches her class, you are going to take a short test about the picture you saw and the story you heard (*pass out the ALS to each student*). Listen closely as I read the directions for the test. "Please circle the number that best represents your feelings. The closer a number is the describing word, the more you feel that way." You will now have 15 minutes to complete the test. I will read each question on the test out loud for everyone. Listen carefully as I read each question and answer as best as you can. When everyone has finished answering all the questions, I will collect the tests from everyone. *(Students will be given 15 minutes to take the ALS. Tests will be collected when all students have completed the ALS.)*

Thank you so much for your participation and cooperation today. Have a great day (*researchers will collect all used technology and questionnaires and exit the classroom*).

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

TEACHER CONFIRMATION PRESENT SCENARIO

Today in class, your English teacher, Mrs. Gonzalez, will be going over verbs. "Good morning class! Please take out your Grammar books so that we can get started on today's lesson," says Mrs. Gonzalez excitedly. Mrs. Gonzalez always smiles when she talks to her students.

Mrs. Gonzalez also moves around the classroom a lot when she teaches, asking students to answer questions and to give their opinions as much as possible. "Jorge," says Mrs. Gonzalez, "why is it important to understand verbs?" Jorge tells Mrs. Gonzalez that verbs tell us the action that is happening in a sentence. "That's correct!" says Mrs. Gonzalez. "Jorge, will you please repeat what you just said to the rest of the class? It is very important that everyone understand what Jorge just explained."

When students answer questions, Mrs. Gonzalez always thanks them for their participation. Mrs. Gonzalez tells her students that she likes to listen to their stories because personal stories are an important part of learning. Whenever students have questions, Mrs. Gonzalez takes her time to answer because she wants her students to understand everything as much as possible. Today, one student was having trouble understanding the lesson on verbs. "Sweetheart, let's meet today after school and go over the problems in the book one more time. I want to make sure you understand everything for the test next week." Mrs. Gonzalez always helps all her students because she wants everyone to do well in her class.

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

TEACHER CONFIRMATION ABSENT SCENARIO

Today in class, your English teacher, Mrs. Gonzalez, will be going over verbs. "Take out your Grammar books so that we can get started," says Mrs. Gonzalez. Mrs. Gonzalez does not smile when she talks to her students and she does not always sound excited about teaching.

Mrs. Gonzalez often stands in front of the classroom when she teaches or sits at her desk when speaking to students. Mrs. Gonzalez does not ask her students to answer many questions, and usually students do not participate in class. Instead, Mrs. Gonzalez spends the entire class period going over the textbook. "What's the answer to number three," Mrs. Gonzalez asks Jorge. Jorge says the correct answer is "A." "Good," says Mrs. Gonzalez without looking at him.

Whenever students have questions, Mrs. Gonzalez tries to answer as quickly as possible because there is a lot of material that she needs to cover every day. Today, one student was having trouble understanding the lesson on verbs. "If you don't understand something you need to study every night," Mrs. Gonzalez said. When students need extra help in class, Mrs. Gonzalez tells them to keep practicing and working hard.

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

AFFECTIVE LEARNING SCALE (MCCROSKEY, 1994)

Directions: Circle the word that best describes what you are.

Class Ranking:	**Sex:**	**Ethnicity:**	**Strongest Language:**
Freshman	Male	Hispanic	English
Sophomore	Female	Anglo	Spanish
Junior		Black	
Senior		Other	

Directions: Please circle the number that best represents your feelings if your teacher was the teacher in the picture and the story you heard. The closer a number is to the item/adjective, the more you feel that way.

(Affect toward content measure)
I feel the class' content is:

Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Valuable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Worthless
Unfair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Fair
Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive

(Affect toward related content)
My likelihood of actually enrolling in another similar course if my schedule lets me is:

Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Likely
Possible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Impossible
Improbable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Probably
Would	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Would not

APPENDIX D (CONTINUED)

AFFECTIVE LEARNING SCALE (MCCROSKEY, 1994)

(Affect toward taking classes with this instructor measure)
Were I to have the opportunity, my likelihood of taking future courses with this specific teacher would be:

Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Likely
Possible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Impossible
Improbable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Probable
Would	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Would not

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E

NONVERBAL IMMEDIACY SCALE (RICHMOND, MCCROSKEY, & JOHNSON, 2003)

DIRECTIONS: The following statements describe the ways some people behave while talking with or to others. Please indicate in the space at the left of each item the degree to which you believe the statement applies to the teacher in the photo you have just seen. Please use the following 5-point scale: **1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Occasionally; 4 = Often; 5 = Very Often**

_____ 1. He/she uses her/his hands and arms to gesture while talking to people.

_____ 2. He/she looks over or away from others while talking to them.

_____ 3. He/she has a relaxed body position when he/she talks to people.

_____ 4. He/she frowns while talking to people.

_____ 5. He/she avoids eye contact while talking to people.

_____ 6. He/she has a tense body position while talking to people.

_____ 7. He/she sits close or stands close to people while talking with them.

_____ 8. He/she smiles when he/she talks to people.

_____ 9. He/she is animated when he/she talk to people.

_____10. He/she has a bland facial expression when he/she talks to people.

_____11. He/she moves closer to people when he/she talks to them.

_____12. He/she looks directly at people while talking to them.

_____13. He/she is stiff when he/she talks to people.

_____14. He/she avoids gesturing while he/she is talking to people.

_____15. He/she leans toward people when he/she talks to them.

APPENDIX E (CONTINUED)

NONVERBAL IMMEDIACY SCALE (RICHMOND, MCCROSKEY, & JOHNSON, 2003)

_____16. He/she maintains eye contact with people when he/she talks to them.

_____17. He/she tries not to sit or stand close to people when he/she talks with them.

_____18. He/she leans away from people when he/she talks to them.

APPENDIX F

APPENDIX F

TEACHER CONFIRMATION SCALE (ELLIS, 2000)

0	1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

The instructor:

Responding to Questions

_____ 1. took time to answer students' questions fully.

_____ 2. listened attentively when students asked questions or made comments during class.

_____ 3. indicated that she appreciated students' questions or comments.

_____ 4. was available for questions before and after class.

_____ 5. was willing to deviate slightly from the lecture when students ask questions.

Demonstrating Interest

_____ 1. communicated that she is interested in whether the students are learning.

_____ 2. communicated that she believes students can do well in the class.

_____ 3. asked students how they think the class is going.

_____ 4. made an effort to get to know students.

_____ 5. smiled at the class.

_____ 6. established eye contact during the lecture.

APPENDIX G

APPENDIX G

TEACHER NONVERBAL IMMEDIATE VISUAL

APPENDIX H

APPENDIX H

TEACHER NONVERBAL NON-IMMEDIATE VISUAL

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jacquelyn Renee Rex earned a Master of Arts in Communication with a concentration in Instructional Communication from the University of Texas-Pan American in August 2011. She also received a Bachelors of Arts in Telecommunication Media Studies from Texas A&M University in December 2008. During her time as a graduate student, Rex worked as a Special Education Resource teacher at Geraldine Palmer Elementary while serving as a 2009 Rio Grande Valley corps member for Teach for America. Rex resides in Edinburg, Texas.