Unspoken Messages:
Understanding Diversity in Education Requires Emphasis on Nonverbal Communication

By Mary John O'Hair and Eero Ropo

Teacher educators often overlook nonverbal communication, the behaviors that convey meaning to other people without the use of language. Nonverbal communication includes any behavior which does not use words. The manner in which teachers use their voice, face, body, or even classroom arrangement signals meaning to students, parents, principals, and others. Nonverbal behavior can even convey information teachers might not want others to know. Often unintentionally, teachers signal to students how they feel about them and about teaching in general.

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Research supports that cultures affect nonverbal behaviors (Matsumoto, 1991; Pitton, Warring, Frank, & Hunter, 1993). As our nation's schools experience an increasingly diverse student population with a homogeneous teaching force (Grant & Secada, 1990), nonverbal communication awareness becomes vital for teacher educators and teachers. Successfully

teaching children of diverse cultures and backgrounds requires an understanding of unspoken messages sent to and received from students and parents of different cultures, races, and genders.

The verbal communication process is, by and large, controllable and intentional, but nonverbal behavior is often difficult to manage and control. In fact, many nonverbal cues can be emitted without a person's awareness. For example, a frustrated teacher, who asks a student "Tommy" to be seated repeatedly, exhibits nonverbal cues. Finally, whenever Tommy is seated the teacher says, "Tommy, we are delighted that you are seated." The teacher's words were probably appropriate for the situation, yet the teacher's eye contact, facial expressions, and tone of voice indicate a lack of sincerity. Research supports that students are quite accurate in reading teachers' nonverbal behavior. One study found that after viewing a 10-second video clip, students as young as the fourth grade could tell (a) whether the teacher was talking to an excellent or weak student and (b) whether the teacher loved the student (Babad, Bernieri & Rosenthal, 1991).

Communication scholars consider nonverbal communication to be a double-edge sword (O'Hair & Friedrich, 1992). It can enhance one's ability to communicate with others if used effectively, or it can damage one's ability to act constructively. This article examines nonverbal communication research over the past 30 years and focuses attention on areas relevant to teacher education and classroom diversity. Particular attention is focused on nonverbal research dealing with different cultures, races, genders, and personalities.[1] Both the education and communication disciplines can benefit by enjoying a closer, mutually beneficial association. The objectives of this article are fourfold: a) discuss major functions of nonverbal communication in the classroom, b) synthesize functions into a framework of nonverbal teaching, c) apply framework to teacher education, and d) give implications for teacher education programs.

Major Functions of Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication serves a number of functions in educational contexts. Argyle (1975) has suggested that nonverbal behavior serves four functions: expressing emotions, conveying interpersonal attitudes, presenting one's personality, and accompanying verbal communication.

The first function is that of **expressing emotions**. Emotional expression is as important in teaching and educational settings as it is in personal encounters. When teachers communicate excitement through their voices and gestures, students get a sense that teachers really are committed to what they are saying. In addition, teachers can have an idea of how students feel about school by how they sit or by their facial expressions. Without nonverbal behavior, the expression of emotions would be difficult, and teachers would have less knowledge about how their students feel and respond to new material, instruction, and learning in general.

The second function of nonverbal communication is **conveying interpersonal attitudes**. This involves expressing opinions toward other people. When students enter the classroom in the morning, a perceptive teacher can tell how they feel about school and themselves by the students' nonverbal communication. If the students say "hi" without much expression in their voice and without looking directly at the teacher, they may simply be going through the perfunctory motions required of all children. If, on the other hand, the children smile, look directly at the teacher, and turn toward the teacher, they are perceived to be genuine in the salutation. In addition, if children come from a contact culture, one in which certain contexts such as greetings require touch, they might hug the teacher. For example, Haberstadt (1985) described African Americans use of complex handshakes. Pitton *et al.* (1993) report that Native Americans use gentle touches and hugs to convey encouragement. Handshakes are accomplished with a very gentle clasping of the hands, and a more intense handshake may be viewed as disrespectful by Native Americans. Shuter (1977) characterized Italian males as tactile and females as nontactile; whereas, German and American cultures contain tactile females and nontactile males. Educators can tell a great deal about others' interpersonal attitudes by their nonverbal behavior.

The third function of nonverbal communication is the **presentation of one's personality** to other people, sometimes referred to as the process of impression formation and management (Burgoon, Buller & Woodall, 1989). Without tone of voice, gestures, facial expressions, and so forth, teachers would appear and sound like robots. Although some teachers and principals perceive state legislatures and reforms to prefer robots in the classroom, the prospect is not appealing. As human communicators, teachers can obtain an accurate sense of what others are trying to communicate by knowing their personality. Knowing about another person's personality characteristics allows teachers to make and confirm predictions about their actions, plans, and behaviors. This makes communicating easier. How students or parents use language can give teachers an indication of their personality to some extent, but their nonverbal behavior also provides a rich source of information about their character, disposition, and temperament. For example, in white, middle-class America, a student who talks loudly and gets right in the teacher's face could be perceived as aggressive and pushy. On the other hand, those students who avoid eye contact, talk softly, and use few gestures may be perceived as shy and reluctant to confront others on issues. In the Japanese culture, students are taught when interacting with authority figures like teachers to maximize the physical distance between speakers, touch less, and avoid public displays of emotion (Ramsey, 1983; Sussman & Rosenfeld, 1982). It is difficult to accurately interpret the nonverbal cues that convey another person's personality without understanding culture, race, and gender expectations.

Nonverbal communication also **accompanies verbal communication**. Nonverbal behavior can **reinforce** what is said verbally (smiling while saying that you

are satisfied with a class project); it can help **regulate** verbal behavior (breaking eye contact to signal that a conversation is about over); it can **complement** oral communication (talking very slowly and deliberately to make an important point); it can **substitute** for verbal behavior (nodding, winking, or gesturing your approval); and it can even **contradict** what you say verbally (saying you are really glad to meet a parent without establishing eye contact with the parent) (O'Hair, 1992). It is often easy to send contradictory messages that depict a lack of cultural understanding.

Educators are not the only ones guilty of sending inappropriate messages. Contradictory meanings led to geopolitical embarrassment for Richard Nixon, who upon a visit to Latin America displayed the "A-OK" nonverbal gesture. The Latin Americans consider the gesture to be obscene, denoting the female genitalia (Harrison, 1974). Educators must carefully monitor nonverbal behaviors that accompany verbal communication to insure that they reinforce rather than contradict verbal messages.

In the following sections of this article, the authors discuss a number of nonverbal behavior types that are found in educational and professional settings, focus on cultural, racial, and gender differences, and recommend a model to study and develop nonverbal communication skills in teacher education programs. First, the essential components of nonverbal communication in educational settings are described through the *Framework of Nonverbal Teaching*.

Framework of Nonverbal Teaching

The *Framework of Nonverbal Teaching* has five major components: paralanguage, facial expression, eye and visual behavior, gesture and body movement, and space. Each will be described and discussed in relation to an instructional communication context and diversity in education.

Paralanguage

The first component of the *Framework of Nonverbal Teaching* is paralanguage, which refers to how teachers use their voices. More specifically, paralanguage involves aspects of verbal communication that are unrelated to the words used. Tone of voice and loudness are some of the more obvious types of paralanguage, but there are others which will be discussed.

Early researchers (Trager, 1958) identified five types of paralanguage: voice set, voice qualities, vocal characterizes, vocal segregates, and vocal fillers. Each are defined and implications given:

Voice set—This refers to the personal characteristics of the speaker such as height, weight, age, and social status.

Implications—We expect tall, heavy-set teachers to have deep, deliberate voices, and petite women teachers are expected to communicate with soft high-

Figure 1
Framework of Nonverbal Teaching
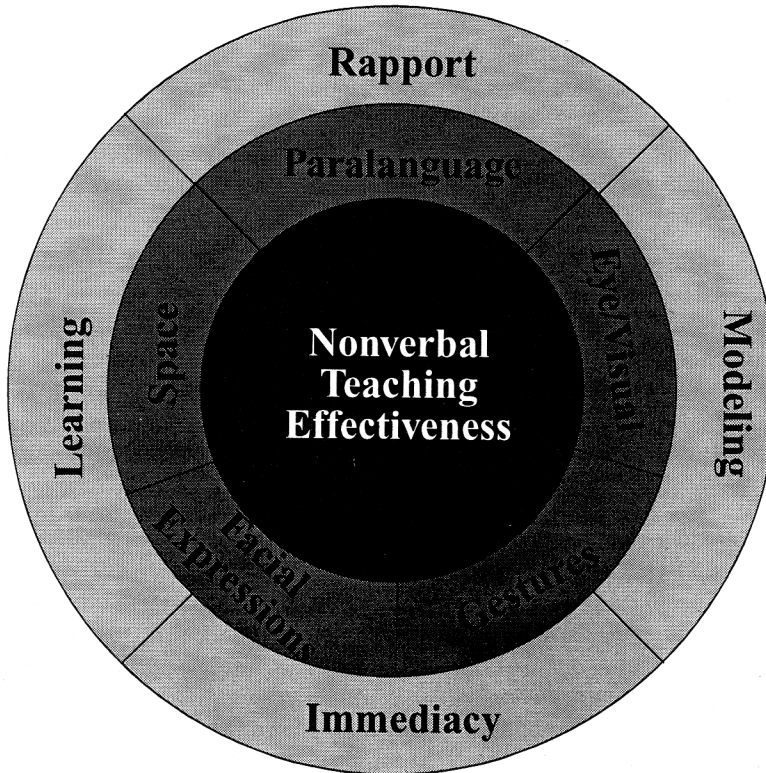
pitch voices. When voice set expectations are violated, students become more curious and suspicious of the teacher.

Voice qualities—These refer to characteristics of speech such as pitch, tempo, volume, rhythm, and articulation.

Implications—Teachers and students can better understand the personality, mood, or even the disposition of a speaker by paying attention to voice qualities. For instance, when a teacher speaks more rapidly than normal, it could signal that she is excited or aroused by something. In everyday settings when people do not articulate clearly, it can be a sign of poor education, lack of interest in the topic or person they are communicating with, or physical problems.

Vocal characteristics—This category refers to audible vocalizations that convey meaning without the use of words.
Implications—Vocalizations such as laughing, crying, snickering, whimpering, moaning, yawning, or even belching can express state of mind, mood, and even the emotional state of students.

Vocal segregates—These are vocal sounds that can substitute for words as in "mm-huh," "huh-uh," "sshhh," and "uummm."
Implications—Although not part of the language system they are usually readily understood by listeners. The use of vocal segregates usually indicates informality in the classroom such that those using them are comfortable with one another.

Vocal fillers—These refer to vocalizations in which the speaker inadvertently breaks up his vocal pattern with non-language fillers (e.g., um, ah, ugh). For example, a statement by a teacher: "I am, ugh, quite unhap— er, displeased with, um, your performance, ugh, on this ex— ugh, science exam."
Implications—Although some people use vocal fillers in much of their communication, for most people vocal fillers can result from stress, emotional strain, fatigue, distraction, and boredom. An increase in vocal fillers used by a student may indicate one of these problems.

As mentioned, paralanguage can provide information about the speaker and the topic beyond what is said verbally. Addington (1968) reported an interesting study that asked people to provide a description of the person whose voice they heard on audiotapes. The results were interesting in that a great deal of stereotyping was present in the evaluators' description of the voices. Table 1 presents some of the results from the Addington study.

As reported in the Addington study, people form a number of stereotypes based on the paralanguage of speakers. The implications of paralanguage as a type of nonverbal communication in educational settings are numerous. First, all too often, teachers and principals take for granted the importance of how characteristics of the voice influence students' perceptions. Teachers often inadvertently communicate thoughts and feelings about certain ideas to students through their voices. It is important for teachers to monitor how their vocal cues are signaling what they think and feel about students.

Second, vocal cues can be useful in accomplishing instructional goals. Specifically, changes in vocal tone and rate can help manage conversation. When teachers want to signal to students that they are ready to give up the floor of discussion they usually will use a rising vocal inflection to indicate a question or to prompt someone to respond to something said. Third, paralanguage can be used to communicate feelings toward others. When a student arrives at school and the teacher greets him with a pleasant tone of voice the teacher is saying that she is glad to see him, and

the student feels more comfortable about visiting the teacher. However, if the teacher is somewhat expression-less in greeting the student, the student may receive the impression that he is unwanted. Either way, paralanguage gives students an idea about teachers' feelings toward them.

Fourth, although there have been few studies of diversity and paralanguage, a few interesting differences have been noted. African Americans often give their speech a rhythmic structure, use a wide range of voice quality, and have strong, assertive voices (Akkinaso & Ajirotutu, 1982). This is illustrated by loud tones and high levels of intensity during conversations (Pitton *et al.*, 1993). In the example of the student who spoke loudly and positioned himself directly in front of the teacher's face, the teacher probably labeled the student as aggressive and perhaps obnoxious based on his nonverbal behavior. If the student came from an Arab culture, the loudness would be interpreted as strength and sincerity; whereas, softness would be interpreted as weakness and deviousness (Hall & Whyte, 1966; Watson & Graves, 1966). The teacher's perceptions of the student would have been inaccurate.

Facial Expression

The face is one of the most expressive channels of nonverbal communication. Although we only have a few words to describe facial expressions (frowns, smiles, sadness, etc), it is possible for the face to display over 1,000 different facial expressions (Ekman, Friesen & Ellsworth, 1972). Why must the classroom teacher be concerned about students' facial expressions? First, facial expressions are most reliable in determining the emotional state of an individual. A teacher who pays close attention to students' facial expressions may have a glimpse of how students are feeling. Early identifications of a problem may enable the teacher to encourage the student to discuss the problem and begin to resolve it. Second, facial expressions allow teachers to determine accurately the real motivations and intentions of their students. For example, a student may say that she understands the assignment but continues to display a look of confusion. A teacher who is aware of facial expressions and uses the feedback appropriately will be considered a sensitive communicator, and students will perceive the teacher as more approachable. Teachers who are characterized in this manner are more effective in the classroom in terms of greater cognitive (Gorham, 1988; Richmond, McCroskey, Kearney & Plax, 1985) and affective (Gorham, 1988; Plax, Kearney, McCroskey & Richmond, 1986) student learning.

Often individuals try to intentionally change their facial expressions to deliberately mislead others about how they feel. Some people can mask their emotions fairly well, whereas others simply display an expression that represents neither what they feel nor what they want people to perceive (O'Hair & Friedrich, 1992). Often this comes across as a blend of emotional expressions. This blending often misleads and confuses the receiver of the message.

Table 1
Paralanguage and Stereotypes*

Vocal Qualities	Stereotypes
1. Breathiness	1. Breathiness in male voices was described as young and artistic while breathiness in female voices was described as feminine, pretty, and petite.
2. Nasal	2. Nasal sounding males and females were described as having unfavorable characteristics.
3. Throaty	3. Throaty sounding males were described as older and cantankerous, while throaty sounding females were described as less intelligent, more masculine, and lazier.
4. Pace	4. Males and females who talked rapidly were perceived as being more animated and extroverted.
5. Variety	5. Males who used a variety of vocal pitches were described as more dynamic and feminine, whereas females using varying vocal pitches were perceived as dynamic and extroverted.

*Based on Addington, 1968

Some interesting and valuable research on facial expressions is available for teachers and teacher educators. The major differences of facial expressions between cultures is the **degree** of expressiveness. Findings and implications will be discussed briefly:

1. **Finding**: Females express basic emotions more accurately than males (Zuckerman, Lipets, Koivumake & Rosenthal, 1975).
Implication: When dealing with male students, teachers must rely on other verbal and nonverbal cues in attempting to determine emotional states.

2. **Finding**: Unpleasant emotions are less accurately perceived than pleasant ones. Happiness is one of the most accurately perceived emotions followed by (in order of accuracy) sadness, anger, fear, disgust, surprise (Howell & Jorgense, 1970).
Implication: Teachers may have false impressions about student happiness with school and life in general. Disgust may be perceived as anger.

3. **Finding**: Different parts of the face are more expressive for particular types of emotions (Boucher & Ekman, 1975):
    Happiness is more associated with cheeks/mouth and eyelid areas.
    Sadness is more identifiable from the eyelid area.
    Fear is best observed from the eyelid area.
    Surprise is best perceived from the brow/forehead, eyelid, and cheek/
        mouth area.
Implication: Teachers may sense that a student is experiencing an emotion and would like to discover more. By attending to these facial areas, teachers may be more accurate in perceiving the emotional state of students.

4. **Finding**: Facial expressions possess many universal characteristics; however, cultural differences do occur. Each culture has unique rules dictating what facial expressions should and should not be shown and what objects or events triggers an expression (Burgoon, *et al.*, 1989; Ekman & Friesen, 1975; Pitton *et al.*, 1993). Japanese restrain negative emotions like sadness and anger while African Americans show these emotions very clearly (Argyle, 1988).
Implication: Smiling in response to a smile from a new teacher is expected of students in the United States; however, in Israel and other countries, smiling in response to a smile from a stranger is not socially expected and often not observed (Alexander & Babad, 1981). In the United States, an exception involves the Native-American culture. Native-American children do not smile automatically after receiving a smile. Emotional displays via facial expressions are not the norm in the Native-American

culture (Pitton *et al.*, 1993). Students from such cultures would not give the socially appropriate response; hence, the teacher may make faulty assumptions about the student.

5. **Finding**: Cultures possess facial expressions whose meanings are recognizable only by other members of those cultures (Burgoon *et al.*, 1989). For example, the North American "smug" expression and the British wry smile (one corner up or partial smile) is unknown to other cultures and not universally recognizable (Brannigan & Humphries, 1972; LaFrance & Mayo, 1978).
Implications: Teachers who are unaware of the nuances of facial expression of diverse students are unable to accurately read and evaluate nonverbal behavior.

Although facial expressions are important for teachers to observe and analyze, this information alone is probably not enough to establish a high degree of accuracy of the student's emotional state. According to the *Framework of Nonverbal Teaching*, facial expressions along with additional nonverbal cues emitted provide the teacher with a more complete picture of students' feelings and perceptions.

Eye and Visual Behavior

The eyes are a very important source of information for teachers. Because humans are becoming more and more visually oriented, the movement of the eyes and how they are focused on other people and objects reveal a great deal of information. For example, a teacher looks up and sees two students talking in the back of the room. The teacher continues talking but focuses eye contact directly on the students. Before long, the students look up to see if they are being observed. If the teacher continues to stare at the students, the message being sent is to stop talking and pay attention. However, if the teacher breaks eye contact and looks elsewhere, the message being sent to the students is that it is all right to talk during the lesson.

Eye gaze means that one person is looking directly at another individual's face, particularly the eyes. Eye contact refers to mutual and simultaneous eye gaze between two people, in that, both people are looking directly into each others' eyes (Harper, Wiens & Matarazzo, 1978). With eye gaze, one person is searching for information about another, and with eye contact both individuals are committed to focusing on the other's communication (O'Hair & Friedrich, 1992). Nonverbal research on the eyes provides teachers and teacher educators with the following implications: cultural and demographic differences, persuasion, and eye gaze avoidance.

Cultural differences. Cultural differences in eye gaze and eye contact behavior are often observed. The eyes are important in regulating the flow of communication among people. When giving a greeting to someone the following sequence

tends to be used (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1972): gaze—smile—eyebrow lift—quick head nod.

This behavior may seem like common knowledge until teachers realize that all students do not share the same nonverbal behaviors. The most distinguishing feature in the cross-cultural use of eye contact is the focus of the listener's eyes (Burgoon *et al.*, 1989). In many cultures in the United States, children are socialized to gaze directly at the speaker's face when they are listening. Arab children gaze even more directly than do U.S. children (Watson & Graves, 1966). Native-American and African-American children often refuse to look directly into the teacher's eyes or any authority figure's eyes until trust is established (Byers & Byers, 1972). In their cultures, prolonged direct eye gaze with an authority figure is considered rude and inappropriate. In the African-American culture, establishing direct eye contact often signals the desire to ask a question, and looking away while listening is not viewed as a sign of disinterest, but rather as a "thinking" response (Pitton *et al.*, 1993). Japanese children are taught to avoid eye contact when listening by focusing on the speaker's neck (Bond & Komai, 1976). Teachers who are unaware of cultural differences may require direct eye contact ("Look at me when I'm speaking to you!") and, consequently, destroy trust that is vital for affective and cognitive learning to take place. Teachers' awareness of cultural differences may prove helpful in understanding visual behavior and improving communication with students, parents, administrators, and colleagues.

Persuasion. Eye gaze and eye contact with others is most useful when trying to persuade. Teacher/parent conferences are more successful if conducted in person rather than over the phone. The teacher is better able to persuade or influence if allowed to observe the eye behavior of the parent. It is essential that a teacher read the parent for signs of support, anxiety, ambiguity, and hesitancy. This can best be accomplished in person. By reading the eyes of parents, teachers hope to obtain valuable information that will be useful in developing successful instructional programs. In addition to parent eye behavior, student eye behavior is very important for the teacher to take note of not only for persuasion and influence purposes, but also regarding a willingness to communicate in general.

Communication avoidance. Communication avoidance is often observed directly in terms of visual behavior. This becomes important for teachers to understand in that both intentional and unintentional avoidance communicates certain meanings. There are several reasons a student or parent may avoid eye contact with a teacher (other than cultural as mentioned earlier). First, the individual may be **unwilling to communicate**. A student may feel unprepared to answer a question, may be busy thinking about something else, or even be unhappy with someone, and as a result, avoid eye contact in hopes the teacher will leave her alone. **Emotional arousal** may reduce eye contact. As mentioned earlier, the face is an excellent source of clues for determining the emotional state of an individual. The eyes can

provide that type of information as well. Sometimes students as well as adults avoid eye gaze to cover up emotional arousal such as despair, depression, and even stress. For example, observe the nonverbal behavior of students who feel embarrassed. Those suffering from an embarrassing situation will divert eye contact to places other than people to help recover from a loss in self-esteem. Not having to look at other students who are privy to one's embarrassment seems to help in the recovery process. Experiencing sorrow tends to reduce eye gaze. As with embarrassment, sorrow precipitates a reaction in people that causes them to reduce their visual input for a while. Unpleasant events in general may have the effect of reducing eye gaze to reduce stimulus and input to the brain so that it can work more efficiently on immediate problems.

Gesture and Body Movement

When teachers and teacher educators think of nonverbal communication, the first thought that comes to mind is gestures and body movement. Gestures and body movement, sometimes referred to as kinetics, are but one aspect of nonverbal communication. Teachers, principals, parents, and students use gestures often to complement what they say verbally. Communication problems occur whenever a person's gestures suggest a different meaning than the verbal message. It is important for educators to remember that whenever a conflict exists between verbal and nonverbal messages, listeners believe and accept more readily the nonverbal message.

Over the past 20 years, the field of kinetics has been studied extensively, with categories that represent most of our body motions. For the purposes of this article, two categories of body motions are discussed: emblems and posture.

Emblems. Gestures that take the place of words are referred to as emblems. All cultures have emblems. Some are universal in meaning, others are not. As in the Nixon and Latin America example given earlier, emblems carry different meanings for different cultures. Even the nod of the head denoting affirmation or negation differs among cultures. For example, the head throw for "no" displayed by Greeks, Southern Italians, Bulgarians, and Turks may be misinterpreted for "yes" in cultures where nodding signifies affirmation (Burgoon *et al.*, 1989).

Posture. Variations in posture differ according to cultures. While studying the postures used in different cultures, anthropologist Hewes (1957) found the range in human posture to be very large, about 1,000. Often, differences are a result of external barriers such as furniture and other environmental features, but some cultural beliefs and social rules affect posture. For example, a teacher of a Thai student may be unaware that sitting with legs crossed and toe pointing in the student's direction is considered an insult to the student. Thais consider feet to be the lowest, most objectionable part of the body, and believe it extremely rude to have a foot pointed at them (Smutkupt & Barna, 1976). African Americans may use

a limp stance and lowered head with someone in authority; however, this does not indicate submission, but rather that the other has been "tuned out" (Argyle, 1988, p. 62). Teachers aware of culturally different body orientations are better equipped to establish rapport and learning relationships with students than are uninformed teachers who unconsciously insult or misunderstand students.

Space

Often teachers and students respond and react differently to space. The manner in which educators use and react to space in a classroom setting is often neglected, and thus becomes increasingly important to examine. Space may be studied from two differing perspectives: personal space and environmental space.

Personal space. This refers to proxemics or the distance that exists between communicators. Educators must consider two aspects of personal space. The first is distance that can be measured in feet and inches, and the second is perceived distance that can only be measured by how comfortable people feel about the spatial distance between them and their communicating partners. People differ according to their tolerance for personal space, such that some individuals prefer very close communicating distances, and others require further distances. Hall (1973) developed a system for personal space preferences. He described four zones in which all communication takes place: intimate, personal, social, and public. If a teacher or student violates the rules of personal space as dictated by these zones, they may offend or repulse the other person. Entering the intimate zone with a casual acquaintance can be misleading and troublesome. On the other hand, if teachers choose to interact at distances that are larger than what the situation calls for, students may perceive the teacher as cold and aloof.

Hall's results may be generalized to white, middle-class, Americans only. As with visual behavior, cultures differ in personal space preferences and develop explicit rules about proper spatial behavior. Italians, Latin Americans, French, and Arabs, among others, are known for interacting at closer distances; whereas, North Americans, British, German, and Orientals interact at farther distances. Within the U.S., Hispanics stand closer than Anglos (Argyle, 1988). The research on African Americans is conflicting. African-American children stand closer than Anglo children, but African-American adolescents and adults stand further away from one another. A strong correlation of personal distance and age exists for African Americans (Argyle, 1988, p. 59). One explanation may involve the preference of African Americans to "talk with the whole body" and need for additional space to move and gesture freely.

Additional research is needed to describe the preference for personal space of children and adults from different cultures. Age and gender variables may also affect personal space preferences and need further study. We know that many cultures display gender differences in spacing and touching distances. In general,

Table 2
Personal Space Zones*

TYPE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Intimate zone	People interact at the closest distance (skin contact - 18 inches). Not often observed in an educational setting. Usually reserved for those very close to us (spouses, best friends, etc.).	Teacher whispers to a student a message so as not to disturb the class.
Personal zone	Interactions which are personal or private in nature (18 inches - 4 feet). Voice level tends to be soft and gestures increase with this distance.	Student asks the teacher for assistance on a math problem.
Social zone	This zone ranges from 4-12 feet and is used a great deal in educational settings (especially elementary). Both teachers and students use normal vocal inflections and volume and tend to feel comfortable both verbally and nonverbally.	Elementary teacher is working with a small group of students.
Public zone	Largest interacting distance space (12 feet and beyond). This zone reduces the chance for immediate feedback and the ability to read facial expression and visual behavior is reduced greatly. Vocal pitch and volume is at levels and gesturing may be exaggerated in order for everyone within the zone to see.	Secondary teacher lecturing to a large class.

*Based on Hall & Whyte, 1966.

adhering to the norms of the situation, status, culture, and degree of acquaintance is the best advice for teachers in using personal space appropriately.

Environmental space. This space refers to how teachers and students perceive, construct and manipulate physical space in classroom settings. Why is environmental space important in the classroom? People are influenced by what they see and perceive with their environment. For example, Blonston (1985) described how the Japanese use space:

> The Japanese are pulled in two directions.... There is a deep need to be close, and it is only when they are close that they are comfortable. The other pole is as far away as one can get. In public and during ceremonial occasions...there is great emphasis on self-control, distance, and hiding inner feelings. (p. 80)

Japanese children, unlike Japanese adults, are accustomed to a lack of space in their homes which results in closer physical contact with parents and siblings than American children. Japanese are considered more tactile with their children (e.g., holding them more frequently when they cry, sitting closer together, and sleeping with parents until puberty) than American parents (Burgoon *et al.*, 1989).

The use of environmental space in the classroom conveys a particular image to students. The classroom arrangement is just as important and powerful when examining perceptions and feelings of students as any other aspect of nonverbal communication. The majority of U.S. classrooms are arranged not by the teacher, but rather by the custodian, who places "ease-of-cleaning" higher on a list of priorities than student learning. Nonverbal scholars and experienced teachers suggest that the best room arrangement is one which puts the least distance and fewest barriers between teacher and students in the class (Jones, 1988). For example, the teacher's desk may be a problem in that it increases the distance between the teacher and students. Jones (1988) reminds teacher educators and teachers that it is not important **where** the furniture is in the classroom, but rather **where it is not**. The objective is to produce walkways. Producing effective use of environmental space in the classroom setting is a constant challenge for teachers.

Paralanguage, facial expression, eye and visual behavior, gestures, and space are essential components for nonverbal communication competence or effectiveness in the classroom. In the following sections, key components of nonverbal teaching effectiveness are applied directly to teaching and teacher education programs.

Application of Framework to Teaching

After analyzing the basic components of the *Framework of Nonverbal Teaching*, the culmination of the framework's use in the classroom (see Figure 2) is synthesized. First, teacher-student **rapport** is established based on nonverbal relational communication that involves liking and trusting another person. Positive

Figure 2
Nonverbal Teaching Framework Outcomes
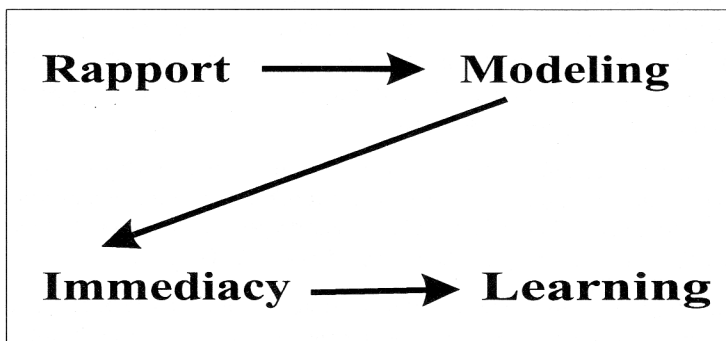
nonverbal behaviors are difficult to hide and when expressed freely serve to strengthen a relationship. Rapport is a byproduct of that relationship. Second, the establishment of rapport leads to **modeling**. Nonverbal modeling refers to structuring of interactions and consequently to influencing students. Nonverbal modeling involves the presentation of one's personality to others and allows others the opportunity to understand and predict behavior. Students feel closer to teachers they can understand and to a large extent predict or even model their behavior. Of course teacher modeling is a two-way street and is most effective when a teacher understands and accurately predicts students' feelings and behaviors. The only way to make accurate predictions is through awareness.

The framework breaks down at this stage if the teacher is unaware and unable to accurately read nonverbal cues emitted by students of differing cultures, races, and gender. Third, effective modeling results in an **immediacy** or closeness between individuals. Nonverbal immediacy is defined as communication behaviors that enhance closeness to another (Mehrabian, 1969, 1981) and aids in establishing a relationship. Last, increased perceptions of teacher immediacy lead to greater affective and cognitive **learning** (Gorham, 1988; Plax *et al.*, 1986). Students learn more from teachers they understand, respect, and like. The outcomes of the *Framework of Nonverbal Teaching* have significant implications for teaching and teacher education.

Implications for Teacher Education Programs

Why is nonverbal communication awareness important for teacher education programs? Perhaps Banks and Banks (1993) summarize the importance of this awareness best. They describe that children need to feel that their teacher understands and validates their culture. By understanding differing cultures, teachers

help students develop positive self images which are central to school success. Pre-service teachers must be introduced to the nonverbal communication knowledge base and practice appropriate and culturally specific nonverbal communication behaviors in early field and student teaching experiences.

Learning to teach requires "learning the texture of the classroom and the sets of behaviors congruent with the environmental demands of that setting" (Doyle, 1977, p. 31). Effective classroom communication involves developing nonverbal communication awareness and skills congruent with diverse environments. Specific recommendations for using the *Framework of Nonverbal Teaching* in teacher education programs to better understand the "texture of the classroom" are described through the *Nonverbal Teacher Education Model*.
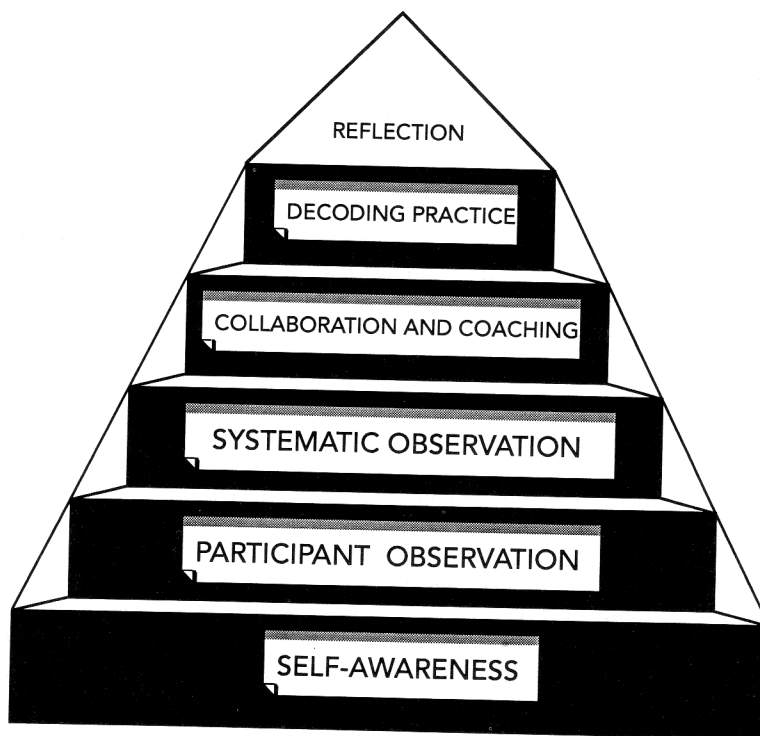
Nonverbal Teacher Education Model

The model encourages teacher educators to create a classroom climate of understanding and respect for individual and cultural differences. Developing this climate requires that teachers not treat all children the same. We do a disservice when we ignore differences. Specifically, the *Nonverbal Teacher Education Model* assists teachers in developing skills in nonverbal communication, thus improving teacher-student communication. Key components of the *Nonverbal Teacher Education Model* include self-awareness, diverse cultural and environmental experiences, systematic observations, collaboration and coaching, nonverbal decoding practice, and reflection.

Self-awareness. Preservice teachers need an understanding of their own nonverbal communication before adapting to others. Seminars in nonverbal communication are helpful in develop nonverbal self-awareness. If unavailable in colleges of education, students may take nonverbal courses in departments of communication studies. Currently, prospective teachers are tested for basic skills before entry into teacher education programs. Nonverbal communication is a basic skill requiring continuous self-awareness and development.

Participant Observation. As the student population becomes more diverse, the teaching force is increasingly white and female with minority teacher representation decreasing (Grant & Secada, 1990). Beginning teachers have few life experiences with diverse cultures and ethnic groups before entry into teacher education. Zeichner and Teitelbaum (1982) suggest that student teachers spend more time studying the school culture and its relationship to the community through participant observation than spending time in actual teaching. In this approach, the school is viewed as a social laboratory rather than a place merely to practice one's craft (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990). Participant observation involves living in other cultures and experiencing diverse environments. When living in diverse settings, prospective teachers are encouraged to spend time at community churches and social settings. Also, prospective teachers are encouraged to participate in commu-

Figure 3
Nonverbal Teacher Education Model

REFLECTION

DECODING PRACTICE

COLLABORATION AND COACHING

SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

SELF-AWARENESS

nity service projects (such as, Big Brothers/Big Sisters) and write about their experiences in journals. Successful experiences with other cultures and environments requires open-mindedness, commitment, and time.

Systematic observations. After experiencing different cultures and understanding the nonverbal communication framework, prospective teachers are ready to begin applying experiences and nonverbal communication theory to classroom practice. This step of the model involves the systematic observation of teachers who successfully build rapport with students from different cultures. Hargreaves (1988) describes how teachers build rapport:

> Teachers do not just decide to deploy particular skills because of their recognized professional worth and value, or because of their own confidence and competence

in operating them. Rather they make judgments about the fit between particular skills, constraints, demands, and opportunities of the material environment of the classroom; about the appropriateness of particular styles or techniques for present circumstances. (p. 219)

Teachers match their communication style (including nonverbal) to the character-istics and needs of their students. Through systematic observations, preservice teachers begin to observe teacher thinking and decision making.

Collaboration and coaching. After observing successful teachers, prospec-tive teachers need time to talk about their observations. Peer collaboration and teacher coaching are essential for model success. Peer collaboration might involve preservice teachers working in teams to discuss observations. For example, one team member may report an interesting example of personal space, whereas, another member may report observing visual behavior. Teams representing various cultures are desirable. If a team member is from the culture being discussed, she/ he may lend a different perspective on the behavior observed.

Teacher coaching is important in understanding nonverbal communication. If asked by a prospective teacher the general question "How do you communicate with students from an inner-city environment?" most teachers may not have much advice. However, when prospective teachers ask specific questions such as "Why did you stand so close to Adam when talking to him?" or "Why did you stare at Tom and Cindy rather than ask them to quit talking?" teachers provide more detailed information. Through teacher coaching and dialogue, prospective teachers begin to understand classroom nonverbal behaviors and how to communicate effectively with other cultures.

Decoding Practice. Prospective teachers need practice in decoding nonverbal messages and responding appropriately to the sender of the message. Early field experiences and student teaching provide settings for practice. In the past, teachers have concentrated on verbal rather than nonverbal communication. Research, however, has found that nonverbal codes are more important than are verbal codes in conveying messages. Mehrabian (1981) reported that approximately 7 per cent of the social meaning of a conversation or an interaction is carried by the words; nonverbal behavior (including paralanguage) conveys approximately 93 per cent. Successful practice in decoding unspoken messages requires understanding one's own nonverbal messages and those of other cultures.

Reflection. The final phase of the model involves self-reflection. Actually, reflection is important within each step of the model. Reflection is valued because it interrupts the smooth flow of events (Floden & Buchmann, 1990, p. 53). The final stage of the model encourages analysis of successful and unsuccessful nonverbal behavior and allows competent practitioners the opportunity to engage in on-the-spot reflection and experimentation. During these internal conversations with the

situation, teachers "consider different interpretations or courses of action, drawing on a repertoire of images, theories, and actions to construct an appropriate response" (Feiman-Nemser, 1990, p. 222).

Conclusions

Communication is vital to the teaching process. Some argue that it **is** the teaching process. Hurt, Scott, and McCroskey (1978) maintained that there is "a difference between knowing and teaching, and that difference is communication in the classroom" (p. 3). The conclusions to be drawn from this article are twofold: (a) understanding diversity requires emphasis on nonverbal communication, and (b) teacher education programs must incorporate nonverbal communication research and practice into the curriculum. As Grant and Secada (1990) conclude, "there is much that we do not know about how to prepare teachers to teach an increasingly diverse student population" (p. 420). We do know that communication, in particular nonverbal, is vital to successful teaching and student learning. There is much to be attained from establishing partnerships with other disciplines such as communication. The challenge for teacher educators is to integrate and apply nonverbal communication theory and research to help prepare preservice teachers for multicultural classrooms. The *Framework of Nonverbal Teaching* and *Nonverbal Teacher Education Model* are designed to assist teacher educators in meeting the challenge.

Note

1. Research findings are generalizations not absolutes about nonverbal communication behavior and diversity. Stereotyping all children of a particular culture as possessing and demonstrating identical nonverbal behaviors is inaccurate and misleading. Exceptions and inter-group diversity will exist.

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