The role of non verbal communication in effective teaching and learning

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A Research & Development Project Submitted for the MSc in Learning & Teaching 2019

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The role of nonverbal communication in effective teaching and learning

Abstract

The aim of the study was to explore what teachers, across different subjects in the Secondary School in which I work, understand non-verbal communication to be and how they feel they use it in the classroom. The topic was chosen in order to investigate and develop awareness of the importance of nonverbal communication, as it is not often a topic that is explored but it is integral to effective communication. The aim was also to explore if teachers use their bodies, voices, facial expressions and the like, consciously and in an informed way. Once establishing those elements through qualitative research, teachers were provided with information to support their progress and to learn further about the topic. The research questions were:

1. *What do teachers across various subjects think nonverbal communication is, and do they consciously use it?*

2. *Can awareness of teachers' current nonverbal communication be increased with an intervention which provides information, and can their current behaviours and awareness be improved?*

3. *In the reflection of teachers after more awareness of the topic, do they feel there have been any benefits in terms of their students' behaviour, learning or general classroom atmosphere?*

Findings suggest that most teachers had a strong understanding of what nonverbal communication was but found it more difficult to reflect on and change aspects of their own practice. Most teachers felt that they had had no training on this topic, or very limited training acquired in passing or through a process of trial and error in the classroom. Teachers welcomed discussion and information on the topic, with many

of those interviewed open to trying new behaviours. Despite this, due to the demands of the school term, only a small number of teachers were able to implement information from the intervention with considerable success over the course of the study, while others showed the ability to reflect more fully on the behaviours they currently employ.

1. Introduction

'There is, indeed, a difference between knowing and teaching, and that difference is communication in the classroom.' (Hurt, Scott & McCroskey: 3)

It would seem that nonverbal communication is a rare topic in the field of education, and my interests in pursuing a project on it was to shed light on this important topic, both for myself and for those in the Secondary School that I work in and could collaborate with. My aim was to learn from colleagues and allow a mutual exchange of information and ideas while also encouraging participants, through the intervention, to reflect on, improve and evolve their practice.

In my own teacher training, I had no direct teaching of the topic, which I find surprising because I also trained to teach drama as well as English, and nonverbal communication was undoubtedly a large part of the implicit training I was given – however, it was never explicitly named or clarified, and in the observation of teachers and videos (such as those on the Teacher's TV programme of teachers entering rooms and greeting students) over the course of my initial years of teaching, I did absorb aspects of gesture and voice for example, but never with the clarity of the topic of 'non-verbal communication' or 'immediate behaviour'. As the prospect of embarking on a new research project approached and as an experienced

member of my department overseeing the progress of an NQT, I wanted to turn to this topic and aim to further enlighten it for myself and others. The reading that initially spurred my interest in the topic stemmed from a general interest for books of a more anthropological nature, and not within the sphere of education itself. I was inspired by Desmond Morris' famous *Peoplewatching* and *The Naked Ape*, which aim to break down and understand aspects of human nonverbal behaviour in scientific detail.

The school I work in is supportive of research, and is an open and intellectual environment, effective in achieving high results from its students with a focus on increasing A-A* grades each year. There is a Director of Teaching and Learning, who has four assistants. Teaching and Learning groups are quite common, often focussing on aspects of technology or areas beginning teachers may need support with, such as behaviour management. The team monitor certain areas, often spurred by Inspector's reports, this year focusing on issues around feedback and assessment policies in order to make students more independent and pro-active with their feedback. Observations within departments are common, as well as observations by those on the teaching and learning team. There is a focus on a knowledge based curriculum, and many departments speed through vast areas of their particular specifications at speed in order to finish courses and reach goals. It is not common to discuss a teacher's gestures or tone of voice, and department meetings are largely concerned with the curriculum. When pedagogy is mentioned, it is usually aspects such as questioning that are discussed rather than other aspects which may also make a significant difference to the classroom environment. Within national policy, in respect to education, there is no mention of nonverbal communication, and everywhere an ingrained sense that teachers need to communicate effectively, but without explicit clarification of the nonverbal aspect of communication.

Teachers use a variety of behaviours in order to maintain order and an atmosphere of learning and co-operation in their classrooms, and to do this they need to be informed and aware of the consequences of their nonverbal communication. As Miller states: 'Teachers should be aware of nonverbal communication in the classroom for two basic reasons: to become better receivers of students' messages and to gain the ability to send positive signals that reinforce students' learning while simultaneously becoming more skilled at avoiding negative signals that stifle their learning.' He also goes on to state that 'it is important that teachers learn how to use natural body movements when talking in front of a class or students, since inappropriate ones will diminish the lesson's delivery. While body movements alone have no exact meaning, they can support of reject the spoken word.' (Miller, 2005:28-9).

The support of current and trainee teachers in these aspects of communication is not common, and though aspects of fluency and 'natural body movements' may increase as teachers gain experience and watch and learn from colleagues, that is not always the case and it leaves an important element of classroom communication up to chance and the natural observational, communicational skills of individual teachers. Aspects of the interview process for tertiary courses in education, as well as the appointment of jobs in schools would help to identify people who communicate effectively, but teachers may benefit from a clearer understanding of how they present themselves and interact with others. Miller also states that: 'Good teachers are also good listeners – listening not only to the words being spoken but also to the silent messages that their students send. Without words, teachers communicate their feelings, expectations and many other messages they would never verbally admit. Teachers should devote time and energy to developing their nonverbal communication skills, just as they do their teaching skills, because they must make sure they are sending the right messages to their students. Think of it as an

unspoken rule.' (Miller, 2005:30) Teachers may need help in learning what nonverbal communication entails in order to develop and analyse their own skills. In this project I set out to help in that process.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction – what is nonverbal communication?

Nonverbal communication encompasses a wide field of elements involved in human behaviour which, put most simply, includes any aspect of communication that does not use verbal language. Miller states that: 'Educators, psychologists, anthropologists and sociologists define body language or nonverbal communication as communication without words. It includes overt behaviours such as facial expressions, eye contact, touching and tone of voice. It can also be less obvious, however, as through dress, posture and spatial distance. The most effective communication occurs when verbal and nonverbal messages are in sync, creating communication synergy.' (Miller, 2005: 28).

It is clear that this involves a complex and widespread array of communicating factors, raising the added complication of the need for messages to be 'in sync'. Nonverbal communication in a classroom would range from how a teacher walks into a room, how often they look at students in a class, how they stand, or if they smile while waiting for an answer to a question. Many elements of nonverbal behaviour are not explicitly taught to teachers, but there are reasons behind actions and consequences to their use. As Miller states: 'There are some important reasons why we use nonverbal communication':

- Words have limitations
- Nonverbal signals are powerful

- Nonverbal messages are likely to be more genuine
- Nonverbal signals can express feelings too disturbing to state
- A separate communication channel is necessary to help send complex messages. (Miller, 2005: 28)

Many people remember effective teachers partly because of how they communicated – a sense of how they spoke, how they communicated with individuals and a sense of how they dressed and stood. This leads to the question of whether what they actually said, though clearly an important factor, was the primary element of their effective communication:

> It has been reported often that 'teachers talk too much' and that classroom teaching conforms to the 'rule of two-thirds' (i.e., someone is talking for two-thirds of the total class time, and two-thirds of that talking is done by the teacher). However, whether teachers are talking or not, they are always communicating. Their movements, gestures, tones of voice, dress and other artefacts, and even their ages and physiques are continuously communicating something to the students. In like manner, students are continuously communicating with their teachers, a point too often missed by teachers relying solely on the verbal message for informational purposes.' (Smith, 1979: 633)

This exchange of nonverbal communication between teachers and students can clearly impact on the quality of learning and general atmosphere in the classroom and also affect the manner in which students absorb the verbal information conveyed. If teachers are more attuned to their own nonverbal messages and those of their students, the classroom may be managed more effectively and purposefully.

Perhaps nonverbal communication is such a powerful tool due to it being a seemingly ingrained and ancient aspect of communication. Charles Darwin (1872)

includes some early observations about nonverbal communication in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, and William James (1890), 'contained a great deal of theory about emotion that was not fully explored' and which highlighted aspects of nonverbal communication (Hecht & Ambady, 1999: 157). The study of behavourism became more prominent in the 1920s, and it wasn't until the 1970s that research in the area flourished before becoming consumed by the cognitive revolution of the late 1970s and 1980s. Hecht & Ambady state the following about the 'popular' work in nonverbal communication in the 1970s:

> Popular books [such as *Body Language* (Fast, 1970) and *How to Read a Person Like a Book* (Nierenberg & Calero, 1971)] vastly oversimplified the research findings, going way beyond what could be accurately concluded (Koivumaki, 1975). This led to bogus statements and recommendations, such as the idea that people that fold their arms across their chest are closed-minded, or the idea that people who unzip their jackets are literally opening up (Nierenberg & Calero, 1971). Another false idea was that one can manipulate one's own body language to make others more attracted without their realizing it (Fast, 1970). Research has since found that context matters a great deal when interpreting any one nonverbal gesture (LaFrance & Mayo, 1978) and that consciously manipulating nonverbal cues can often backfire (Ekman, 1985). (158-9)

It is clear that the context of nonverbal communication is very important, and that generalisations and quick assumptions have no place in adequately understanding nonverbal signals in the classroom. Despite this, these texts, as Smith states: 'have served to make the public aware of the nonverbal element in human

communication.' (1979:637) Due to the lack of absolute answers however, there is perhaps a difficulty in informing teachers about nonverbal communication, as some might agree that: 'another reason that nonverbal communication may have been left out of the cognitive revolution was due to the notion that nonverbal communication is relatively automatic, not requiring thought' (Hecht & Ambady, 1999: 159-160). Despite the fact that some aspects of understanding or producing nonverbal cues is 'automatic' it may be that teachers, who interact with impressionable groups of children daily, cannot always rely on, or be assumed to have, this seemingly automatic awareness.

There have been inroads and progress in research of this area since the cognitive revolution, though it is still an area that is perhaps dominated by a confused sense of which theoretical family it belongs to – be it psychology, anthropology, communication theory or some other, and prone to 'popular' generalisations about how to read others' behaviour for one's own benefit. There is no doubt however, that it is a crucial element of effective teaching and learning. As Nolan (1975) states: 'nonverbal behaviour precedes verbal behaviour in the evolution of communication,' (101) thus implying that it is the foundation of all human communication. Smith (1979) states that 'the importance of the nonverbal domain for communicative purposes apparently remains beyond question' further clarifying with the following:

> What does classroom teaching have to do with communication in general and nonverbal communication in particular? Most educators would probably have an immediate response to only the first part of the question. From his anthropological perspective, Montagu (1967) stated that the main purpose of

> education is to teach the art of communication since the child learns to become human through communication. Most of us would agree that the nonverbal is an essential part of the communicative act. Victoria (1970) commented further: 'The process of education essentially is a communication process, not only in that sense of transmitting knowledge, but more particularly as it relates to interpersonal communication behaviours (4); and 'nonverbal phenomena become qualitatively predominant aspects of interpersonal relationships. These interpersonal relationships are critical aspects of all learning situations' (3). A related sentiment was voiced by French (1970): 'The data clearly shows that what teachers do is as important as what they say, and that there is no direct relationship between verbal and nonverbal influence' (25). (via Smith, 1979: 632-3)

If Montagu's view is taken on board, as well as the similar viewpoints presented by others in the quote above, the art of clear and effective communication is also part of the schooling process and may ready students for more successful relationships in the future. Students, for example, are absorbing aspects of speech, tone and eye contact as they listen to and interact with teachers, and this may impact their own communicative powers and future abilities. The skills and vocabulary they are taught in different subjects are also clearly significant, but it may be that teachers have the potential to also develop effective communicators by their modelling of effective nonverbal actions in the classroom.

2.2 What aspects of nonverbal communication are the most important for teachers?

As the exploration of the literature will clarify further, there are certain behaviours which have met with more success in the eyes of students and researchers: 'Gaze, smiling, fluency, vocal warmth, vocal and facial expressiveness, lack of adaptors or random movement, fluency, and articulation/clarity' are seen as positive factors that lead to effective teaching and learning (Guerrero & Miller, 1998, 33).

These open, fluent and expressive behaviours have perhaps met with the most success because they may increase a student's level of interest through purposeful, personal and direct aspects of communication. They may combine to create a positive, collaborative atmosphere which enables learning. Miller clearly defines some similar elements of nonverbal communication in his piece directed at teachers, with his sub-heading called 'What Research Says to the Teacher' (1988). He highlights that the face, use tone of voice, use of gesture and the classroom environment are crucial aspects of communication. These findings may help teachers reflect on and potentially learn how to use these elements consciously and effectively in the classroom, and are expanded on in his 2005 article:

> In human interaction, people focus their attention on the face to receive visual cues that support or contradict verbal messages. Facial expressions are the primary source of information, next to words, in determining an individual's internal feelings.

> Teachers usually maintain eye contact and flash visual signals when they want to emphasise particular points. Direct teacher eye contact can express support, disapproval or neutrality. According to many evaluation specialists, a stern look should be a teacher's first action in a situation that involves obvious cheating in a testing situation.

> Sometimes referred to as paralinguistics, vocal intonation includes components such as rhythm, pitch, intensity, nasality and slurring. It is important to remember that if vocal intonation contradicts your words, the former will dominate… teachers should use a variety or vocal inflections when presenting material [and]…articulate words at a comfortable rate to maximize the potential for student comprehension.
>
> Gestures are used in a variety of situations and are often comprehended more quickly than speech. Teachers routinely use them to convey information to students because they can either add to or replace words. Gestures are a visual form of communication that can travel farther than spoken words and are unaffected by the presence of noise.
>
> Fixed feature space involves the layout of walls, partitions and other immovable objects, while semi-fixed feature space is the arrangement of classroom furniture. Both are more than aesthetic issues and can directly affect student learning… 'Ugly' rooms create reactions such as monotony, fatigue and irritability. (Miller, 2005: 29-30)

Though these areas of nonverbal communication may seem obvious and straightforward, teachers may benefit from seeing positive examples of the above behaviours, as training the face, voice and body to effectively implement these areas may not always come naturally. Time spent analysing current behaviours and evaluating them in respect to those of others may be beneficial and aid the learning

process. Teachers may also benefit from the awareness that they are being evaluated by students for their nonverbal cues and behaviour. Ambady and Rosenthal's study (1993) 'Predicting Teacher Evaluations from Thin Slices of Nonverbal Behavior and Physical Attractiveness' using video clips, some as short as 2 seconds, found that students were accurate in their judgements, stating that: 'These results have important implications for education. They highlight the considerable influence of very subtle affective nonverbal behaviors on the teaching process and reveal that these subtle influences might be identifiable from thin slices of behaviour.' (440) Quick judgements may not always be accurate, but the success in this study suggests that certain valuable messages are communicated quickly through nonverbal means, and that they could have lasting effects.

However, it does seem that more research is needed to reach any absolute conclusions in this complex area, as 'various observations have been made such as one by Fowles (1974): 'Our clothes broadcast our sex (usually), our rank (decreasingly), and our up-to-dateness (increasingly)' (348), but the significance of this information for teaching is unclear. Cook (1971) has stated, 'Studies on the interpretation of facial features, voice, etc., that give only this information, are probably overestimating their importance. If the judge is given a larger sample of more relevant information – as would normally be the case – he does not allow the subject's appearance to influence his judgement (69). A further examination of this aspect of teacher nonverbal communication would seem warranted.' (via Smith, 1979, 651-2)

Despite this need for further research, nonverbal communication is relevant to all subjects and age groups, though the use of different behaviours may be necessary when teaching different age groups. As Wilkinson (1972) states in his study of infant school students: 'learning provided by a traditional secondary school, fixed desks, class taught, will be very different from those in the infant school… This is not to

say, of course, that we should necessarily try to reproduce the latter in the former. The glutinous tactilism of some nurseries would be quite out of place with mixed adolescents. It is to say, however, that the whole setting and behaviour carries a meaning, or, if you want, hosts of meanings, which affect the learning going on. However, inimicable the surroundings (room etc.) it is still the teacher who is the chief architect of the communications which go on. If the surroundings are to be changed it is he who will have to do it.' (61) Wilkinson's views that primary and secondary schools will have different nonverbal elements predominating due to the ages and developmental needs of the children would resonate with many teachers. His claim that 'the whole setting and behavior carries a meaning' continues to highlight that there is a constant flow of nonverbal communication in the classroom, and much of that is within the teacher's influence and control, and can be manipulated to different effects. Miller also states that: 'Research has shown that younger children tend to learn significantly more when teachers exhibit touching, close body proximity and smiles of approval. As children grow older, however, touching behaviors become less appropriate.' (2005: 29).

In Flevares and Perry's study (2001) of nonverbal aspects of teaching mathematics to primary school students, there do seem to be some similarities to those found in a secondary school environment. Flevares and Perry state: 'With their speech, teachers indicate and discuss the instructional tools they are using to symbolize information… The communication, including gestures, accompanying symbols may either convey to students how a symbol is linked to a concept or confuse them by failing to link the symbols to a concept.' (Flevaras & Perry, 2001: 332) Rates of 'gestures, pictures, objects, and writing' were studied and it was found that gestures were the most utilised by teachers, but not always with full clarity or success, though interesting manipulations of gesture were discussed. One particular teacher given the title of 'Teacher M' used 'her nonspoken representations to reinforce rather

than scaffold the production of students' correct responses' and 'the teacher's actions became more specific and less ambiguous about the quantity being discussed when she was responding to [a pupil named] Juan's failure to answer. Her actions when repeating the question appear to disambiguate for Juan the term *leftover*.' (340) The ability of this teacher to be more precise with their nonverbal signals in response to this child highlight how many options for further clarity and understanding may be opened up by awareness of nonverbal communication. The use of gesture to reinforce correct responses may also be useful in the secondary classroom, which raises further questions about which gestures may be the most useful, clear and emphatic for students and how teachers could study and become more aware of their own movements. The success of this teacher seems to lie in the precision of the movement, giving the abstract idea of a mathematical 'leftover' a physical shape and presence within her gesture.

Gestures do seem to also be crucial over a range of studies and age groups, as McNeill (1985, 1993) has found that 'gestures serve to illustrate, amplify and punctuate speech.' Neill and Caswell (1993) explain that: 'These gestures confirm what you are saying, firstly by showing the shapes or movements of objects (*iconix*), secondly by miming the concept you are talking about, or your educational intention (*metaphorix*) and thirdly by directing the children's attention salient parts of the message (*beats*)'. (111) These aspects of nonverbal communication are clearly complicated, and the elements noted here are not an exhaustive list. The context of behaviours and the school environment is also crucial to understanding effects of nonverbal behaviours accurately.

Overall, teachers of all ages and subjects can use aspects of nonverbal communication such as gesture, paralinguistics and eye contact to clarify points and communicate positively, purposefully and directly with their students. Many of these

elements are also classified as 'immediate' behaviours, which will be further explored in the next section.

2.3 How can nonverbal communication affect pupil behaviour?

The range of effects of nonverbal communication on students is manifold and complex. Students look to teachers for constant nonverbal feedback in lessons: 'Teachers express enthusiasm, warmth, assertiveness, confidence and displeasure through facial expressions, vocal intonation, gestures and use of space. However, when teachers exhibit verbal messages that conflict with nonverbal messages, students become confused, which in turn can affect their attitudes to learning.' (Miller, 2005:29). There are many difficult and valuable concepts stated here, but much of the research analysing the effects of teachers' nonverbal behaviour has explored many of these areas through the lens of immediacy.

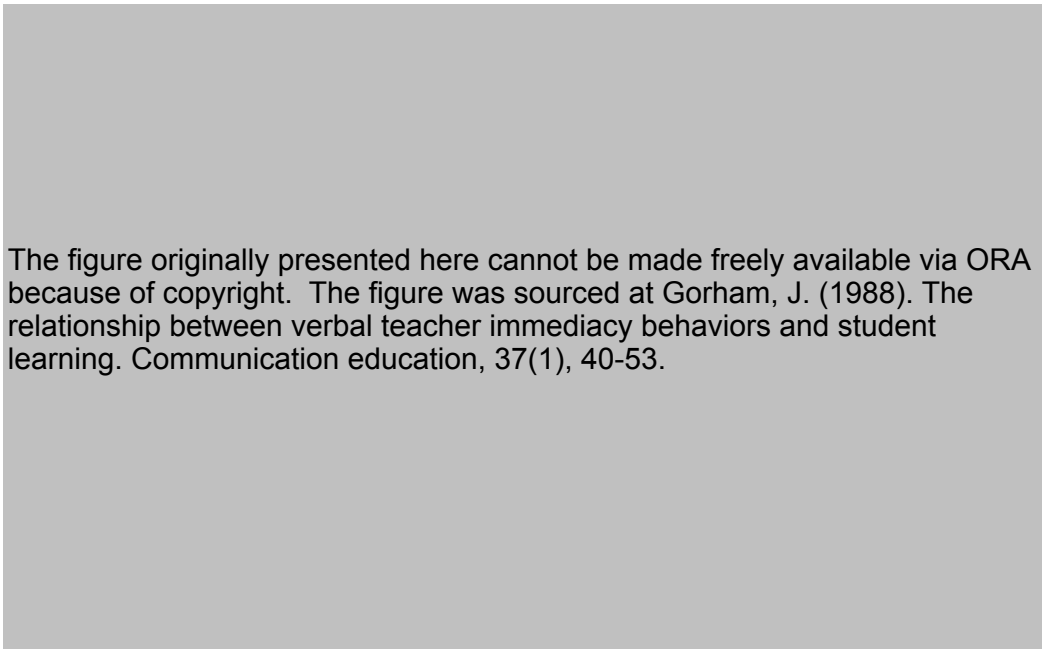
2.4 The effects of immediate nonverbal behaviours

Immediacy is defined in the following terms by Andersen: 'the more immediate a person is, the more likely he/she is to communicate at a close distance, smile, engage in eye contact, use direct body orientation, use overall body movement and gestures, touch others, relax, and be vocally expressive' (1979:548). Plax also clarifies the concept: 'Immediacy is defined as the extent to which particular communication behaviors enhance physical or psychological closeness (Mehrabian, 1967). Specifically, nonverbal immediacy behaviors are most commonly cited as body lean, physical closeness, eye contact, smiling, and touch (Andersen, 1979; Burgoon, Buller, Hale & deTurck, 1984; Mehrabian, 1981; Patterson, 1973). Andersen, Andersen and Jensen (1979) identified the additional nonverbal

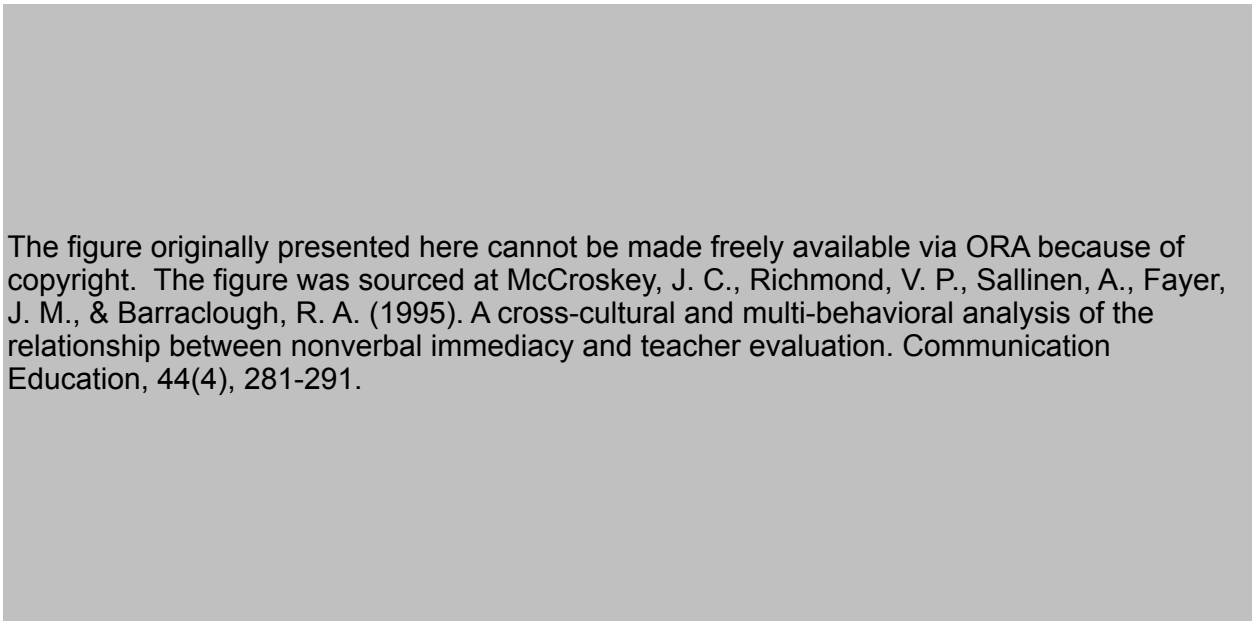
immediacy cues of positive head nods, purposeful gestures, and vocal expressiveness.' (1986:45). These aspects of communication can be seen to appeal directly to individuals and may be claimed to allow for a more interesting, personal level of communication than may, arguably, be found in more traditional or austere classrooms.

The importance of a personal, engaging and direct approach to nonverbal communication is also evidenced in Plax's research, who states: 'At the risk of over-simplification, the results of this series of research studies to date indicate that use of pro-social (based on reward, expert, and referent power) messages to alter student behavior tends to increase student perceptions of the teacher's immediacy which in turn leads to greater affective learning on the part of the student. In contrast, use of anti-social (based on coercive and legitimate power) messages to alter student behavior tends to decrease student perceptions of the teacher's immediacy which in turn leads to reduced affective learning on the part of the student.' (1986:54). This builds on Mehrabian's research, who stated in 1971: 'As such, immediate teachers communicate positive attitudes or approach orientations, while nonimmediate teachers signal distancing and detachment. In this way, "liking encourages greater immediacy and immediacy produces more liking" (7). Consequently, teachers who have positive feelings about their students are more likely to be immediate and in turn, students are more likely to respond reciprocally to those teachers.' (Plax, et al., 1986:45).

The list below was used by students to analyse immediate teacher behaviour in Gorham's 1988 study (44). It is based on the '14 item Nonverbal Immediacy Measure (NIM) first used by Richmond, Gorham, & McCroskey (1987).' (McCroskey, 1995:284).



McCroskey uses an adapted version in his 1995 study labelled 'Figure 1' below:



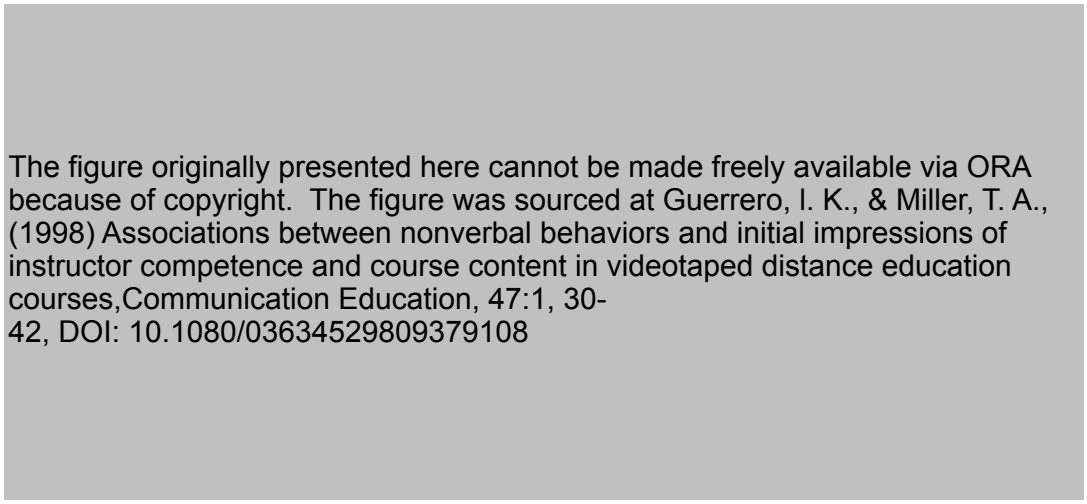
McCroskey's 1995 study encompassed students of different cultures, with data collected from U.S college students, as well as others from Australian, Puerto Rican and Finnish colleges. The results collected using Figure 1 showed that students of all cultures benefitted from immediate behaviour in teachers. He states in this study that: 'the results of this study point to the importance of teachers' nonverbal

immediacy behaviors across four divergent cultures… it would appear that having a vocal variety, a relaxed body position, eye contact with the students, and smiling at the students are all aspects of nonverbal immediacy which contribute to teachers receiving higher student evaluations. Engaging in movement and gesturing appear also to be viewed positively by students but are of lesser importance to their evaluation of teachers.' (McCroskey, 1995: 289) McCroskey also clearly defends the accuracy and importance of these student ratings, stating that: 'It would appear that if we want to make 'satisfied customers' of our students, we would be well-advised to be immediate in our teaching. Though some may think that we are recommending that teachers pamper students or be overly responsive to their preferences, it would be wise to keep in mind that the research also indicates these same behaviours increase student learning.' (McCroskey, 1995: 290).

McCroskey's view aligns with the study of effective teaching in videotaped distance education courses by Guerrero and Miller (1998), which focused on initial impressions which 'sets the tone for a course and increases student motivation.' (31) They state: 'In line with our hypotheses, results indicated that instructors who are viewed as expressive, warm and involved are most likely to be judged as highly competent. In addition, when instructors are expressive, warm, involved and articulate, their course content is likely to be judged favourably, especially if they are not overly composed and fluent.' (30)

Videotaped instruction removes certain important elements of nonverbal communication, such as proxemics, so 'instructors teaching via videotape need to be particularly cognizant of other nonverbal behaviors that can be utilized within the distance education context.' (Guerrero & Miller, 1998, 31). As online education continues to develop, it is clear that this will be an interesting area to observe. The criteria students were given to rate teachers is shown below (36). The table headed

'Expressiveness and Warmth' below was used in Guerrero and Miller's 1988 research to study these factors in respect to videotaped lessons:



It is interesting to consider whether aspects of enthusiasm and fluency may be aided by the *absence* of 'live' pupils in a dynamic classroom. However, the absence of direct, live communication may also pose problems. One student approached for the study stated that he would not take part because an earlier videotaped learning experience had not been successful: 'lectures were delivered in videotape to us. It was *extremely* boring and one of the worst classes that I have ever taken. There was little to no opportunity to speak to the lecturer and if he doesn't show up for class then why should I?' (40) This view may clearly be individual to this person, but it re-iterates the importance of a wide range of immediacy behaviours for successful learning for all. In respect to gaze, Breed (1971) found, as Smith (1979) states: 'moderate levels of gaze worked to the teacher's advantage… However, when the same material was presented on videotape, gaze was not considered important; the students evidently realized that they were not being visually monitored in any case.' (650)

Interestingly, some research has found that perceived dominance varies as a function of whether one is gazing while listening versus speaking. Exline and Messick (1967) found that individuals who gazed less while listening were rated as more

dominant.’ (Carney et al. 2005: 117). Perhaps this depends on context and it is difficult to imagine how sustained withdrawal of eye contact while listening could play into building positive relationships, whether on video or in person.

Immediacy, however, is not necessarily a guarantee of learning and effective relationships. As Sanders and Wiseman (1990) state:

> Andersen (1979) found that immediacy did not predict student grades. Likewise, Chaiken et al. (1978) found no difference for student performance with immediate teachers. However, Richmond, Gorham and McCroskey (1987) argue that past measures of cognitive learning are unreliable and that a more appropriate measure is students' perceptions of cognitive learning. On that basis they found a variety of nonverbal immediacy behaviors had positive associations with both affective and perceived cognitive learning. They conclude that immediacy behaviors are significantly related to cognitive learning but suggest that the relationship between immediacy and cognitive learning may be nonlinear. Moderate immediacy may be necessary for cognitive learning and low immediacy may suppress such learning. However, high immediacy may not increase cognitive learning over that generated by moderate immediacy.’ (342)

In Sanders and Wiseman’s own study of immediacy behaviours in students from different cultural groups, they did find that there was a positive result in respect to immediate behaviour. They state: ‘The present study found that teacher immediacy behaviors enhance the students'

perceived cognitive, affective and behavioral learning in the multicultural classroom. However, the results suggest that there are both similarities and differences in the effects of teacher immediacy cues across U.S. cultural groups. While immediacy

appears to be positively associated with learning for all groups, the levels of association vary. Further, some immediacy cues appear to have pancultural effects while others hold particular salience only for certain ethnicities.' (349) This brings to light the importance of understanding how students of different cultures may respond to teacher behavior in an ever changing school landscape.

2.5 The further effects of smiling, gender and nonverbal power signals

Miller states that, in accordance with the views on immediacy expressed above, that 'a teacher's face should convey a variety of expressions when speaking to students, but whenever suitable, they should smile when working with students, since smiles present a warm and open invitation for communication. While listening to students, teachers should use facial expressions that communicate interest about questions and concerns.' (1988:29) Gorham's findings also showed that 'eye contact, smiling, and vocal expressiveness are important teacher behaviours regardless of class size, whereas gesturing, smiling at individual students, relaxed body position, and movement around the classroom become more important factors as class size increases.' Smiling is not without its own ambiguity. In an international study, 'across a variety of cultures, when asked to choose the dominant face out of a pair of faces, people have been found to pick the nonsmiling face.' (Keating et al. 1981) This raises the question as to whether not smiling allows for more of a power signal to students, in line with the common saying to 'not smile until Christmas.'

Gorham's study also analysed the implications of gender and immediate behaviour. It was found that 'females were…substantially more likely to touch students and smile, findings which are consistent with gender differences reflected throughout nonverbal literature. While female teachers were found to be somewhat more

immediate than males, the differences on the majority of the immediacy variable were not significant and we cannot conclude that teacher gender is related to either immediacy or student learning in any particularly meaningful way.' (Gorham, 1988: 51). The lack of a clear connection between immediate behaviour and gender has also been analysed in further studies: 'Davidio and his colleagues (Dovidio, Brown, Heltman, Ellyson, & Keating, 1988) … manipulated social power by varying sex-based competence on a task and showed that, as predicted, sex differences in nonverbal behaviour could be reversed.' When the women were more confident about a topic they 'engaged in more of the nonverbal behaviors that have been previously linked to power, including more time speaking, more speech initiations, less looking while listening and more gesturing', though 'women [still] smiled more than men in all conditions'. (via Deutsch, 1990: 531-2)

Interestingly, Kraut and Johnson (1979) looked to test the source of smiling, wanting to discern whether smiles were linked to emotion, or to building social links between people. Their findings suggested that people smiled not only when making a good bowling shot in a bowling alley, but due to a variety of shots once they turned to their friends. Fridland (1991) also studied the source of smiling, also finding that it had a social, rather than 'happy' core. As Hecht and Ambady (1999) explain: 'this increased smiling was not due to happiness, which remained constant across the four conditions [which involved watching films alone and with others]. Fridlund concluded that people smile readily in response to the presence of real or imagined others, and that even solitary facial behaviour is not necessarily a result of emotion alone.' (165) This adds an interesting dimension to smiling in the classroom – it is not necessarily that the teacher is 'happy', but that the teacher is engaging with the class in a manner which could increase the bond and level of sociability between them.

A variety of nonverbal behaviours linked to power and control have been explored. In Carney's study, students were surveyed in respect to their understanding of power signals. It was found that, as predicted, 'Within behavioral qualities, high power individuals were seen as more likely to have self-assured expressions, use broad gestures, act animated, and express intimacy in greeting. Within vocal behavior, high power individuals were believed to have fewer ''um''s and ''ah''s, fewer dysfluencies, less halting speech, fewer unsuccessful interruptions, and fewer pauses. Conversely they were thought to have more successful interruptions.' They also found that 'Participants thought that high power individuals engaged in more gaze overall, more gaze while speaking, and more negative gaze (glare).' Self-touching was seen as a low power act, while having open body movement was seen positively. (Carney et al., 2005: 116-8). In earlier research 'higher social power has been attributed to people who speak faster (Harrigan, Gramata, Lucic, & Margolis, 1989), interrupt more (LaFrance, 1992), have more vocal pitch variation and more relaxed voice (Burgoon & Le Poire, 1999), make more eye contact (Kleck & Nuessle, 1968), have lowered brows (Keating et al., 1981), nod more (Burgoon & Le Poire, 1999), and use more hand gestures (Burgoon & Le Poire, 1999).' (Carney et al., 2005: 108) Richmond's 1990 study highlights the need to use a selection of these appropriate nonverbal behaviours to build good relationships, which can then foster more effective teaching and learning:

> It is clear that the development of positive relationships between teachers and students is critical. When such relationships are built, the availability of referent and expert power is much greater, thus opening many more communication options to the teacher for maintaining mundane control. While the development of positive student affect toward the teacher does not guarantee the subsequent cognitive and affective learning of the students, the results of the research in this series of studies certainly indicates it makes

> that income more likely.' A central conclusion we can draw from this research, then, is that prospective and in-service teachers must be taught communication techniques which will build better relationships between them and their students. (194)

Thus, a show of power and dominance is clearly not enough in itself, as it would not necessarily allow for productive relationships between teachers and students. As Plax et al. state sheer demonstrations of power signals may be detrimental: 'demanding student submission by exerting teacher authority typically results in both increased incidences of student disruptions and decreased affect toward the learning process (Clegg & Megson, 1968; Heal, 1978; Hoy, 1968; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston & Smith, 1979; Wlodkoski, 1982)… Instead, classroom control is redefined to include those management techniques which influence students to *want* to learn.' (Plax, et al., 1986:43). This links directly to the discussion of immediate behaviours explored in this section, and further raises the question of how aware teachers are of their own behaviours, and if they can identify and manipulate the way they present themselves for the benefit of their students. It also emphasises the point that nonverbal communication can support individual growth in lessons if behaviours are adequately directed towards students, as 'previous research on secondary teachers and students indicated that effective prosocial BATs were those that were *student oriented*, while ineffective BATs [Behavioural Alteration Techniques] [1]reflected teachers or peers as sources of power (Kearney, et al., 1984; McCroskey, et al., 1985). (Plax, et al., 1986:54)

[1] A list of BATS and affective behaviour grids can be seen in Appendix C.

2.6 Can teachers identify their own nonverbal signals (and those of their students)?

Miller states that, as many teachers are becoming increasingly aware, 'the best way for teachers to check body movements, postures and gestures is to record themselves teaching an actual class.' (Miller, 2005:30) Though more schools are investing in devices to video lessons and engaging in reflecting on processes of teaching and learning, nonverbal communication remains a difficult area to analyse on video without any real training or provision of information about nonverbal behaviours, in order for teachers to consider alternatives and more effectively analyse what they are doing.

Even with further information, these behaviours may still be difficult for teachers to control. As Woolfolk (1985) states:

> Nonverbal behaviors are difficult to control consciously, even for the most well-meaning teachers. Without realizing, they may stand closer to some students when answering a question, or smile at a chosen few students when they come to the desk for help while greeting others with a look that says, "What do you want this time!" Teachers may wait longer for one group to answer, give others more choices, speak to some students only in public, allow one child to interrupt but scold another for what appears to be the same behavior, and so on.' (523)

Indeed, there are studies which have shown that these things do often occur in classrooms (Woolfolk, 1985). Miller also states that 'teachers, like most people, tend to get closer to those they like and maintain a greater distance from those they don't like. Creating a supportive learning environment means not sending messages of rejection through the use of personal space.' (Miller, 2005:30) Babad (1988) states that this may be difficult, as 'although more positive affect may be

transmitted in controllable channels, more negative affect may be transmitted (or leaked) in less controllable channels.' (Babad, et al., 1989: 91) This study found that: 'biased teachers showed a consistent and substantial leakage effect, that is, leaking more negative affect through the less controllable compared with more controllable channels. Unbiased teachers showed no such leakage effect.' (Babad, et al., 1989: 93) Part of avoiding such 'leakage' may be further training, as 'several writers have suggested that communication skills be taught to students or teachers and that nonverbal training be an essential part of this instruction (e.g., Gray, 1973; Hennings, 1975; Rezmierski, 1974)' (via Smith 1979: 633).

Heightened awareness of a teacher's own actions may have the further beneficial effect of understanding the nonverbal communication of students more accurately. In a study of how students, primarily of African American origin and with severe emotional disturbance, it was found that 'boys with SED who make nonverbal decoding errors may experience increased frustration in reaction to their nonverbal mistakes' and were also seen to have more problematic relationships with friends (Cooley, 2002: 748) Understanding of these students' difficulties could allow for some added clarification of ideas via further use of gestures or pictures. Ideally, 'an observant teacher can also tell when students understand the material or if they are having trouble grasping major concepts. Slumping in a chair often indicates fatigue, boredom or discouragement, while attentive students will sit up straight and lean slightly towards the teacher.' (Miller, 2005: 30) This isn't always the case however, and once again context and an individual's typical behaviour needs to be noted, and as Neill and Caswell (1993) explain, some small closed challenges are not necessarily worth challenging and disrupting the flow of the lesson for. They state: 'one of the abilities of experienced and effective teachers is an ability to pick out and read the meaning of the critical nonverbal signals and to ignore the mass of

behaviours which have relatively little significance for the overall success and development of the lesson' (56).

This is not to say that teachers don't need to be observant, as aspects of students' nonverbal behaviour can convey a range of information important to their learning and progress. Neill and Miller (2013) have found, by observing gestures in young children, that: 'producing relevant gestures significantly predicted how accurately children sorted [this particular task involved children explaining why they had made certain choices when sorting objects] and gesturing even explained more unique variance in accuracy than did age despite the wide age span' tested. It was also found that 'gesturing may have scaffolded children's linguistic representations of the rules by reinforcing the conceptual links between attributes and language.' (1524) This interesting link between aspects of nonverbal communication supporting and allowing for more accurate understanding and verbalisation of concepts is something teachers could be more aware of in the classroom and may also productively play into the design of certain tasks. It does remain a difficult area to decode, as some gestures may become 'covert' and internalized, still resulting in high understanding and performance (Neil and Miller, 2013:1525).

2.7 Conclusion and research questions

It is clear from the literature that nonverbal communication is a complex and important aspect of behaviour with clear consequences in the classroom. Miller (1988, 2005) has brought to teachers' attention the importance of awareness and some aspects of behaviour which teachers may find helpful in order to maintain a productive and positive atmosphere in classrooms, such as the use of gestures and eye contact, as well as other behaviours that have similarities with the literature on immediate behaviour and its effects. As Cristophel (1990) states: 'The most salient

teacher behaviors contributing to student learning were found to be vocal expressiveness, smiling, and a relaxed body position. Kelley & Gorham's (1988) experimental study isolated the effects of immediacy on cognitive learning, providing support of immediacy's arousal stimuli being highly associated with attentional focus, enhanced memory, and recall'. (325). Researches of immediacy before Cristophel and Gorham (Andersen, 1979; Mehrabian, 1967) also found that it can result in a higher level of learning and, as Plax further explains: 'nonverbal messages typically provide the framework for interpreting verbal messages (Burgoon, 1980; Burgoon & Saine, 1978; Mehrabian, 1981; Wiener & Mehrabian, 1968), teacher nonverbal behaviors in the classroom may well provide the context for students' interpretations of those verbal control messages teachers employ'. (Plax, et al., 1986:44). The importance of purposeful, congruous nonverbal behaviour can also help establish healthy power relations in the classroom (as seen in Richmond, 1990; Plax et. al, 1985; Carney et. al., 2005) and the encouragement of students to use their own gestures and awareness of students' nonverbal behaviour may also lead to more effective teaching (Cooley, 2002; Neill & Miller, 2013).

The important co-existence of verbal and nonverbal communication in the classroom, as well as the range of research which supports immediate behaviours has raised questions in my mind about how informed and aware teachers are in my own school environment. It has also, in respect to my own practice, raised the question of how I can more effectively reflect on my teaching and benefit my students. I decided to frame the research with the following questions:

1. What do teachers across various subjects think nonverbal communication is, and do they consciously use it?

2. Can awareness of teachers' current nonverbal communication be increased with an intervention which provides information, and can their current behaviours and awareness be improved?
3. In the reflection of teachers after more awareness of the topic, do they feel there have been any benefits in terms of their students' behaviour, learning or general classroom atmosphere?

3 Methodology

3.1 Process of Data Collection

The research conducted was qualitative and research questions were explored through individual semi-structured interviews, which were audio recorded. This method was chosen because it allowed for a personal way to convey and gather intensive information one to one without a sense of teachers having to discuss in a wider group, perhaps affecting the tone or honesty of their own contributions and reflections. In addition, it avoided teachers being too much 'observed', as may have been the case with a video recording of the interview, which it was also feared would intimidate teachers, their responses and their willingness to participate. A questionnaire to a wider range of teachers was considered but aspects of nuance and nonverbal aspects such as tone would be lost, which may have affected the richness, openness or informative nature of the data. This was crucial considering that the project was primarily concerned with personal reflections and development, not just the volume of information, some of which would be subtle and perhaps wouldn't have been written onto a questionnaire.

To ask for teachers to contribute an email was sent to my department (English), as well as a range of colleagues from different departments who I thought would be willing to participate. I targeted people from different subjects and with different levels of experience in order to examine a variety of approaches and levels of understanding of nonverbal communication. Nineteen people agreed to take part, resulting in a productive collaboration between different subjects and teachers of different styles and levels of experience.

The data was collected in two stages – an initial interview at the very start of the summer term to gauge the initial knowledge of the teachers contributing, and a subsequent follow-up interview at the end of the term to check what progress, if any, had been made.[2] The length of the term, including the half-term holiday, was ten weeks on the school calendar. During the first interview participants were all given the immediacy grids,[3] which were discussed, as well as a few quotes on the nature of immediacy. The first two quotes were discussed, and those being interviewed were encouraged to read the rest in their own time. After the first interview, I also emailed all participants two articles to read by Miller on nonverbal communication – one long and one short[4], asking them to read the short one, and to look at the long one if they were interested and had time. I chose to do this in order to give people more information about what we had discussed in the first interview,

[2] Questions asked at both interviews are included in Appendix A and B.

[3] The immediacy grids discussed are included in Appendix C.

[4] Long article - Miller, P. W. (1988). Nonverbal communication, third edition: what research says to the teacher. Washington: National Education Association. Accessed via ERIC.

Short article - Miller, P. W. (2005). Body language in the classroom. *Techniques, 80*(8), 28-30. Retrieved from https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:7316/docview/216134474?accountid=13042

and to allow certain issues and ideas to sink in or be reflected upon in their own time as they read the piece or pieces. I chose those particular documents because they were clear and not overly complicated or hard to follow. Also, as time was limited, I was keen on choosing at least one short, easy to understand article in order to make it manageable for those involved.

The time of year chosen was partly out of necessity, in that exam classes were leaving, which freed up some valuable time for interviews to be conducted within school hours. It also allowed for more time for teachers to potentially reflect and try out new aspects of nonverbal communication without some of the pressure of the earlier terms. In the vast majority of cases I went to teachers' classrooms or offices to conduct interviews, at a time that was convenient to them. If more privacy was needed, interviews were conducted in a nearby room in their department. I thought this was important as it made the process more convenient for them, and also allowed them to feel comfortable, and 'on their own territory'. In some cases it was useful to be able to discuss the displays or table layouts in the rooms we were in as part of the conversation on nonverbal communication.

3.2 Ethical Considerations

In terms of ethical considerations, I was aware of the personal nature of asking teachers about their nonverbal habits and areas to reflect on and develop. I made sure that the conversation was conducted amongst equals, as Kvale states, (via Cohen et al, 2017, 506): 'an *inter-view*, an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest.' I avoided giving off a sense that I had 'the answers' and also added areas I'd like to work on or improve into the conversation. I am also not in a leadership position in the school, which eliminated a sense of perhaps making interviewees more conscious of their comments in terms of

their own position in the school. Further to this, conducting this manner of research 'raises questions of identifiability, anonymity, confidentiality and privacy of individuals. Whilst numerical data can be aggregated so that individuals are not traceable, this may not be the case in qualitative data analysis, even if individuals are not named or are given pseudonyms.' (Cohen et al, 2017, 650). This issue was resolved by clearly stating to participants that all contributions would remain anonymous and asking for clearance to record the interview and to quote anonymously from it for terms of the research paper. All participants knew the research was being conducted for a Master's research project, but if the piece had a larger scope in terms of publication, that may have raised added questions about how open some participants may have been. All data was kept securely, on a password protected computer. I had ethical approval from CUREC for the research and BERA guidelines were followed.

3.3 Methods of data analysis

The interview data was analysed through inductive means, as 'The process of qualitative data analysis is typically inductive (Thomas, 2006) (via Cohen et al, 2017, 645). This allowed me to work towards developing 'interpretations of the data and derive… themes, concepts, theories, explanations, understandings, summaries, models etc. which fairly and comprehensively explain the data or phenomenon.' (Cohen et al, 2017, 645). I chose not to fully transcribe the data, even though it would have been informative, there was not the time to do so. Initial interviews were around 20 mins each, with some going over half an hour. Subsequent interviews were shorter, but still ranged from 10 mins to 20 mins, and the sheer volume of information made full transcription very difficult. Instead, I chose to analyse key topics via a semantic approach 'directly from the video or audio

recording, selecting out the important materials directly from the original source, thereby avoiding becoming so caught up in detail that sight of the bigger picture is lost.' (Cohen et al., 2017, 646). I chose to categorise the interviews via the main topics discussed because it seemed the most natural and useful way to examine the volume of qualitative data. It allowed for a wide scope of detailed discussion on the findings, while also minimising the material in a meaningful way. I also wanted to categorise relevant topics under research questions in order to further streamline the data in a purposeful way in order to be as clear as possible in my findings and discussion. The categories I used were centred around the awareness, use and training in nonverbal behaviours, and then the degree to which teachers had managed to implement new behaviours, or were able to reflect on the potential benefits of increased awareness and new behaviours in the future.

3.4 Possible Limitations of Methods

In term of possible limitations of methods, the people approached to take part were colleagues that were open and conversational in nature, and not the most 'closed off' individuals, which may have somewhat affected the outcome of the research. Despite this, even within my initial selection of people (which was of a wide range, I emailed 29 people, with 19 people agreeing) one potential participant avoided the process, explaining that they were not sure what they could say about the topic.

There was also not a chance to have an objective observer check codes, as 'Thomas (2006) suggests that checking for the consistent use of codes can be addressed' through methods such as 'independent, blind parallel coding', 'checking on the clarity of the categories' and 'stakeholder and number checks' (via Cohen et al., 2017, 645). The scope of the project did not allow for this. Also, though I did have a clear outline of questions for interviews, it is still clear that: 'since the data obtained

[is] all couched in 'social events', reporting involves a double hermeneutic process (Giddens, 1976) by which the researcher interprets the data from participants who have already interpreted their world, and then relates them to the audience in his/her own words.' (via Cohen et al., 2017, 648). Considering the range of people interviewed and the somewhat ephemeral, unconscious nature of nonverbal communication and the subjective nature of processing the signals given out by oneself and others, this is undeniably an issue in research on this topic, though I believe it has been possible to generate some clear conclusions across the range of people interviewed.

4 Findings and Discussion

Tally of teachers showing the level of engagement with intervention strategies (other than the interviews) over the summer term:

Read the short article about nonverbal communication and remembered specific details – 7 people

Read the short article but could not remember specific details – 4 people

Did not read the short article – 8 people

Filmed a lesson to reflect – 2 people

Audio recorded a lesson to reflect – 1 person

Research question 1 - *what do teachers across various subjects think nonverbal communication is, and do they consciously use it?*

4.1 Awareness and use of nonverbal communication:

4.1.1 Good awareness and some conscious use

Seventeen of the nineteen people interviewed were able to demonstrate a good awareness of the term 'nonverbal communication'. Many nonverbal elements were listed in response to the question: 'what do you think nonverbal communication is?' Though each of these individuals did not give complete lists of specific elements, they were able to make clear connections to body language and the lack of words. One participant explained it as, 'any communication from looks to nods to eye rolling to my whole body' and clicked their fingers to demonstrate further, before continuing: 'walking around, pointing…' Many teachers were able to comment on the powerful use of applying or withdrawing their gaze, linking to Miller's research on how impactful this nonverbal communication can be: 'Teachers usually maintain eye contact and flash visual signals when they want to emphasise particular points. Direct teacher eye contact can express support, disapproval or neutrality.' (Miller, 1988, 29) References to tone of voice were rare, and no-one mentioned classroom layout and displays until prompted at later stages of the interview, where some discussed their inability to alter certain classroom layouts due to elements out of their control.

Participants made perceptive comments about the importance of nonverbal communication and the way it worked in tandem with verbal communication in the classroom. One teacher stated that it was more important than what was said because: 'you can say the same thing, but if you do something nonverbal with it, you can totally change it', and another stating that it can give 'illustration of a point', which links back to the research by Flevaras and Perry (2001: 340) and the importance of gesture in clarifying certain mathematical concepts. One participant pointedly noted that verbal and nonverbal communication 'work hand in hand', because if nonverbals are not engaging 'they wouldn't listen to what you were saying.'

Interestingly, when the initial interview moved towards questions of these teachers' conscious use and awareness of their own behaviours, it was more difficult for teachers to pinpoint what they actually did in the classroom, supporting Woolfolk's (1985) claim that: 'Nonverbal behaviors are difficult to control consciously, even for the most well-meaning teachers.' One that could give an excellent definition of nonverbal behaviours said in respect to their own practice: 'I hate watching myself… even hearing myself in a recording.' During an observation of this teacher earlier in the year she was told that she (effectively, in the observer's view) clicked at a boy for attention, which she had not even consciously realised she'd done, and on reflection stated 'I would not find that particularly nice from someone'. This is perhaps an example of Babad's (1988) statement that: 'although more positive affect may be transmitted in controllable channels, more negative affect may be transmitted (or leaked) in less controllable channels.' (Babad, et al., 1989: 91) Another teacher stated that: 'I don't consciously think about it in the same way that I consciously think about the words I use.' A sports teacher who was also interviewed stated that he consciously tries not to cross his arms, also stating that 'they learn by watching' for PE, adding that 'if you shout the whole time, you can't compete' against distractions outside, further highlighting the need for effective use of nonverbal communication. This comment is also supported by Miller's research, as he has stated that 'gestures are a visual form of communication that can travel farther than spoken words and are unaffected by the presence of noise.' (Miller, 2005, 30)

A younger teacher, in the profession for two years, stated that they consciously thought about nonverbal signals, such as avoiding putting hands in pockets, but stated that he felt more conscious when an NQT, but perceptively noted that it was more effective to deal with aspects of inattention or minor misbehaviour nonverbally, because 'it doesn't disrupt the flow of what you're saying', which links

directly to Neill and Caswell (1993), who also state that not all signals from students are worth disrupting the lesson to challenge (56). Other learnt behaviours were referred to by another teacher: 'there are certain things, that I'm consciously aware of, that I've trained myself to do, such as standing by the door as students come in.' This teacher also referred to other habits that were less consciously controlled, such as pacing up and down the classroom, and also gripping on to the lectern during assemblies: 'I try to hold on to it in a relaxed way… I don't know if that translates into the classroom and if I do the same with the desk…' One teacher of languages highlighted aspects of cultural difference: 'In Spain we use different body movements… I can move my hands a lot, and that does not mean that I'm angry or anxious, it just means that I'm trying to communicate something… they can think that I'm mad if they don't know what I'm saying…' As Flevares and Perry's research has shown, gestures are often utilised, but not always to full or productive effect (2001: 332) and this teacher's comments also link to, as Sanders and Wiseman (1990) state some 'immediacy cues appear to have pancultural effects while others hold particular salience only for certain ethnicities.' (349)

As these examples demonstrate, teachers could refer to some specific behaviours, and some had been given feedback from students or observations over the course of their teaching. One had filmed himself before, stating: 'I've watched myself but I've never thought specifically about nonverbal feedback when I've done it.' As was indicative of many of the teachers interviewed, he could state some behaviours, such as: 'I always stand in the same place regardless of what the seating plan is'…. 'off centre to the right' and also referred to standing by the door as students entered the room. Others mentioned smiling to varying degrees, one stating that they only smile at classes once they get to know them, and another stated firmly that smiling was crucial: 'of course you have to … they have to feel welcome, and that they come in to have fun and learn at the same time.' She also added: 'what a role we teachers

have, we can inspire or kill the students' interest in something' not just through knowledge, but through how it's presented.

One participant who works as a teaching assistant in the school's science partnership program stated that nonverbal communication was potentially more important for primary school students, as 'you need to do a lot more showing rather than telling'. She also emphasised the importance of smiling to the children, and that they warmed to her quickly due to always smiling and waving when she was introduced to a new group, but also stated: 'I focus on being friendly… sometimes I think I smile too much.' This teacher was still at the point of thinking a lot about what to say, and referenced looking up sometimes while thinking, and not always at them. Despite some of this participant's apprehensions research has shown that younger children benefit greatly from smiles of approval (Miller, 2005: 29).

4.1.2 More partial awareness and less conscious use

Only two of those interviewed seemed more unaware of how to answer the 'what is nonverbal communication?' question. One seemed to have awareness of nonverbal communication and behaviours to a degree, as they referenced wanting to minimise their own teacher talk, but struggled to label more nonverbal behaviours, and were not very conscious of their own classroom behaviours. This participant found it difficult to answer as to whether they felt that verbal communication was more important than nonverbal considering this lack of knowledge on the topic. There was some confusion as to whether written feedback is nonverbal, and the teacher stated: 'I'm not really conscious of it at all.'

Another participant, perhaps due to other factors, replied to the question about what nonverbal communication is with 'anything verbal'…before being prompted, then

stating: 'what, actions?' He could then go on to reflect on his own behaviours: 'I've been described as being quite… expressive with movement.' He also referred to using visuals often, perhaps partly due to teaching geography, stating that he often asks: 'why am I showing you this?' to allow them to think and draw their own conclusions. He thought that verbal and nonverbal communication 'complement each other.' He referred to moving around the classroom, using the eyes and also referred to his use of humour.

4.1.3 Further and developing awareness shown through examples and references through the course of discussion in the first interview

All of those interviewed were able to show a developing awareness of their own practice through discussion, and could give further examples of nonverbal communication during the course of the initial interview. Many of these realisations were enabled through responses to the question about the nonverbal behaviours of their favourite teachers at school. An impressive array of desirable nonverbal communications were highlighted: there were references to focused listening, intent, engaged looks, 'being quite patient… waiting for me to develop what I was saying' and those that 'did a lot with their face.' There were also references to teachers who walked around the room, 'owned' the room, or 'would stand competently in front of the classroom'. There were also references to teachers who emitted a sense of fear (in a respectful sense), those who had well decorated rooms, and matronly, smiling, calm or logical figures. There were also references to the need for approval from these teachers, with some stating that they craved 'validation' one stating: 'I demanded special attention' and another, 'I was quite desperate for approval.' There were also interesting references to a 'fierce gaze that would demand your attention

nonverbally', their body language 'reflecting their wants'. One teacher referenced seemed a mainly entertaining figure, who was enthusiastic, at times thumping desks and karate chopping books. The clarity with which some remembered the value of these teachers was interesting to note, one stating: 'she never judged me, she was able to bring out the best of me… but as a teenager I wouldn't have been as aware of body language.' Another also stating: 'I try to emulate him… he would be watching seemingly everyone at the same time.'

In the course of discussion, the two teachers who had had the most trouble defining nonverbal communication were able to further develop their understanding of the term. One made a realisation about movement as nonverbal communication, as well as classroom layout and displays. He stated: 'to be honest with you, I haven't thought as much about it as in the last ten minutes… actually there's a whole lot that could be done in terms of communication with the class.' When asked how he had learnt what works he stated that: 'I don't really know what [works] and I think that different things work with different students in terms of nonverbal communication.' In discussion of the immediacy grids he raised the issue of how subconscious these behaviours are, stating: 'to what extent do you think a teacher can control and learn this?' and in discussion of eye contact gave the information that: 'royal butlers always enter the room backwards so as not to draw attention to themselves… if people don't have the eyes to look at, they don't bother looking, apparently,' showing that he was reflecting on the topic and the meanings of certain behaviours.

The other teacher who had trouble defining the term, in discussion of the immediacy grids, agreed that there is a role for filming to increase awareness, but explained that some pick up effective nonverbals quickly and some might need more help. He stated: 'If you're not a communicator, you're in the wrong job… I am of a generation that is a bit more sink or swim… no concessions, you were straight in, full timetable,

doing duties in the school, doing duties in the boarding house… I'm not saying that's right, but you do learn.' He further discussed that he found using a quiet voice effective, as well as use of the eyes and changes in volume. With this participant, there was a sense that they had been teaching for such a long time that their behaviours had become ingrained, largely unconscious, habits. He further explained with: 'I think if you've had more exposure to it, you've done it more often, it's become part of your teacher training.' This may link to Neil and Miller's notion that nonverbal behaviours can become absorbed and 'covert', which doesn't necessarily take away any of their effectiveness (2013:1525).

In terms of wider realisations about nonverbal behaviour by the other participants, examples ranged from one teacher noting an 'aha moment' with a difficult class, when she stood up with legs apart and arms up wide at the front of the classroom and metaphorically pushed her hands towards them saying 'over to you', noting that 'it wasn't on purpose' but was 'quite liberating'. Several made realisations about the powerful nonverbal signals inherent in their classroom displays, one stated: 'I use that map at the back of the classroom quite a lot… I hadn't thought about board displays as being nonverbal.' Another stated that classroom displays had gone up for Open Day and had remained, also making the connection between displays and nonverbal communication. She stated that: 'This is the kind of thing that you don't think about unless you're actively… consciously asking questions about it of your own teaching.' Another noted the significance of tidiness and clearing the board at the end of the lesson. A teacher with pastoral responsibilities, also realised during the course of the first interview that the layout and objects in his office were a form of nonverbal communication. He then expanded to say: 'this is where I'd sit (a chair adjacent to mine) if I wanted you to open up to me, I'd sit over there if you were naughty (pointing at a chair directly opposite mine)' and he explained that he thought about this consciously. He also made reference to changing seats if the

mood of the interview had changed, and if he wanted to avoid it becoming too much of an interrogation. He stated that he watches the body language of others, but often not consciously, also bringing up the importance of silences in pastoral conversations.

Four people also made the important realisation that tone of voice was an aspect of nonverbal communication, as Miller states in his research, 'teachers should use a variety or vocal inflections when presenting material [and]…articulate words at a comfortable rate to maximize the potential for student comprehension' (Miller, 1988, 29-30). One teacher noted that manipulating volume is something he'd like to work on: 'whether it should be loud at the start, quiet at the start, crescendo…' Another discussed the value of sounding passionate and engaged in a topic. Others came to realise they do gesture, and one teacher was encouraged by reading through the immediacy grids, realising that they do use many of those behaviours. She did note that 'something I know I don't do is smile' and another teacher also noted when discussing the immediacy grids, 'smiling has come up twice now, I'm not sure I do that.' The importance of smiling is echoed in the research of McCroskey (1995:289): 'relaxed body position, eye contact with the students, and smiling at the students are all aspects of nonverbal immediacy which contribute to teachers receiving higher student evaluations.'

Many of the teachers were able to reflect generally on their behaviours as the immediacy information was discussed, and nonverbal communication further defined. Teachers referred to signalling to students (miming the doing up of top buttons or to take off coats) and discussed whether they prefer desks in groups or horseshoes and how that affected their eye contact and movement. One teacher felt that she was relaxed and calm, 'almost to a fault' while others wanted to be calmer, one noting, referring to the start of lessons, that: 'just to watch them sit down is so powerful.' Another teacher further explained that, for different grammar exercises,

she had different signals such as clicking fingers – which would then indicate that they needed to locate an example of the accusative in the example given. There were interesting reflections on how to treat all classes and individuals with an equal level of professionalism and immediacy. Some mentioned that sitting down while teaching was more of an option with the Sixth Form, with one teacher noting that that conveyed that they were 'subconsciously part of the same group.' Many teachers noted that they may speak too quickly and conceded that some students, for various reasons (classroom layout, lack of time or energy or focus on more tricky or enthusiastic characters), may gain more attention and eye contact than others. The importance of making students feel important was clarified by one participant, who noted: 'every student needs to feel valued at a human level… there may be an exception around autism to an extent, which makes dealing with those guys particularly interesting but challenging.' This comment brings to light the research stating that context matters a great deal when interpreting any nonverbal gesture (LaFrance & Mayo, 1978) and that not all students will necessarily respond to certain signals in the same way.

5 Training in nonverbal communication

5.1 References to previous training in effective use of nonverbal behaviours

In discussion with these teachers most of them felt that they had not been fully informed, and as Miller states: 'Teachers should devote time and energy to developing their nonverbal communication skills, just as they do their teaching skills, because they must make sure they are sending the right messages to their students.' (Miller, 1988: 30) It was clear that all but three of the teachers

interviewed agreed with this, and that some more guidance on how to develop skills would have been useful, particularly at early points in their career. This research supports Richmond's (1990) statement that: 'prospective and in-service teachers must be taught communication techniques which will build better relationships between them and their students' (194).

5.2 No training

Five teachers felt that they had had no training on nonverbal communication at all and could not give any examples of training of any kind. One referred to having one lecture on behaviour that may have included some aspects of nonverbal communication, leaving her 'woefully underprepared' in this respect. Another noted: 'I feel very uninformed; I haven't had any training.' This participant is now a Head of Department, with several pre-qualified teachers needing advice, to which he stated: 'I don't know much about it so I can't really train them about it.' Another stated that: 'one of my regrets is that I didn't do teaching training… a lot of my formative years were absolutely disastrous.' He states that he learnt through trial and error but noted that 'sometimes I worry that I'm a bit didactic'. One stated that he may have been told helpful things in his PGCE, but he couldn't remember the training and it was hard to pinpoint. One of these five felt comfortable with this lack of training, stating that her abilities were natural and 'innate'.

5.3 Some minimal training

Eleven of those interviewed stated that they hadn't had any significant training, but that some advice within the realm of nonverbal communication had been conveyed at some point. One referred to some advice given in their 'Teach First' year about

controlling the voice and becoming quieter when disciplining a student. Another was shown some clips of teachers entering a classroom during their PGCE, and another referred to having to film themselves during their PGCE, noting that 'there was a lot of arm waving which I hadn't realised was going on.' Another noted that some advice was imparted during their GTP, but that it was stated in a critical and condescending way, and therefore not taken on board as effectively. Another referred to not having had any training but had completed some mental health training in recent years that had helped with his awareness and listening skills. Another participant without a PGCE noted that the Peer Support training at university had been their main source of knowledge in this respect. When one teacher was asked to explain how they were taught to take up more space, they replied: 'I think someone along the way told me that… a long time ago'. Another mentioned that they hadn't had any real training on this topic during their PGCE, but that the time spent observing other teachers during this time had allowed certain aspects of nonverbal communication to be learnt, which clearly depends on the observational skills of the trainee. The PE teacher interviewed felt that he had received more training for coaching than classroom teaching, referring to learning 'how you position your group to deliver', for example, not standing in front of the sun to give instructions.

5.4 Training

Three people answered firmly that they felt informed and trained in this area. One stated she had learnt what works through 'a little bit of thinking back to when I was taught… but I watch a lot of lessons.' Another participant stated that they felt informed and had attended an NQT body language lecture for around 2 hours of an INSET. They immediately implemented some of the info given, such as palms up

conveying a more open and positive position. He also filmed himself as part of the PGCE, realising that he smiled more than he thought and that he was inadvertently focusing questions to the outer areas of the room, and not the middle. Another teacher, trained in Spain to teach English as a Foreign Language also felt they had had training, including filming, where she noticed that the students 'were more focused on what I was doing with my hands rather than what I was teaching'. She stated that her course encompassed how different cultures use body language. She also stated that: 'we had to analyse other people's classes'.

Overall, there was a sense from the majority of participants that any training given, if any, was not very clearly or memorably communicated, or ingrained into their respective training programs. Many of them made clear that they felt this was inappropriate, which gives support to the claims of a variety of researchers who have emphasised the importance of training teachers in respect to nonverbal communication: 'the need to make teachers explicitly aware of nonverbal facets of communication has been stressed…by a number of researchers (e.g., Galloway, 1968, 1970, 1974a; Koch, 1971b; Montagu, 1967; Ostler & Kranz, 1976). (via Smith 1979 (633)

Overall, in summary of the findings for the first research question, teachers were largely aware of what nonverbal communication entailed and were able to define it with a high level of accuracy. Their awareness of their own behaviours was not so clear or well pronounced, however. During the course of the first interview teachers were able to develop their understanding and learn about immediate behaviours, enabling a strong degree of reflection and with the vast majority keen to move forward and improve their practice.

6 Research question 2 - *Can awareness of teachers' current nonverbal communication be increased with an intervention which provides information, and can their current behaviours and awareness be improved?*

6.1 Changes in awareness and use following intervention

6.1.1 More conscious and aware

Fourteen of those interviewed felt that their awareness of nonverbal communication had been improved when they were interviewed for a second time at the end of the summer term. Despite this, very few could remember the exact term 'immediate behaviour', and what that term represented. Only three could define it and one of them stated that the term may overcomplicate something that teachers are naturally aware of. This provided evidence in the fact that, though many found the information given in the first interview useful, that if the term and meaning of 'immediate' behaviours was to be ingrained within teachers' practice, they would need to be reminded and the usage of the term more thoroughly ingrained in general conversation about teaching and learning at the school.

Even though many teachers could give a good definition of the term 'nonverbal communication' in the first interview, it was clear that many felt more comfortable with defining the term in the second interview and had reflected on its meaning and possible impact in their teaching. There were differing scales of this awareness, ranging from teachers who stated: 'I think I have a better sense of what it is… I can't say that I've thought about it all the time' to more thorough awareness. One stated that he had become a lot more self aware, and found the short article 'really interesting'. He stated: 'I was kind of aware of my nonverbal communication, but less so of the students,' which was mentioned in the article and struck a chord with him. Several of the others who had read the short article mentioned an interest in

being able to read students' nonverbal signals more accurately. This links to Smith's statement that: 'students are continuously communicating with their teachers, a point too often missed by teachers relying solely on the verbal message for informational purposes.' (1979, 633)

This participant also picked up in the article that if verbal and nonverbal signals contradict, the latter will dominate. Reflecting on his practice, he stated: 'if I'm reading something dramatic from a historian I could move to the back of the room and show an image on the board… I don't do that very often.' This led to some discussion of why 'delivery' is not a part of a lesson plan sheet, as it may be beneficial to consider it at the lesson planning stage.

One teacher, who had not been able to define nonverbal communication in the first interview, stated, 'I had this narrow view of it', also stating:

> I think since last conversation, yes, definitely a lot more conscious of it, even just walking around school saying hello to students, sometimes you don't say hello, you put your hand up and it's just a very subtle way of communicating with the students… I always thought it was important, but I suppose what it's made me think about, actually, sometimes as I said to you, as a teacher you can get into habits. You get into the routine of the term and forget about these pedagogical ways of looking and thinking about your teaching, so it's just been really good to re-engage with that again and have it at the back of my mind.'

Another teacher, who filmed themselves to reflect on their nonverbal communication and who had earlier stated 'I feel very uninformed,' stated: 'Talking to you was the most useful thing. I read through the article but I don't think it really made much difference compared to what you'd already said… it's something I've thought about more, whereas before it was something I'd always done, it wasn't something that I'd

focused on and actually thought about…' Through watching himself on film, he noted: 'what my face was showing and what my voice was saying were two different things', and he often found that he was gesturing too much, and in future will aim to make the gestures more purposeful, linking to Miller's statement that 'the most effective communication occurs when verbal and nonverbal messages are in sync, creating communication synergy.' (1988: 28). He also realised that a lot of his gestures were closed, rather than open and friendly. Another participant was also more aware after the first interview and reading the article, stating in reflection:

> You never have time to think about the attitude that you have with the students, like the body language, you only focus on what you have to teach, and you don't realise how much your teaching can benefit from the body language as well, because it can make your class more focused, more quiet, more engaged, more motivated.

On the whole, out of the fourteen who stated they had more awareness, it was more common for them to state that the awareness was still in a developmental stage, and that the school term had not allowed for a full reflection or implementation of new behaviours. Teachers stated: 'I think I've perhaps realised that it's more important' but also stated 'I don't think I am aware of my habits.' This perhaps highlights the importance of a teacher's own awareness, as Woolfolk (1985) states: 'If teachers are able to recognize their own nonverbal behaviors, they can determine if the behaviors are appropriate to the goals of the task and occur regularly enough to become reliable cues to the students' (524). Another said: 'I've thought about it a bit more since our conversation' but also added that 'it's hard to quantify, it hasn't been my main focus… I have been thinking about where I stand a bit more.'

Many who hadn't filmed themselves said that they would like to in future. Another stated that, in a common reference, that it was 'very hard to break your habits…

because you haven't embedded a different habit.' Another stated: 'I definitely understand the concept better,' mainly due to the first interview. She referred to being a little more aware of her nonverbal habits and was more conscious of walking back and forth at the front of the classroom, though she was quite conscious of this already, having referred to it in the first interview. She stated: 'it's something I would have thought of before, but not as consciously if that makes sense.' Another participant stated that they were 'definitely' more aware, but also added that 'that will fade probably.' He stated that he had also become more 'attuned to others, and signals given off in the houseroom.' Further explaining his awareness with: 'hopefully I've made eye contact a tiny bit more with my classes, but I'd like to think that's not a completely new thing,' continuing to state: 'you have to do body language, because you are a person communicating, so you might as well do that as effectively as possible.'

Throughout the second round of interviews there was a sense that participants found the research and topic interesting, were more aware of the term and what it constituted, and were keen to learn and try new things, but that in the day-to-day practice of teaching many had found it difficult to implement conscious changes.

6.1.2 No change

Five of those interviewed felt that there had been no change in their awareness of the topic. One stated, 'yes, since our last discussion,' but when asked if they were more aware of their own behaviours they stated that they 'always had been.' He stated that he may have used a different behaviour but was not entirely aware of what he might have adjusted, commenting that it might have happened unconsciously. He stated that he was personally interested in body language, but not more than before. Another stated that they were also already aware of the topic,

as they had been doing it for so long, stating: 'some things just work'. Another stated that their awareness was 'probably about the same, essentially, there may have been subtleties that I haven't thought about enough.' They thought that the topic was important but 'really hard to change… I only think about it out of the lesson… I don't think about it at the time, when I could change it.' Another participant stated: 'I ought to address it… I can't see that there are particular things in my mind that I want to change.'

6.2 Could give ideas about raising consciousness in future teaching and wider school life

All but one of the nineteen interviewed could give ideas about how to raise their own, or wider school, consciousness of the topic in the future. Many suggested an INSET, one stating that 'classroom craft' isn't really discussed at the school's INSETs. She stated: 'I think, sometimes, there's a bit of… when you have been doing it for longer that you ought to know how to do it, and it makes you weak or something if you want to discuss it… because, does that mean you can't cope?' Several mentioned the personal nature of the topic, one stating: 'this is more personal, it's something about you as a person.' Another also suggested an INSET, stating: 'it's such a massive part of teaching… there might be an attitude, where people are like, that's just being a good teacher, but it's just another thing that you can practise and get better at.' This led to discussion of teachers not thinking about this aspect of their teaching 'actively.' This teacher further stated: 'All of the of the other parts of teaching that you've changed over time, you've probably only done because you've been given advice…' Another suggested: 'an expert coming in to talk about body language would be fascinating… you can pre-empt an awful lot [with body language] before you get to a critical point [with a class].' Another referenced

changing the school culture – 'rather than it being a criticism on the teacher not doing enough', leading to more collaborative and supportive discussion about how to progress in this area. A couple of participants raised the issue that those who were less self-aware would be the least likely to take on board advice of this kind, even in an INSET.

One teacher gave a sense of general reflection on the topic: 'it's interesting to think about how you are perceived within the organisation, and you want to be perceived as [someone that is] positive and good at their job… sometimes, it's silly, but I worry about walking around with my coffee cup… I worry that it might look as if I'm someone who is slightly less professional', and a couple of participants mentioned that they would like to increase their nonverbal awareness for interviews and promotions. Another raised the issue of how important it was to keep improving: 'if you want to continuously improve, there's is no way you're going to say, this is silly, if you're a professional and want to get better and better… otherwise, anything that comes your way you say 'I know better'.

Some focused on the advice being more useful for beginning teachers, one stating, for young teachers moving straight from university to teaching: 'All your life up to that point you've been in education, being educated, and so what you do initially is you look back at your school, and you don't really know how they did it, because they're the teacher and they just do it.' Another mentioned that very new teachers would find it difficult to focus on nonverbal behaviours, suggesting that those who had been teaching between 3-5 years would be a more productive focus. One beginning teacher did seem willing to take on board the advice, stating: I don't want to get set in my ways, and I know there are things I could do better.'

Others suggested that they would apply ideas they had learnt in the next school year, one stating they wanted to use more open body postures, adding: 'if you want

to change it you need to focus on it.' Two teachers discussed that they would like to manage the use of laptops in lessons more effectively, as they felt that the screens impeded communication. Another, focusing on the information in the short article, wanted to focus on reading the students' nonverbal signals and to 'put the focus on them'. Others mentioned a desire to give all students an equal amount of enthusiasm and attention, one putting it as: 'this is a people profession' and another: 'we know it's not really what is said but the way you say it and the way it is perceived by the children,' which links directly to the literature on immediate behaviours. Three others mentioned that teachers should be 'forced' to film themselves and reflect as part of departmental policy. Some also suggested 'buddying up' with another teacher in order to observe each other teaching to raise self-awareness. One stated: 'it's that person watching you that keeps you on your toes and aware… even then if you overdo the cues at least you're practising them.' Another suggested including a lesson on nonverbal communication in the school's PSHCE program and another suggested a student panel, where students could give feedback about what aspects of teachers' nonverbal communication they found most helpful.

In summary of the findings for the second research question, the majority of participants demonstrated a stronger awareness of what nonverbal communication entailed, and how it might affect their teaching. It was clear that the initial interview helped a range of teachers across different subjects in their understanding of the topic, and this was also demonstrated in their ability to suggest a wide range of ideas for how to promote awareness and understanding in wider school life. For some participants, the level of awareness was the same, and it was also apparent that teachers found it difficult to implement new ideas at the end of the school year, and amidst the habits they had formed already, and felt comfortable with.

7 Research question 3 - *In the reflection of teachers after more awareness of the topic, do they feel there have been any benefits in terms of their students' behaviour, learning or general classroom atmosphere?*

7.1 Perceived benefits

7.1.1 Specific benefits mentioned

Five of those interviewed were able to give examples of specific ways in which their practice had benefitted through increased awareness. One participant, who had trouble defining nonverbal communication in the first interview, stated: 'I've been trying different nonverbal things with my Lower School class… trying to be a bit more sophisticated and thoughtful in dealing with the second years [Year 8], it's just the snap reaction, isn't it, to just shout 'Right! Second Year, be quiet! Thank you!' so instead [I've been using] just the classic trick of standing… in front of them and just waiting for them to be silent, and actually that is something that needs to be ingrained in the lesson.' Also, in response to their use of technology, which he stated was often out 'as soon as they get into the lesson… what I've tried to do in response to that is move around the room' and he has developed a kind of crocodile hand clap signal for closing laptops, stating: 'I'm happy with that, that's working quite well.' He stated that walking around the room was not something he had thought about before the initial conversation, stating: 'standing near them as a form of communication, that's interesting and it stuck in my mind, actually, and I've been doing that a bit more consciously.'

Another teacher also stated:

> I used to be, really strict, but didn't cross my arms or anything, so I was being loud, because I was mad at something I didn't like, but I didn't really reflect that with my body. And since I read that and what you said, I now tend to go into the middle of the class, cross my arms, don't say anything, and then they get the message. I don't shout as much anymore… instead I look at them, and wait with my arms crossed… Sometimes when you shout, they see it as a funny thing.. I am way more aware.'

This is supported by Miller's statement that 'body movements alone have no exact meaning, they can support of reject the spoken word.' (Miller, 1988:28-9). Another was also able to use nonverbal communication from students to adapt his own methods:

> There was one boy, two actually, and they may have been listening but their body language didn't look as if they were engaged, and it just, in my mind I thought I'm just going to adapt what I'm doing or the way that I'm doing this, you know, said a quick question and… made sure they answered both of those… I think I find it easier to respond to their nonverbal communications rather than me pre-empting how I should do it.'

He also added that: 'I certainly have been way more self aware… if I've asked a question and they're responding I stand back and then look in their eye, I make such a conscious effort now.' This is supported in much of the literature, as 'gazing is perceived as indicating more power' (e.g., Brooks, Church, & Fraser, 1986; Burgoon et al., 1984; Burgoon & Le Poire, 1999), and may also make the students' feel more valued. This participant also stated that: 'I do think they appreciate it.' The intent listening used here may have also been effective because it gave the students a sense of power and belonging in the classroom, as research has found that 'teachers and students indicated that effective prosocial BATs [Behavioural

Alteration Techniques] were those that were *student oriented*.'(Kearney, et al., 1984; McCroskey, et al., 1985), (via Plax, et al., 1986:54).

Another two participants could give less significant examples, but one mentioned that they were trying to gesticulate less to create a more 'centred presence' and use more targeted 'looks' for behaviour management, which they felt were working well. The other mentioned that he felt more aware in one-to-one pastoral conversations, giving the example that: 'I had to have quite an in depth conversation with a kid, and instead of sitting opposite each other… we went for a walk and chatted', which he felt had gone well, perhaps due to the relaxed, immediate approach of the conversation.

7.1.2 No specific benefits mentioned and hurdles mentioned in respect to adapting behaviours

The fourteen others interviewed were not able to name specific benefits, other than general awareness in most cases. Many stated that this was due to less teaching, exam marking, report writing or the general difficulty of changing aspects of one's practice at this point in the school year, as one teacher noted: 'by the time you've got to this stage, with each class there's an established atmosphere, whereas 'in September… when you're starting new with a class and they don't have any expectations of you yet' it might be more practical to implement new nonverbal behaviours.

In terms of barriers to changing aspects of their teaching, teachers also mentioned a lack of full control over their actions, as some referred to feeling busy or having a bad day being difficult to mask, as one stated: 'The classes I like more, I'm naturally

more expressive with, the classes I don't really enjoy teaching, because of the group dynamic… I feel like I need to be expressive, but it's a real effort.' This comment directly links to research that has shown that 'teachers who have positive feelings about their students are more likely to be immediate and in turn, students are more likely to respond reciprocally to those teachers.' (Plax, et al., 1986:45). Another teacher also mentioned that some body types or genders may find that, nonverbally, they portray a certain status or strength to classes, while for others it is more difficult to create a sense of presence. However, this view is not entirely supported by research, as added information about those being judged, or the opportunity for participants to discuss areas where they felt more confidence or expertise was seen to eliminate a gender bias (Cook, 1971, 69), (Deutsch, 1990: 531-2). Perhaps added aspects of immediacy would impact certain individuals or genders differently, however, as research has proven that women tend to smile more, which may impact on the sense of power or authority conveyed. Carney states: 'Participants thought that high power individuals engaged in more gaze overall, more gaze while speaking, and more negative gaze (glare).' (Carney et al., 2005: 116-8). Some teachers may see this reference to negative gaze as a typically male trait, or one suited to certain body types. Others referred to aspects of effective nonverbal communication being largely unconscious aspects of personality. Research has also noted that 'nonverbal communication is relatively automatic, not requiring thought' (Hecht & Ambady, 1999, 159-160), but even though it is difficult to change these habits, it is not necessarily beyond any teacher's reach if it were to benefit their practice and students' learning.

One teacher noted that they already felt self conscious, and felt that filming or critiquing behaviours might lead, in a negative sense, to 'becoming more self conscious', while others referred to the sheer difficulty of changing established habits within lessons, one stating: 'it's not always a good habit that sticks, but it

sticks' and another referred to teaching 'being like driving', and becoming automated. The focus on aspects of classroom displays and ambience also could pose a barrier to some teachers, as one stated: 'we were very keen at the beginning of the year for the people who were a bit more untidy to tidy their rooms and it almost led to a bit of... stress and people saying 'I'm trying, I'm trying, but I'm not the tidiest person and I teach loads of kids and I need to put all of my stuff somewhere…' Despite some teachers' desire for a tidy room, Smith (1979) discusses the fact that not all 'ugly' rooms have a negative effect on learning, and can have a variety of effects depending on other factors such as size. (658)

The complex nature of teaching and balancing what is to be taught with how it is conveyed seems to be at the root of these claims by the teachers interviewed. The views shared raise questions as to what schools and other staff can do to help support and train teachers in order to keep developing and strengthening their confidence and practice, but also reinforces that nonverbal communication can be a particularly difficult area of teaching to control and monitor.

In summary of the findings for the third research question, five people were able to give specific examples of specific benefits stemming from their heightened awareness and use of nonverbal aspects of communication. The other participants, though demonstrating a heightened awareness of the topic on the whole, were not able to implement specific new behaviours over the course of this intervention. Teachers reflected on the difficulty of working on this area of their teaching amongst the other demands of the school day, though many were enthusiastic and encouraging about the significance of nonverbal communication and felt that they had gained from participating in the project.

8 Conclusions and next steps

Overall, the findings show that the teachers interviewed held a good awareness of what nonverbal communication involved at the start of the research, and that continued to strengthen over the course of the two interviews. The vast majority of teachers were able to reflect on their practice through discussion and showed awareness and insight in respect to how aspects of nonverbal communication could be strengthened in respect to their own teaching, and the wider school organisation. Participants showed strong understanding of immediate behaviours when they were explained in the first interview, and though teachers could refer to facets of immediate behaviour as they reflected in the second interview, the term itself was difficult for many to remember.

In terms of being able to implement and witness improved behaviours in teaching over the term that the research was conducted, only five teachers were able to give specific examples. Many more signalled that they would like to work on their ideas for improvement at the beginning of the next school year, and many felt that they would have more time and freedom to film and reflect on teaching at a later point. Though awareness was raised over the course of this project, there was a sense that teachers would forget terms and ideas raised in conversation without a more integrated approach to heightening awareness and monitoring progress. Considering the busy and complex nature of the job, it seemed that care would have to be taken in how teachers were helped and supported through their development. It was clear that teachers would welcome further education on the topic and would have liked a firmer focus on it during their training years.

I have been asked to contribute findings to the next Teaching Learning school newsletter, conduct a session for PQTs (pre-qualified teachers) next year and to also share findings with my department. The school is very much in favour of filming to heighten awareness of teaching practice, and are supportive of the research, despite a largely knowledge-based focus for most current INSETs and teaching and learning initiatives.

The project has allowed both myself and those I have collaborated with to reflect and learn from each other. It enabled a dialogue to begin that many had not been a part of before, even during their training years in teaching. I feel that it has opened up those collaborating to new ideas, and enriched their teaching to varying degrees – even if not tangibly over the course of the intervention, perhaps in the future as they meet new classes, build relationships and continue discussion within their respective departments.

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Appendix A

Initial interview questions:

What is nonverbal communication?

Why is it important?

Is what you verbally communicate more important?

Thinking back to your favourite teacher what were their nonverbal behaviours like? Were they the same to you as to others in the class?

What nonverbal habits do you think you have? How do you know? What aspects of your nonverbal behaviour do you find most effective in controlling behaviour/increasing motivation/adding clarity to teaching and learning?

How informed do you feel on this issue? Have you had any training?

What areas do you feel you could know more about?

How did you learn what works / doesn't work if you didn't have any training?

Do you know what immediate behaviours are / have you heard of them?

How do you feel your subject affects aspects of your nonverbal communication?

How do aspects of your nonverbal communication affect/demonstrate your interaction with the classroom? – Displays, technology, posters, moving around etc.?

Would you be willing to film yourself before our next meeting? I won't watch it – for your own self reflection.

Appendix B

Second round of interview questions:

Do you now have a better sense of what nonverbal communication is?

Has your view changed on how important it is in any respect?

Do you feel like you have become more aware of your own nonverbal habits? How have you come to this awareness? If not how might this develop in future?

Have you used any 'new' aspects of nonverbal communication since we met? How did it go? If not, what did you feel might have got in the way?

Do you remember what immediate behaviours are? Do you feel like you notice your own immediate behaviours more than before?

Are you more aware of nonverbal behaviours when observing other members of staff or students?

Did you film yourself – video or audio? Did you ask students for feedback? Were the article(s) interesting / helpful to you?

Do you think this an important area for the school / individual teachers to pursue? Do you have any ideas about how it could be integrated/developed/strengthened at our school?

Any other comments on the project – positive negative or general reflection?

Appendix C

Teacher handout for initial interview:

- Immediacy: ‘the more immediate a person is, the more likely he/she is to communicate at a close distance, smile, engage in eye contact, use direct body orientation, use overall body movement and gestures, touch others, relax, and be vocally expressive’.

- ‘Immediacy is defined as the extent to which particular communication behaviors enhance physical or psychological closeness (Mehrabian, 1967). Specifically, non- verbal immediacy behaviors are most commonly cited as body lean, physical closeness, eye contact, smiling, and touch (Andersen, 1979; Burgoon, Buller, Hale & deTurck, 1984; Mehrabian, 1981; Patterson, 1973). Andersen, Andersen and Jensen (1979) identified the additional nonverbal immediacy cues of positive head nods, purposeful gestures, and vocal expressiveness.’

- ‘At the risk of over-simplification, the results of this series of research studies to date indicate that use of pro-social (based on reward, expert, and referent power) messages to alter student behavior tends to increase student perceptions of the teacher's immediacy which in turn leads to greater affective learning on the part of the student. In contrast, use of anti-social (based on coercive and legitimate power) messages to alter student behavior tends to decrease student perceptions of the teacher's immediacy which in turn leads to reduced affective learning on the part of the student.’

- ‘As such, immediate teachers communicate positive attitudes or approach orientations, while nonimmediate teachers signal distancing and detachment. In this way, "liking encourages greater immediacy and immediacy produces more liking". Consequently, teachers who have positive feelings about their

students are more likely to be immediate and in turn, students are more likely to respond reciprocally to those teachers.'

- How would you interpret your own body language in respect to the grids below?

FIGURE 1

REVISED NONVERBAL IMMEDIACY MEASURE

Directions: Below are a series of descriptions of things some teachers have been observed doing in some classes. Please respond to the statements in terms how well they apply to this teacher. Please use the following scale to respond to each of the statements: Never = 0 Rarely = 1 Occasionally = 2 Often = 3 Very Often = 4

_____ 1. Gestures while talking to the class.
_____ 2. Uses monotone/dull voice when talking to the class.*
_____ 3. Looks at the class while talking.
_____ 4. Smiles at the class while talking.
_____ 5. Has a very tense body position while talking to the class.*
_____ 6. Moves around the classroom while teaching.
_____ 7. Looks at the board or notes while talking to the class.*
_____ 8. Has a very relaxed body position while talking to the class.
_____ 9. **Smiles at individual students in the class.
_____ 10. Uses a variety of vocal expressions when talking to the class.

*Item should be reflected prior to scoring.
**Recommended replacement for #9 in future use: "Frowns at the class while talking." * See note 1.

Expressiveness/Warmth

1. The facial expressions demonstrated by the instructor were appropriate (neither blank nor exaggerated).
2. The instructor used a lot of gestures to emphasize what was being said.
3. The instructor smiled frequently.
4. The instructor's facial expression was generally pleasant (rather than neutral or unpleasant).
5. The instructor's voice was warm and friendly.

Composure/Fluency

1. The speaking rate the instructor used was appropriate (neither too fast nor too slow).
2. The instructor's speaking style was fluent and smooth (s/he avoided pauses, silences, uhs, etc).
3. The instructor demonstrated vocal confidence (s/he was neither tense nor nervous sounding).
4. The instructor spoke without shaking or demonstrating nervous twitches.
5. The instructor's movements seemed purposeful (s/he did not fidget or appear nervous).