AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS',

PARAPROFESSIONALS', AND STUDENTS' LANGUAGE EXCHANGES DURING

READING/LANGUAGE ARTS CLASS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

WITH BEHAVIORAL DIFFICULTIES

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Desiree Aaron-Stanton

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Author:

Desiree Aaron-Stanton

Approved by:

_____
Annemarie B. Jay, Ph.D.

_____
Kathleen A. Bowes, Ed.D.

Widener
University

_____
Richard Thurlow, Ph.D.

_____
Tina Selvaggi, Ed.D.

_____
Noreen M. Yoder, Ed.D.
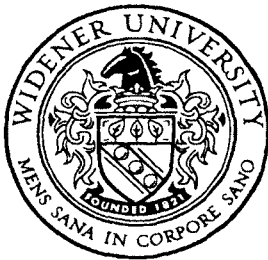
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Abstract

This ethnographic study of language shows the importance of educators' appropriate use of linguistic, nonlinguistic, and paralinguistic communication techniques when working with elementary students within two classrooms who have behavioral and emotional disorders. This study focused on communication techniques used by teachers and paraprofessionals and how these forms of communication can provoke, support, or alleviate problematic situations during instruction. The conceptual framework of this study was based on key tenets of three communication forms that staff members utilize with special education students while taking preventative actions to avoid physical outbursts.

The methodology for this study included classroom observations and the coding of instances where linguistic, nonlinguistic or paralinguistic communication created positive or negative outcomes for students' reactions to classroom situations. Data sources for this ethnography also included a survey for staff members and interview questions for teachers. Results of data analysis indicated that linguistic communication that included positive reinforcement, compliments, language of empathy, placing ownership on students, and language that referred to behavior modification programs produced effective results. Staff members' use of paralinguistic communication that consisted of even toned and calm rhythm was an effective technique that helped students. Nonlinguistic forms of communication that included soft touches and standing within a close proximity of students were also proven effective. Inconsistency of staff members' use of techniques, negative language, annoyed tones, and ignoring behaviors were found

to be ineffective. Results also indicated a lack of best practices of Reading/Language

Arts instruction as well as inconsistent collaboration between teachers and assistants.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Research has shown that students with behavior and emotional disabilities have frequent outbursts of aggression and they can be verbally or physically abusive (Wilmshurst & Brue, 2010). Studies also indicate that students who are emotionally or behaviorally disabled (EBD) are at a high risk of reading problems (Vaughn, Levy, Coleman, & Bos, 2002; Levy & Chard, 2001). Other classified students under the category of learning disabled (LD) also are proven to struggle in the primary academic area of reading (Vaughn, Levy, Coleman, & Bos, 2002). Therefore, in order to help special education students feel comforted and at ease during Reading/Language Arts class, many teachers and paraprofessionals who work in special education schools are trained in specific intervention programs to learn proper communication techniques to help special education students when they struggle academically and emotionally.

When special education students cannot find appropriate education placements to meet their needs within their public school setting, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team can consider placement in special classes or even separate schooling (New Jersey Department of Education, 2013). This separate schooling is considered an out-of-district placement, because the student receives their education at a private institution that is not within their home district. There are many approved private schools for students with disabilities in the state of New Jersey and these schools serve students on a daily basis and or through a residential component (New Jersey Department of Education, 2013).

Many health, mental and school institutions that deal with disturbed pupils use a variety of intervention programs. Two popular training programs that are used in some out of district special education schools are the *Crisis Prevention Intervention* technique through the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) and *Handle with Care* training through Handle With Care Behavior Management System. Both programs utilize preventative actions to decrease the need for physical restraint. However, if a particular situation escalates, there is also a physical component to each program that staff members are trained in so if needed, they can use non-harmful restraints (Crisis Prevention Intervention, 2005 & Handle with Care, 1984).

Statement of Problem

Every teacher's main goal should be for their students to progress academically however, if there are ongoing behavior problems this is a difficult task to accomplish (Lindberg, Walker-Wied, Forjan & Beckwith, 2006). Students who have emotional and behavior disabilities often act out unexpectedly and those actions are not considered predetermined violence (Crisis Prevention Institute, 2005). When students with emotional or behavioral disabilities act out, the staff members who work with the students are likely to be the object of the emotional/behavioral explosion this is because they happen to be present at that time (Crisis Prevention Institute, 2005). At times, the staff member who is facilitating the situation may be ineffective or make the situation worse. Staff members who are not trained and/or do not utilize specific intervention techniques may not know how to respond to out of control behavior (Couvillon, Peterson, Ryan, Scheuermann, & Stegall, 2010). It is imperative that staff members who work with

students who have disabilities understand and use the appropriate communication techniques in order to help control the situation and help the target student. Those who do not use the appropriate techniques may cause situations, which lead to students becoming physical and harming themselves or others (Crisis Prevention Institute, 2005).

When a situation escalates and the student moves from verbally acting out to physically acting out he or she reaches a point that is more difficult to manage. Staff members must know how to react immediately and calm the student before physical altercations occur. If a situation is controlled in the beginning, the student can calm down sooner and the typical learning environment is resumed for all. It is important for staff members to use effective verbal interventions because physical interventions should only be used as a last resort (Crisis Prevention Intervention, 2005). A hostile situation can be defused through verbal means and the use of a hands-on approach will only escalate the situation (Crisis Prevention Intervention, 2005).

The problem is that even though teachers and paraprofessionals are trained in recognized intervention models, the techniques are not always applied properly. When teachers and paraprofessionals do not use appropriate linguistic, nonlinguistic and paralinguistic communication techniques they can cause students to have escalated behaviors.

Staff members who do not utilize the necessary skills to manage violent behaviors will produce normal instinctive reactions of fear and self-protection (Crisis Prevention Institute, 2005; Cazden, 1988). Normal self-protection reactions are not appropriate and do not help alleviate the aggressive student. When staff members use alternative

techniques and nondefault patterns, these changes can have considerable cognitive or social significance (Cazden, 1988). Staff must utilize the appropriate communication techniques, because the students have behavior and emotional disabilities that require specific attention. The problem is that there are many professionals who do not use the appropriate communication techniques when working with students who struggle with behavior disabilities. When the proper skills are not used, there are many violent outbursts that occur and both teachers and students may be emotionally or physical harmed.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study examines the effective use of linguistic, nonlinguistic and paralinguistic communication techniques that staff members use in the elementary Reading/Language Arts classroom with special education students. The framework is based on key tenets of three communication forms that staff members utilize with special education students while taking preventative actions to avoid physical outbursts. Figure 1.1 represents the importance between the appropriate use of these three communication techniques in regards to the positive learning environment of special education students. The conceptual framework was the basis for the observational checklist the researcher used to collect data for the study. The checklist (Appendix B) is described in Chapter 3 of this document.

The conceptual framework for this study focuses on a myriad of communication techniques and is not limited to techniques only discussed in the crisis prevention programs (*Crisis Prevention Intervention* and *Handle with Care*). The conceptual

framework structures the purpose of the study. The goal is that if staff members of special education students use positive linguistic, nonlinguistic and paralinguistic communication techniques then there will be fewer physical and emotional outbursts from the special education students. Fewer outbursts will allow for a safe and positive learning environment for all students present in the classroom.

Effective use of Linguistic, Nonlinguistic and Paralinguistic
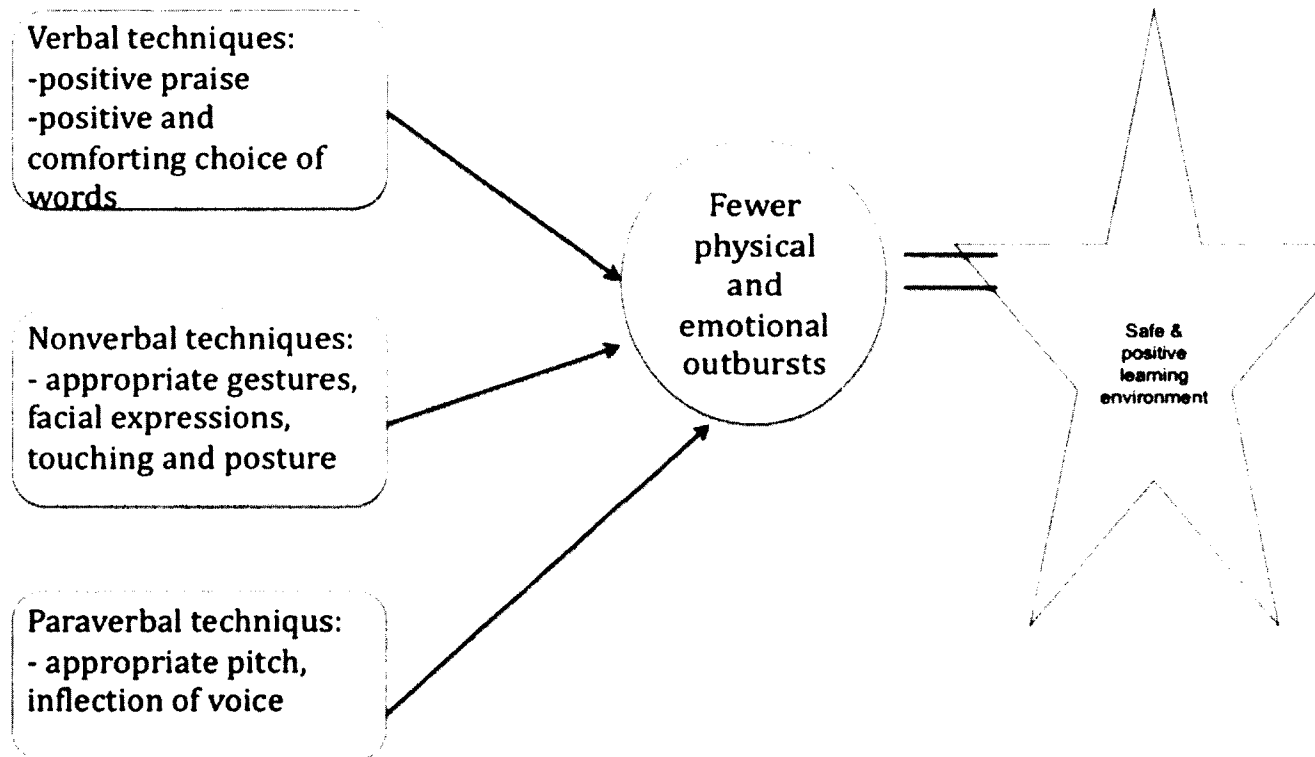
Communication

Figure 1.1. Communication techniques for an Effective Reading/Language Arts Classroom for Special Education Students

Purpose of Study

The population in this study consisted of students who were all classified as emotionally or behaviorally disturbed and most of the students also have severe learning disabilities. The students who made up the population were also significantly behind in reading and many of them were academically three grade levels behind their same aged peers. These students received special education services at an out of district placement. The students who comprised the sample for this study attended school at an out of district placement at a suburban town in New Jersey. The population of students was in grades kindergarten (K) through fifth and the students received services for disabilities of emotional and/or behavioral issues that interfered with their learning in a regular public school system.

The purpose of this study was to measure teachers' and paraprofessionals' use of language in the Reading/Language Arts classroom in grades K through 5 in order to analyze linguistic, nonlinguistic and paralinguistic communication in regards to impacting student behavior. One of the main goals for the students attending this out of district placement is for them to eventually return to their original school districts. Placement in the current private school was made with hopes to increase students' awareness of appropriate social behavior, increase their self-esteem and create more positive social interactions.

Description of Site

The school attended by the students in this study is an approved private special education school in southern New Jersey that serves children with disabilities ages five

through twenty-one. This out of district placement consists of three separate school buildings that are equipped to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The elementary school where this study took place consisted of students with emotional, behavioral, and learning disabilities. A detailed description of the site is provided in Chapter 3 of this document.

Research Questions

The following questions frame the inquiries and procedures that were used in this study:

1. Which form of communication (linguistic, nonlinguistic, paralinguistic) do special education staff members use most frequently?

2. How does the form of communication used by teachers and/or paraprofessionals affect students' behavior in the special education Reading/Language Arts classroom?

3. How do teachers and paraprofessionals perceptions of their communication practices with their special education students during Reading/Language Arts class align with observed practices?

Glossary of Terms

The following terms are defined as they are used throughout this document. Accommodations- Adjustments to lessons that help students without changing content, expectations, or activities (Lindberg, Walker-Wied, & Forjan Beckwith, 2006). Aide(s)- A person who acts like an assistant (Merriam-Webster, 2006).

Alternative School Setting- A school that serves students who are not succeeding in their public school setting for reasons of education failure, poor grades, behavior, truancy etc. (Kleiner, Porch & Farris, 2002).

Behavioral Disorders- A person who often exhibits significant difficulties in EF areas related to behavioral regulation, including inhibit (ability to control impulses and stop an ongoing behavior) and Emotional Control (appropriate modulation of emotional responses) (Wilmshurst & Brue, 2005).

Classified students- Disabled students who are categorized according to their disability specified by IDEA 2004 (Wilmshurst & Brue, 2005).

Comorbidity- A special education student who exhibits problems in more than one area at the same time. (Wilmshurst & Brue, 2005).

Emotional Disturbance- A person who exhibits a variety of diagnoses such as anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, or bipolar disorder. These students also tend to exhibit behavioral difficulties (Wilmshurst & Brue, 2005).

Executive functions (EF)- The tasks that the brain performs when a person is engaged and actively thinking and acting while solving problems (Wilmshurst & Brue, 2005).

IEP (Individualized Education Program)- A written plan for serving students with disabilities ages 3 through 21 (Turnball, Turnball & Wehmeyer, 2010).

Intervention- Intensive additional instruction for children not progressing as rapidly as expected; usually one-on-one tutoring or small group (one-on-three) teaching (Pinnel & Fountas, 2009).

Kinesics- Body movements, postures, any movements that communicates meaning

(Miller, 2000).

Learning disability- A person who has a disorder that manifests itself in an imperfect

ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations (Turnbull,

Turnbull & Wehmeyer, 2010).

Linguistic- Human speech including the units, nature, structure, and modification of

language (Merriam-Webster, 2006).

Modifications- Changes to the general education curriculum that impact the content,

expectations, or activities of a lesson (Lindberg, Walker-Wied, & Forjan Beckwith,

2006).

Nonlinguistic- Gestures, body postures, facial expression, eye-contact, head and body

movement, physical distance of proxemics (Owens, 2008).

Nonverbal communication- Communication without words; use of overt behaviors such

as facial expressions, eye contact, touching, tone of voice, dress, posture and spatial

distance between two or more people (Miller, 2000).

Out-of-district placement- Consists of approved and non-approved private schools for

students with disabilities; students attend these schools when the public school setting is

not appropriate to meet their needs (New Jersey Department of Education, 2013).

Paraprofessional- A hired professional who provides instructional services to a student

only under the direct supervision of a teacher (Individual with Disabilities Act, 2004)

Paraverbal communication- The vocal part of speech that is used to convey a message

(Crisis Prevention Institute, 2011) also defined as paralinguistics.

Paralinguistic(s)- The vocal intonation, rhythm, pitch, intensity, nasality, slurring that elicits a message (Miller, 2000).

Proxemics- A component of nonverbal communication that indicates territory or the use of space (Miller, 2000).

Verbal communication- The vocal part of speech that is used to convey a message (Crisis Prevention Institute, 2011).

Chapter II

Review of Relevant Literature

This chapter contains a thorough review of the research pertinent to the topic of

language exchanges that occur in the Reading/Language Arts classes of elementary

special education students with teachers, paraprofessionals and students. Topics reviewed

include: Special Education Students and some specific disabilities, Developmental

Milestones of Special Education students ages 5-11, Behavior Management in the

Classroom: Intervention Models: Communication Techniques that include Linguistic

Communication, Nonlinguistic Communication, Paralinguistic Communication: Teachers

of Reading/Language Arts in the Special Education Classroom, Reading/Language Arts

instruction for Special Education Students; Paraprofessionals in the Special Education

Classroom; and Classroom Discourse. A summary statement concludes the chapter.

Special Education Students

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which was enacted in

1975 mandates that children ages 3-21 with disabilities must be provided a free and

appropriate public school education (U.S Department of Education, 2012). The number

of students who receive special education services has significantly increased over the

last thirty years (Wilmshurst & Brue, 2005). In 2007-2008, the United States

Department of Education assisted 55 million students (Pre-K through grade 12) and these

students attend 100,000 public schools and 34,000 private schools (U.S Department of

Education, 2008).

Special education services are available to students ages three to twenty-one years of age and these students can have a variety of disabilities and difficulties that impede their ability to learn (Wilmshurst & Brue, 2005).

Learning Disabilities. Children identified as being in need of special education services may be diagnosed with learning disabilities (Strickland, Ganske & Monroe, 2002). Common and relevant educational terms used in conjunction with learning disabilities are comorbidity, accommodations, and modifications. Each of these terms is reviewed further in this section.

Comorbidity. Many special education students have problems in more than one area at the same time, this is a condition that is called *comorbidity* (Wilmshurst & Brue, 2005). Wilmshurst and Brue (2005) consider this a "double whammy" when working with special education students. For example, comorbidity would be an accurate description for a student who is diagnosed with a severe behavior disorder, such as Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and who also has a diagnosed learning disability in reading. Students identified with a comorbidity condition not only struggle with behavioral or emotional disorders but they also are significantly behind in one or several academic areas. Students who exhibit externalizing comorbidity (aggression and delinquency) require complex approaches to assessment and intervention (McConaughy &Skiba, 1993).

Children who struggle in a specific academic area and are at the bottom group of receiving and tracked as having the lowest test scores, are likely to drop out of school and these students tend to misbehave in the classroom (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009). Some of

the behaviors can be minor and do not inflict actual harm to others, such as being off task and not completing assignments. However, at times struggling special education students tend to become so frustrated that they give up and act out as a way of coping with their failure (Bloomquist, 2006; Dayton-Sakari, 1997). These students can become physical and the physical outburst is a result of their continued academic failure.

One of the most frequent tasks that learning disabled students tend to struggle the most with, is the task of reading (Gersten, Fuchs, Williams, & Baker, 2001). A given school day is heavily dominated on language processing, reading, and writing (Selznick, 2009). "Having good reading skills is a very strong predictor of later academic success and employment. Lower reading skill is associated with academic failure, school dropout, under – or unemployment, and even juvenile delinquency. In short, a child has to read to succeed" (Bloomquist, 2006, p 125).

Therefore, school is the "arena" where many students (if they are struggling) can begin to formulate the idea that they are ineffective and dumb (Selznick, 2009). When a student struggles with reading and the assignment is too difficult for them, they will act out or shut down as a way of hiding their failure (Selznick, 2009; Dayton-Sakari, 1997). For struggling students to avoid acting out or shutting down, they must know that there are adults outside of their family members who care about them; these essential adults need to take the time to connect and reinforce positive messages to the students on a regular basis (Selznick, 2009). It is important for staff members to find something that they genuinely like about every child and concentrate and put effort towards helping the child develop that positive attribute (Lindberg, Walker-Wied, Forjan Beckwith, 2006).

Getting to know students and help them on a personal level will help develop positive

relationships with him or her (Lindberg, Walker-Wied, Forjan Beckwith, 2006).

Accommodations and Modifications. Some special education students may require

accommodations or modifications that are not available within the public school system.

Accommodations may include providing a student more time to complete an assignment,

or taping a section of a text that the class is using for a lesson (Lindberg, Walker-Wied, &

Forjan Beckwith, 2006). Modifications could include having a student read a book that is

the same topic as the rest of the class but on a different reading level (Lindberg, Walker-

Wied, & Forjan Beckwith, 2006). For students unable to function within the public

school's special education setting, alternative schools or out-of-district placements

through private institutions are a viable option. Alternative schools have more hands-on

courses that can motivate the shutdown child (Selznick, 2009).

Specific alternative schools have unique programs and flexibility to help certain

students with special needs. Alternative schools are for students who are not succeeding

in the public school for reasons of education failure, poor grades, truancy or even

behavior problems (Kleiner, Porch & Farris, 2002). In the 2000-2001 school year, there

were 10,900 public alternative schools and programs in the nation (Kleiner, Porch &

Farris, 2002). Alternative schools aim to return at-risk students back to regular schools

once they are prepared to do so (Kleiner, Porch & Farris, 2002). Private institutions for

students with disabilities also aim to return students to their public institution, but at

times the disabilities of students are so severe that the public school setting is just not

equip to meet their needs and in this case many students remain in out-of district placements until they graduate.

The Role of Executive Functions

Many special education students struggle in areas of executive functions. Executive functions (EF) are the tasks that the brain performs when a person is engaged and actively thinking and acting while solving problems (Wilmshurst & Brue, 2005). EF are called into action when a person is recalling information, learning new information, recalling the past or finding information from memory (Wilmshurst & Brue, 2005).

Since executive functions are the cluster of a person's abilities, if one or more of the processes of a special education student's EF are not functioning properly, there is a high chance that goals will not be achieved. The lack of achievement will have a substantial impact on the child in areas of cognitive, social, behavioral, emotional and most importantly, academics (Wilmshurst & Brue, 2005).

Students with learning disabilities struggle in areas of their EF, and they are often the poorest readers because they demonstrate multiple problems with low comprehension, poor decoding, poor fluency and have comprehension deficits (Klingner & Boardman, 2007). Special education students who struggle with comorbidity and have deficits in their use of EF are likely to struggle (Wilmshurst & Brue, 2005). Students who struggle with comorbidity (including co-occurrence of other disabilities) may exhibit intensified behavioral problems that compromise their academic performance (Levy & Chard, 2001). Therefore giving students with comorbid conditions challenging work can be a typical trigger for an outburst or misbehavior (Baker, 2012).

Developmental Milestones of Special Education Students grades Kindergarten-Five

Students in grades K through five typically range in age from five to eleven. Students who are classified as special education may not show typical patterns of development.

Five-seven years of age. One of the most important developmental milestones for a five year old is the development of their ability to think about what others are thinking and feeling. They do not have empathy developed but they have perspective taking as one of their cognitive processes (Petty, 2010). Five year olds tend to ask a lot of questions, and begin to argue reasons. They also begin to understand at this age that stories have a beginning, middle and an end (Petty, 2010).

Students six years of age have moved through preschool and kindergarten and are now beginning formal schooling. Students that are six years old have an increased attention span and begin to tell stories that are more imaginative with a variety of facial expressions, gestures and voices (Petty, 2010). A child at six will engage in more conversations with adults. Their vocabulary and reasoning skills have now increased enormously. It is also at six years of age where a child will begin practicing reading strategies as they figure out meanings of unfamiliar words. Young readers will use phonics and context clues and try to put both together to formulate understanding while reading stories (Petty, 2010).

A typical seven year old in a general education classroom will have sophisticated story-telling and story-writing abilities; he or she will also begin to read for meaning (Petty, 2010). A seven year old who is struggling and/or is classified in special education

may not perform literacy skills at the same level of achievement as his or her typical peers in general education. When the child begins to show areas of struggling in academics, problems such as acting out can soon occur (Selznick, 2009).

It is developmentally typical when a child reaches seven years of age to often display impatience: this reaction causes frequent disagreement and arguments with peers (Petty, 2010). However, the seven-year-old special education student may show more aggressive behaviors during impatient encounters. There are specific rating scales and tables that indicate children's behaviors in relation to similar-aged peers. Parents can complete a scale that focuses on areas of mood, anxiousness, attention, non-compliance and aggression which will show where their child falls in comparison to same-aged peers (Wilmshurst & Brue, 2010). Some of the behaviors that are in question on behavior rating scales include areas such as: upset with changes in routine, problems paying attention, fighting, complaints of headaches etc. (Wilmshurst & Brue, 2010). *Eight-Eleven years of age.* According to Petty (2010) the eight year-old child will begin to be influenced by their peers: they will also experience stages of anxiety or fear. This means that at the age of eight, students can already show signs of frustration and symptoms of stress (Petty, 2010).

It is not until ten years of age that a child begins to understand the concept of ambivalent feelings (one person having conflicting emotions) (Wilmshurst & Brue, p 168, 2005). It is also in this stage that children begin to start self-evaluating and they can see their achievements in relation to those of their peers (Wilmshurts & Brue, 2005). When students continue to exhibit daily signs of failure, they become discouraged and

will often shut-down (Selznick, 2009). It is in this stage where children who struggle

may begin to show signs of shutting down or work avoidance, in order to not show their

lack of success to their peers (Wilmshurts & Brue, 2005).

The most important action that can be done for a student, who is in a shutdown

mode, is to help them accept themselves and overcome their negative perceptions. "Most

shut down learners are dejected, discouraged, and despondent" (Selznick, 2009 pp.66).

Professionals in the field need to understand the developmental milestones of children in

order to understand the behaviors that should be appropriate at a typical age (Petty,

2010).

Behavior Management in the Classroom

Special education teachers need to know how to deal with students' behaviors in a

successful way or classroom learning will be limited (Lindberg, Walker-Wied, Forjan &

Beckwith, 2006). Many schools seek outside vendors to properly train and prepare their

staff members for crisis prevention intervention (Couvillon, Peterson, Ryan,

Scheuermann, & Stegall, 2010). Couvillon et. al (2010), identified 22 commercial

programs that are currently used in organization to prepare and train educators.

Nonviolent Crisis Intervention, Prevention, and Communication. Those who have

utilized nonviolent crisis prevention have accounted for seeing many positive gains in

their schools. Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) is the nation's largest

regional education agency (CPI, 2012). The LACOE, claims that they use fewer physical

restraints now then they ever have before since using appropriate verbal intervention

(CPI, 2012). Other school systems have also claimed that the classroom environment has

been improved since implementing nonviolent crisis intervention techniques. The Lafayette Parish School System has seen less tension and conflict amongst students in the classroom and they also have observed more confidence in the teachers in confrontational situations (CPI, 2012).

Two training models of crisis intervention, *Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI)* (2012) and *Handle With Care* (2001) are reviewed in this section because these programs are the basis for this study's conceptual framework (see Figure 1.1 on page 5). Both programs are popular training programs that are used in private special education schools in the state of New Jersey. The out-of-district special education school that serves as the sample for this study has in the past, trained their teachers and paraprofessionals in *Crisis Prevention Intervention.* Recently, the school has ceased using the CPI model and currently only train their teachers and paraprofessionals in *Handle with Care.* Both training models are focused on in this study to see if *Handle with Care* is in fact the better training program for these teachers and paraprofessionals to use with the students at the school.

Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI). *Crisis Prevention Intervention* (CPI) uses specific verbal, nonverbal and paraverbal techniques that resolve potential violent situations. "Since 1980 more than six million human service providers across the globe have been trained through the Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Program to provide care, welfare, safety, and security to those involved in a crisis situation" (Crisis Prevention Institute, 2011, p.1). CPI has both a physical and non-physical component towards handling

potentially violent situations through minimal anxiety and maximum security (Crisis Prevention Institute, 2011).

The non-physical component of CPI is training that involves staff members learning appropriate nonverbal, paraverbal and verbal techniques to help students who are in a crisis situation through use of personal space, body posture, motion, comforting words, and empathetic listening (Crisis Prevention Intervention, 2005). The physical component of CPI is used when a student is no longer responding to reason and all verbal managements have been exhausted. It is through the physical component of CPI where teachers are trained in proper holding techniques that are non-harmful and effective for use of students who are trying to hurt themselves or someone else (Crisis Prevention Intervention, 2005).

A student who is in a crisis situation may tend to test the staff's limits and use abusive language (Crisis Prevention Institute, 2005). In this instance the staff member must know how to be professional and not engage in a power struggle with the student who is acting out (Crisis Prevention Institute, 2005). If a student mocks a staff member or uses profanity with the staff member, the staff member must remain calm. However, at times, when a staff member loses control and acts irrationally there can be an explosive argument between the staff member and student. At this point, once the student sense that the staff member has lost control of their own behavior, it serves as "more fuel for the fire" (Crisis Prevention Intervention, 2005).

A staff member, who stands in a face-to-face, shoulder-to-shoulder position, creates a perceived challenged position for the acting out student (Crisis Prevention

Institute, 2005). Such non-verbal cues may cause the student to believe that the staff

member is physically trapping them or putting them in a dangerous situation (Crisis

Prevention Institute, 2005).

Handle With Care. *Handle with Care* training, similar to *Crisis Prevention Intervention*,

also includes physical and non-physical components. The non-physical components are

described in three distinct areas: tension/tension reduction cycle, the solid object

relationship model and also nonverbal and verbal intervention techniques (Handle with

Care, 1984). The model's training within tension reduction cycles highlights the

importance of tension, ego, therapeutic relationships, stressors, and the use of effective

verbal techniques (Handle with Care, 1984). This tension/tension reduction cycle allows

staff to learn the dynamics of escalating and de-escalating tension. The solid object

relationship model consists of staff learning and establishing therapeutic relationships and

understanding stressors to reduce tension (Handle with Care, 1984). The final non-

physical component of nonverbal and verbal intervention techniques consists of staff

being able to effectively use a range of appropriate verbal and nonverbal intervention

skills.

If non-physical components are not effective with students and if it is necessary to

use a hands-on approach, the staff members are also trained in a physical component of

Handle with Care. The physical component of *Handle with Care* is comprised of staff

members being trained in personal defense techniques such as blocking, escaping, and

effective restraints, takedowns and also deployment (Handle with Care, 1984). *Handle*

with Care has been an effective intervention program, which has earned international

reputation for teaching safety and powerful verbal and physical interventions since 1985

(Handle with Care, 2001).

Communication Techniques

There are three common communication techniques that are used during

discourse. These communication techniques include, linguistic, nonlinguistic and

paralinguistic. Each communication technique is described below. Linguistic

communication is the verbal or vocal part of speech that deals with word choice.

Nonlinguistic communication involves nonverbal cues and sending and receiving

messages without directly using words. Paralinguistic (also referred to as paraverbal in

this document) communication is vocal without being verbal, including tone, volume,

inflection and prosody. The communication techniques are described below.

Linguistic Communication

Staff members use the linguistic communication technique most frequently when

responding to students. Linguistic communication is the human speech which includes

the units, nature, structure, and modification of language (Merriam-Webster, 2006). The

teachers in the classroom have the right to speak at any time and they can interrupt or

speak to a student anywhere in the room (Cazden, 1988). The teacher has verbal control

over the student. Linguistic communication includes commands, reprimands, positive and

negative comments, language of comfort and language that represents power and control

etc.

The specific words that a staff member chooses to use can either alleviate or

instigate a negative situation. Staff members should know how to praise appropriate

behavior and provide positive reinforcement so that students are not only given verbal reprimands when they are misbehaving (Taylor-Greene et. al., 1997, & Wilmshurst & Brue, 2005, & Levy & Chard, 2001). Those who work with special education students who struggle with behavior and emotional disorders must understand that it is crucial to use language that is clearly defined (Wilmshurts & Brue, 2005; McCarney & Cummins Wunderlich, 2006). Researchers have also supported the importance of language use that is not only clearly defined but is also consistent (McCarney & Cummins Wunderlich, 2006).

A staff member who is trying to eliminate a crisis situation must understand the avoidance of a power struggle (Baker, 2012). Forcing a student to do something that he or she does not want to do will only turn into a power struggle, and make a situation worse. The adult must act as the role model and demonstrate the appropriate behavior, all staff members must think before they act and explain the behavior to the student if something is done that is inappropriate (Wilmshurts & Brue, 2005). It is also important for the staff member to listen to the student, agree, and apologize when necessary (Baker, 2012).

An adult should admire small success and verbally praise the child so that the child knows clearly when they are doing something correctly (Selznick, 2009). Special education teachers and staff should develop appropriate behavior incentive programs by asking the student what he or she would like to earn (Lindberg, Walker-Wied, Forjan & Beckwith, 2006). If the adults who are in the special education student's life do not understand what motivates the student, then improving behavior will be difficult

(Lindberg, Walker-Wied, Forjan Beckwith, 2006). It is also important that a child who seems to be in a constant struggle with failure sees that he has strengths: these strengths must be pointed out to him by the adults in the classroom (Selznick, 2009).

Providing directions to a student is another important area that needs specific attention. It should never be assumed that a child will automatically follow and understand spoken directions (Selznick, 2009). It is crucial that special education teachers and paraprofessionals are very clear with directions; however verbal directions may not be the only way to express what needs to be done to special education students.

Nonlinguistic Communication

Nonlinguistic communication, communication made without using any words. Nonverbal communication consists of gestures, body postures, facial expressions, eye contact, head and body movement, and physical distance or proxemics (Owens, 2008). Nonlinguistic communication (also referred to as nonverbal communication) also consists of touching (Miller, 2000). Research indicates that teachers and students send and receive several hundred non-verbal cues in a given day (Miller, 2000). Sometimes a staff member's hand movements, posture and facial expressions can give a reprimand and redirect a student without the need to state anything verbal. Literature indicates that nonlinguistic behaviors send clear and distinct messages and can actually be more explicit and candid means of showing intent than the speaking word alone (Rosa, 2002; Miller, 2000). Nonverbal cues are extremely powerful, primarily because they express inner feelings and they generally evoke an immediate action or response (Miller, 2000).

Staff members trying to calm an aggressive situation must know how to appropriately stand next to the student and use other nonlinguistic cues. A student in a discipline situation should never be backed into a corner and they should be given time to cool down in their own space (Lindberg, Walker-Wied, & Forjan Beckwith, 2006).

Staff members who are not trained in appropriate kinesics may instinctively put their hands in their pockets or behind their backs. Although these postures may be habits, if the staff member's hands are not visible during an aggressive situation, they may be perceived as threatening stances to the student. If the special education personnel take appropriate action during a discipline situation, they will deescalate a potential serious follow-up (Lindberg, Walker-Wied, & Forjan Beckwith, 2006).

It is also best to offer praise and comfort through nonverbal communication. Sometimes a hug or a smile can be an appropriate way to show a positive reaction to positive behavior and help raise a students' self-confidence (Wilmshurts & Brue, 2005). Touching can be used as reinforcement in the classroom, and research has shown that these pats on the back and smiles actually help younger children learn more (Miller, 2000).

Students, who act out because they are failing, are usually avoided by the teacher throughout the school day. Therefore those failing children must know that somebody cares about them, because too much of their day involves receiving negative or no direct contact (Selznick, 2009). Research has found that taking a child on a walk or giving him a simple high five can go a long way (Selznick, 2009).

Paralinguistic Communication

Paralinguistic communication deals with the vocal part of speech excluding the actual words one uses. Paralinguistic communication is also referred to as paraverbal communication. This type of communication includes the intonation, stress or emphasis, speed or rate of delivery, and pause or hesitation which is superimposed on speech which that signals attitude or emotion (Owens, 2008). Paralinguistic cues specifically are comprised of loudness, pitch, timbre, rate, inflection, rhythm, and enunciation which also all relate to the expression of various emotions" (Miller, 2000). It is imperative that the staff understands how to change the tone of their voice for specific situations. One who raises his or her voice can negatively affect a student in an aggressive situation. Yelling, and or shouting is proven to be ineffective during a discipline situation and speaking to students in a quiet and composed approach will calm him or her and will help them back away from inappropriate behaviors (Lindberg, Walker-Wied, & Forjan Beckwith, 2006).

Yelling, as well as other forms of inappropriate communication can intensify a discipline situation. The staff member's use of improper inflection of their voice and showing sarcasm can be very insulting to the student. The same words or phrases can have different meanings, depending on how they are said and if intoned sarcastically, it can insinuate an opposite intention (Miller, 2000). It is important to watch critical tone and to be sure that the child is not put on the defensive (Selznick, 2009). In situations that deal with behavior and emotional disabled students, they can perceive this paralinguistic communication in a negative manner. This is why inflection of voice is critical when

intervening with an explosive or violent student because screaming or threatening will only confuse or elevate the students' activity level (Harwell, 1989).

Teachers of Reading/Language Arts in the Special Education Classroom

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Act, Page 118 STAT. 2771, special education teachers must be prepared with teaching and addressing the needs of children who have different learning styles and understand and use appropriate positive behavioral interventions (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004). The special education teacher must also use scientifically based reading instruction, which includes early literacy instruction (Individual with Disabilities Act, 2004).

Special education teachers are responsible for planning, adapting, and implementing literacy instruction as well as giving guidance to paraprofessionals in order for them to accurately assist in the special education classroom (Causton-Theoharis, Giangreco, Doyle, & Vadasy, 2007).

Literacy Instruction for Special Education Students

Literacy instruction can be considered one of the most complex tasks and also a very critical and important responsibility for teacher and paraprofessionals in the special education classroom (Causton-Theoharis, Giangreco, Doyle, & Vadasy, 2007). Teachers in the primary grades have even more of a responsibility than high school teachers because they have the responsibility of teaching children to read (Protheroe, 2003). Instruction in reading comprehension should be a flexible approach, which should involve the Palincsar and Brown's reciprocal teaching technique (Palincsar & Brown, 1986) and also encouraging think-alouds (Gersten, Fuchs, Williams & Baker, 2001).

Research has shown the importance of careful modeling and extensive feedback and the importance of teaching students how to use specific strategies across a variety of reading materials (Gersten, Fuchs, Williams & Baker, 2001 & Klingner & Boardman, 2007). Struggling readers also require a balanced program (Protheroe, 2003 and Pressley, 1998). The best approach is a balanced approach, where teachers combine whole language and skills instruction (Pressley, 1998).

Special education teachers in the Reading/Language Arts classrooms must teach both comprehension and decoding strategies that are proven effective and utilize a guided reading format of before, during and after reading instruction (Klingner & Boardman, 2007). Teachers must teach explicitly text structure (Gersten, Fuchs, Williams & Baker, 2001; Klingner & Boardman, 2007). Teachers must provide questions and steps in strategies to push students to think about what they have read and provide hints to help guide their thinking (Gersten, Fuchs, Williams & Baker, 2001).

Struggling readers also need to be motivated (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009; Harwell, 1989). If reading is not seen as an enjoyable activity, students who struggle will less likely be intrinsically motivated to read. "Struggling readers must be willing to read and to read in quantity" (Pinnell & Fountas, p 473, 2009). One of the most important factors in helping struggling readers is intervention. Pinnell and Fountas (2009) describe fifteen keys factors to intervention. These include: be supplementary, occur frequently, have lower teacher to student ratios, be short term, be structured and systematic, be fast paced, develop comprehension strategies and vocabulary, combine reading and writing, include systematic phonics, develop fluency, use high-quality texts, assess and monitor progress,

connect to the classroom and students' homes, and develop and present connection with

professional development (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009).

It is also important when working with special education students at the

elementary level that teachers differentiate instruction. This means that teachers must use

more than one instructional methodology, use a variety of formats and they must know

how to modify instruction to meet the needs of all learners (Turnbull, Turnbull &

Wehmeyer, 2010). At times in a special education setting, one classroom can consist of a

variety of age groups and abilities. It is very easy to assign students to bookwork that is

on each of their individual levels. Unfortunately, many teachers take this easy route.

Teachers must provide adequate learning opportunities and they must supplement work

in books with additional types of practice (Harwell, 1989).

Paraprofessionals in the Special Education Classroom

Paraprofessionals are non-certified staff members who are hired to improve

reading skills of students with disabilities and those who are considered at risk (Causton-

Theoharis, Giangreco, Doyle, & Vadasy, 2007). IDEA 2004 state plans SEC. 1111:

indicates that paraprofessionals may provide instructional services to a student only under

the direct supervision of a teacher (Individual with Disabilities Act, 2004). There are

negative and positive views of paraprofessionals who work with the special education

population. Some studies have proved that paraprofessionals are most effectively used

when they are given supplementary roles, use research based reading approaches, are

properly trained in reading approaches, are properly trained in managing behavior and

when they are provided with feedback and ongoing monitoring (Causton-Theoharis, Giangreco, Doyle, & Vadasy, 2007).

Other studies have shown that paraprofessionals have been identified as "the least qualified personnel to students who present the most challenging learning and behavioral characteristics" (Giangreco, Suter, & Doyle, p 52, 2010). Paraprofessionals have been known to do too much of students work for the students and provide students too much assistance (Broer, Doyle, & Giangreco, 2005). The special education teacher should be responsible for overseeing the work of the assistant (or paraprofessional) by ensuring that he or she is not helping the special education student "too" much or doing the work for the student (Lindberg, Walker-Wied, Forjan Beckwith, 2006).

Role and training of Paraprofessionals

The role of the paraprofessionals is to not plan for instruction but to contribute to classroom instruction by effectively implementing tasks that they are specifically trained in to do (Causton-Theoharis, Giangreco, Doyle, & Vadasy, 2007). Paraprofessionals can be effective when they are provided the appropriate training in instruction and behavioral management techniques (Causton-Theoharis, Giangreco, Doyle, & Vadasy, 2007 & Giangreco, Suter & Doyle, 2010). Paraprofessionals take on many roles in the classroom specifically answering individual questions of students, re-reading stories, reinforce skills, but not introducing new material (Causton-Theoharis, Giangreco, Doyle & Vadasy, 2007).

Research additionally indicates that paraprofessionals can be effective in enhancing reading skills of special education students when they are properly trained in

reading intervention programs (Causton-Theoharis, Giangreco, Doyle, & Vadasy, 2007). Even though paraprofessionals have been proven to be effective in enhancing reading skills for students when they are properly trained, the special education students should still be receiving their primary instruction from a highly qualified special education or general education teacher (Causton-Theoharis, Giangreco, Doyle, & Vadasy, 2007). There are concerns that students with disabilities receive too much of their instruction from paraprofessional rather than from qualified special education teachers (Causton-Theoharis, Giangreco, Doyle, & Vadasy, 2007;Broer, Doyle, & Giangreco, 2005). Another concern about paraprofessionals addressed in the research is that paraprofessionals are viewed as interrupting social discourse amongst students within the classroom (Broer, Doyle, & Giangreco, 2005).

Unfortunately, many special education students see the paraprofessional (specifically one-on-one) as their primary teacher (Broer, Doyle, & Giangreco, 2005). The best classroom is one in which both the special education teacher and paraprofessional create an atmosphere of managing the three areas of providing academics, social skills and a positive behavioral atmosphere together as a team (Lindberg, Walker-Wied, Forjan Beckwith, 2006). However, the paraprofessional should never be viewed as the primary instructor for the special education students.

Conversation in the Reading/Language Arts Classroom

The benefit for students with special needs who attend out-of-district private schools is that they can receive accommodations and modifications that they cannot receive in the public setting. For this reason, classroom environments can be more

intimate, and allow for flexible grouping and opportunities where students can engage in more conversation with peers and other staff members. Struggling students are more likely to receive the help that they need when instruction is provided in small groups rather than whole class instruction (Strickland, Ganske, & Monroe, 2002).

A typical classroom where a teacher provides whole group instruction tends to have the same basic structure of conversation (Cazden, 1988). The teacher initiates the sequence by calling on a student to share, the child responds by telling a narrative, and then the teacher comments before calling on next student (Cazden, 1988). This type of classroom does not always work well for a student with disabilities. Many students with disabilities need small group instruction and the opportunity for cooperative learning (Harwell, 1989). When students are provided instruction in small groups they also do not feel intimidated and they will be more likely to participate (Strickland, Ganske, & Monroe, 2002).

Cazden's seminal research, (1988) shows that children in low reading groups are corrected more consistently and more immediately by staff members and when these students are denied opportunities to self-correct it interrupts them and negatively impacts their reading (Cazden, 1988; Allington, 1980). Therefore, small groups are not always successful if the teacher is not effective. If the teacher is not an attentive or responsive teacher, then small groups can hinder learning (Strickland, Ganske, & Monroe, 2002). Teachers who facilitate small group instruction must be sure that there is a distinct routine that is communicated to the class and the teacher must be sure that all students are engaged in the learning process (Strickland, Ganske, & Monroe, 2002). The teacher and

assistants in the special education classroom should circulate throughout the room and engage in communication with the students (Harwell, 1989). During this circulation process, the teacher and assistants can determine if all of the students are on task, and also this is the opportunity where students can seek out help (Harwell, 1989).

Conversation amongst struggling peers is an effective and easy way to enhance literacy. Providing students with time to talk about their reading and writing has been proven to create measureable benefits in areas of comprehension, motivation, and language competence (Allington & Gabriel, 2012). Therefore, in order for struggling students to learn in the best way possible, most of their reading instruction should include small groups and cooperative learning.

Summary

This chapter provides a thorough review of both current and seminal studies related to language exchanges and literacy instruction in elementary special education classrooms. The review indicates that a need remains to conduct ethnographic research in these particular areas in order to analyze how linguistic, nonlinguistic and paralinguistic exchanges enhance or inhibit academic and social learning.

Chapter III

Methodology

This chapter provides a description of the methodological structure of this study. A comprehensive explanation of the procedural framework for collecting and analyzing data is outlined. The information is organized into the following sections: rationale for the study, review of the research questions, research design, demographic information, data sources, research time line, and a summary of the research methodology.

Rationale for Study

It is imperative that staff members who work with students who have disabilities understand and use the appropriate communication techniques in order to help control potentially aggressive situations and help the target student. Staff members who are not trained and/or do not utilize specific intervention techniques may not know how to respond to uncontrolled behavior (Couvillon, Peterson, Ryan, Scheuermann, & Stegall, 2010). At times, staff members can help or hinder specific outburst situations. The purpose of this study was to determine which communication techniques both helped and hindered special education elementary students in the Reading and Language Arts classroom. The conceptual framework for this study examined the effective use of linguistic, nonlinguistic and paralinguistic communication techniques that staff members use in the elementary Reading/Language Arts classroom with special education students. The framework is based on three communication forms that staff members utilize with special education students while taking preventative actions to avoid physical outbursts. The conceptual framework specifically focused on positive use of communication

techniques, which provided a safe and successful learning environment for special education students.

Research Questions

1. Which form of communication (linguistic, paralinguistic, nonlinguistic) do special education staff members use most frequently?

2. How does the form of communication used by teachers and/or paraprofessionals affect students' behavior in the special education Reading/Language classroom?

3. How do teachers and paraprofessionals perceptions of their communication practices with their special education students during Reading/Language Arts class align with observed practices?

Research Design

The research for this study is considered an ethnographic study of language. Ethnographers enter a natural setting in order to conduct field research through various observations (Berg, 2008). Ethnography deals with researchers observing and listening attentively, in which case, the researcher took intricate notes by using the observation sheets and a laptop computer. All field notes were kept on a password-protected computer.

This research used convenient sampling. The researcher sat in on each of the two elementary classes during their literacy block. The researcher observed both of the elementary classes four different times during their Reading/Language Arts class. During observations, the researcher recorded linguistic, nonlinguistic and paralinguistic

techniques that were used by teachers and paraprofessionals in the classroom. The researcher used the observation checklist, which can be found in Appendix B. The researcher also distributed a survey to twenty- two staff members who work at the school (see Appendix C). The survey provided feedback from the staff's perceptions regarding communication techniques that they use and specifically what they found to be effective and helpful.

Demographic Information

The following sections describe the site and the population that were studied for this ethnography. Site information (a private special education school) is followed by information about the specific population.

Site Information. This study took place at a special education, out-of-district school in a suburban town. Permission to conduct research in this school is documented in Appendix D. The district is comprised of three schools, located within a multi-county area. The district services more than thirty-five sending districts and students ages five through twenty-one. Students attend this school to learn in an environment that best suits their individual needs. Students attend this out-of-district placement due to the child's sending district not being adequately fit to meet their needs. The staff members at the school are currently trained in proper linguistic, nonlinguistic and paralinguistic techniques through *Handle with Care* training.

In the past, the district trained teachers and paraprofessionals in *Crisis Prevention Intervention*. However, the participating staff members for this study were only trained

in *Handle with Care* due to administrators and staff who consider this technique as more effective with their population.

The following study was completed at the elementary school, which also houses a middle school population of students. There were currently twenty-eight students who attended the elementary and middle school and twenty-four staff members. This out-of-district school has open enrollment throughout the year and the population can increase or decrease sporadically depending on students who leave and return to their home district or students who are sent out of their home district and attend this placement. The sample of students for this study included only students of the elementary population. *Population.* There were nine students who are present in the elementary school and there were three permanent staff members present in each elementary classroom. There was a substitute assistant who served as a floater throughout the school. In the K-4th classroom there was a teacher, two paraprofessionals and a substitute assistant who was present at times. One paraprofessional was considered the teacher's assistant and the other was a one-on-one assistant for a student. In the third -fifth grade classroom there was also a teacher, a teacher's assistant and a one-on-one assistant. The above population was utilized for the observation component of the study.

The classrooms consisted of students having their own cubicle work space (referred to as a cubby) where visibility of other students was not a distraction. There were also tables in the classrooms that the teachers used to have students complete group work. The school was comprised of "quiet rooms". The quiet rooms were padded and were available for students to go to during a crisis situation. Crisis aides used to be

present to help students and staff when there was a crisis situation, but due to budget cuts, this position no longer existed.

The analysis of data in this design is considered a discourse analysis, which is a form of content analysis. Content analysis in this instance will examined discourse and looked at patterns of language that were used in a communication exchange (Berg, 2008). This type of content analysis examined communication exchange in regards to the purpose in the specific setting of the Reading/Language Arts classroom. According to Berg, (2008) counting specific themes in discourse allows the researcher to ascertain variations and nuances in the ways that people engage in communication exchanges and how it creates their social world. For this research, the educational setting was used and not a social setting. Once the observations were complete an analysis was conducted through a coding process.

The purpose of coding is to organize data and interpret what the data says; there is no single best way to code data (Berg, 2008). There are a variety of ways that one can take on coding, and in qualitative research, coding can serve many different purposes (Richards and Morse, 2002). For the purpose of this study, the researchers used a coding process to determine the effects of specific communication techniques on student behavior.

The researcher also distributed a survey (after the observations were completed) to the school population of teachers, teacher assistants, one-on-one aides, and social workers. The survey sought to gain information regarding the staff members'

perceptions of specific communication techniques that they find the most effective with their students.

Data Sources

There were three distinct sources of collecting data for this ethnography. The sources were: observation checklist (Appendix B), a survey for staff members (Appendix C), and informal interview questions (Appendix D). Each data source is described in this section.

Observation Checklist. The observation checklist (Appendix B) was used each time the researcher observed in one of the elementary Reading/Language Arts classrooms. The observation checklist was devised to allow the observer to keep track of the various types of communication techniques and then provide notes regarding the outcome of the specific communication techniques that were used. The observation checklist was arranged in sections of time intervals to help the researcher determine if there were any patterns of outbursts and the possibility of increased communication techniques towards the end of the class when students may become more anxious. The researcher found it more convenient at times to record field notes on a computer and then transfer them to the checklist simply for the ease of speed and accuracy of collecting all information.

The notes from the observation form allowed for the coding process. The researcher counted the number of instances each specific pattern occurred. Figure 3.1 identifies the patterns that are often evident during classroom observations. Coding allowed for sorting into various categories in order to allow for one to seek certain patterns (Berg, 2008).

Linguistic

When the teacher/ paraprofessional used positive linguistic communication it created a positive outcome in student behavior. (positive = positive)

When the teacher/ paraprofessional used negative linguistic communication it created a negative outcome in student behavior. (negative = negative)

When the teacher/ paraprofessional used positive linguistic communication it created a negative outcome in student behavior. (positive = negative)

When the teacher/ paraprofessional used negative linguistic communication it created a positive outcome in student behavior. (negative = positive)

Nonlinguistic

When the teacher/ paraprofessional used positive nonlinguistic communication it created a positive outcome in student behavior. (positive = positive)

When the teacher/ paraprofessional used negative nonlinguistic communication it created a negative outcome in student behavior. (negative = negative)

When the teacher/ paraprofessional used positive nonlinguistic communication it created a negative outcome in student behavior. (positive = negative)

When the teacher/ paraprofessional used negative nonlinguistic communication it created a positive outcome in student behavior. (negative = positive)

Paralinguistic

When the teacher/ paraprofessional used positive paralinguistic communication it created a positive outcome in student behavior. (positive = positive)

When the teacher/ paraprofessional used negative paralinguistic communication it created

a negative outcome in student behavior. (negative = negative)

When the teacher/ paraprofessional used positive paralinguistic communication it created

a negative outcome in student behavior. (positive = negative)

When the teacher/ paraprofessional used negative paralinguistic communication it created

a positive outcome in student behavior. (negative = positive)

Figure 3.1. Communication Pattern Types During Classroom Discourse

The next step in the coding process was to determine the patterns that were found,

and, according to Berg (2008), even no apparent pattern can be a type of pattern. Once

the findings were determined the researcher considered the patterns in light of the

research in order to offer an analysis of the findings and then relate the analysis to the

literature of the subject (Berg, 2008).

In addition to observing, the researcher also audio recorded the observation

sessions in order to match linguistic, nonlinguistic and paralinguistic communication with

what is visually evident in each situation.

Staff Members' Survey. According to Fetterman (2010), surveys are the ethnographer's

knowledge about the system and are an excellent way for fieldworkers to tackle questions

dealing with representativeness. This specific survey was created by the researcher by

adapting information provided by *Crisis Prevention Intervention* training and *Handle*

with Care programs. Even though the staff members at the school were trained in *Handle*

with Care, the possibilities existed that they may also incorporate other communication

techniques that are typical to personality traits. The survey asked questions about staff

perceptions in regards to techniques and training that they found to be most helpful. The twenty-two staff members of teachers, assistants, and social workers completed the survey.

Informal Interview Questions. The informal interview questions asked the teachers in the observed classrooms specific questions about their students and effective communication techniques. Although the interview questions were researcher-generated, the content of the questions were based on both the conceptual framework for this study (see Figure 1.1 on page 5) and research related to communication techniques (Cazden, 1988; Levy & Chard, 2001; Wilmshurst & Brue, 2005). Open-ended questions can be very helpful for ethnography during the discovery phase and it is important through this type of informal questioning that the participant be in control of the communication (Fetterman, 2010). Some questions may open up conversation and lead to interesting findings. Therefore, the questions found in Appendix D, are merely a framework and questions were sometimes asked that were based on the responses from the teachers. Fetterman (2010) indicates that informal interviews should be casual conversations and that these conversations will lead to discovering how ones perceptions compare with another's. The teachers were also asked questions regarding the specific paraprofessionals in their classroom and what they found to be helpful or ineffective about them.

Research Timeline

The following timeline aided the researcher for conducting this ethnographic research:

1st month: The researcher began initial observations in both elementary classrooms. The researcher sat in on two, 40-minute classes of Reading/Language Arts (referred to by the school as their literacy block). Informal interviews of teachers were conducted regarding communication techniques and the effective use of the paraprofessionals' communication techniques in their class. The researcher reviewed the data and began the coding process from the observations. Informal interviews of teachers were conducted regarding communication techniques and the effective use of the paraprofessionals' communication techniques in their class. The researcher conducted a second observation in each classroom also within the first month. Data from the second set of observations was reviewed and coded.

2nd month: The researcher conducted the third and final observations. Data from the third and fourth set of observations was reviewed and coded. After completion of the observations, the researcher distributed the survey to the twenty-two staff members. The researcher collected the surveys and analyzed the data that the survey produced. The researcher analyzed the cumulative data from the study.

Summary of Research Methodology

Overall, this study used a qualitative and ethnographic approach using observations, interviews, and an open-ended survey. Ethnography requires the researcher to use surveys as well as specific questions in order to gain thick descriptions on observing behavior (Fetterman, 2010). By collecting data through various qualitative means, the researcher was able to draw conclusions about staff members' use of communication techniques and their impact on students with disabilities.

Chapter IV

Results

This chapter provides the results of the data analysis used following the methodology described in Chapter 3. This study examined special education teachers' and paraprofessionals' linguistic, nonlinguistic and paralinguistic communication in the Reading/Language Arts classroom in grades K through 5 and its impact on student behavior. The data for this study was collected through classroom observations, interviews with classroom teachers and a survey that was completed by staff members at the site. This study was an ethnographic study of language with the use of qualitative analysis to examine classroom discourse and student behaviors in the Reading/Language Arts classrooms. Data was collected through a tallying system, which indicated communication techniques and the results that these techniques produced. The use of staff members' communication techniques either produced a negative, positive or neutral result on student behavior. For example, a positive result would be distinguished as a student's misbehavior ending, or the student's compliance with a command. A negative result indicates that a student's behavior worsened and a neutral result explains no change occurred in behavior.

There were two classrooms that participated in observations. The classrooms will be referred to as Classroom A (grades K-4) and Classroom B (grades 3-5). During the time of this study, Classroom A did not have any Kindergarteners or first graders so that classroom provided instructional services for student's grades 2, 3 and 4. Classroom A consisted of a teacher, two assistants (one was the head assistant), and a substitute

assistant who served a role as a "floater" throughout the school. The floater was taken out of this class at times and was placed in other classrooms; she did not remain in the classroom all day as the other two assistants did. Classroom B consisted of a teacher, one head assistant and a one-on-one assistant.

The following questions framed the data collection for this study:

1. Which form of communication (linguistic, nonlinguistic, paralinguistic) do special education staff members use most frequently?

2. How does the form of communication used by teachers and/or paraprofessionals affect students' behavior in the special education Reading/Language Arts classroom?

3. How do teachers and paraprofessionals perceptions of their communication practices with their special education students during Reading/Language Arts class align with observed practices?

The results of data collection are reported based on the three instruments used: observations, interviews, and survey. Observations took place in two special education classrooms described above. Interviews were conducted by the researcher with teachers who consented to be interviewed. Surveys were distributed school-wide to teachers and staff members who interact with children.

Observation Data

The physical arrangement of both classrooms is described to show how the physical space contributed to the communication and space in both Classroom A and Classroom B. Every student in both of the classrooms has a cubby, which consists of a

cubicle-type workspace with a desk and walls that are located on the front and side of the desk. These cubbies allow for students to have their own working space where they hang pictures that represent their likes and personalities as well as reminders of good behavior. Some students have lists of cooling down techniques to refer to when they are in a behavior. In these cubbies the students also have blinded views from their peers.

Classroom A

Classroom A was set up with a general circular gathering table located at the front of the classroom, positioned so the students could see the SmartBoard. The instructor sits in an alcove of the circular table so that he or she can see the students as the instruction takes place. Students in Classroom A were given the option to work at their cubbies; however the majority of lessons throughout the school day were instructed at the head table.

Classroom A: First Observation.

The teacher was absent from school during Observation 1 of Classroom A. The head assistant (Assistant A-1) of classroom A instructed the students in Reading/Language Arts. During the observation with Assistant A-1 serving the role as the teacher, there was no behavioral problem from the student who had behavioral outbursts in the other three observations of Classroom A. The first observation of instruction for Reading/ Language Arts in Classroom A was a total of thirty minutes.

The first observation of Classroom A took place on a school-wide *Pajama day*. Students and staff members dressed in their pajamas to show their school spirit. During this observation, Assistant A-1 started the morning by complimenting a student as he entered the class. She said, "I like your pajamas, you have really cool pajamas on". This

compliment resulted in a neutral outcome as the student did not respond verbally or with behavior.

As Assistant A-1 started the lesson she said "good morning" to the students and sat at the circular table. As the students entered the classroom and put their jackets away, they sat at the table without being told. Assistant A-1 began the daily routine of morning announcements. The SmartBoard indicated highlights for the day, such as it being Pajama Day. Assistant A-1 also told the students they would be having P.E today with the sixth graders. The students cheered, and she shushed them and the students became quiet. Assistant A-1 sat at the head table and started the lesson. At the start of the lesson a student was up out of his seat and wandering to the front of the classroom. Assistant A-1 redirected the student by asking him, "Can I help you?" The student realized that he was not where he should be and he returned to his seat.

Assistant A-1 continued with her instructions. She said, "Today we are going to read The Little Brown Cookie Man". She passed out the stories. Students immediately previewed the text, flipped through and discussed the pictures. Assistant A-1 asked the students "What do you think the story is going to be about?" Students gave appropriate predictions and engaged in a brief discussion. As the students gave their responses, Assistant A-1 rewarded them with an incentive of faux "bucks" of the school. One student was redirected after giving an inappropriate remark. She said, "Are we being appropriate?" The student realized that he was not being appropriate and not only did he stop the behavior but he said "okay".

Assistant A-1 began the oral reading of the story through popcorn reading. Popcorn reading involved each student taking a turn reading a paragraph as they went around the table. It was apparent that there was one student who struggled with the reading task so Assistant A-1 got up from her seat and squatted behind the student as he read. She stayed behind this student during the remainder of the popcorn reading. Assistant A-1 helped the student quietly by giving him words that he did not know. Assistant A-1 also used positive brief words to encourage the reader. She used words like, "good job" and "yes". There was a neutral outcome from this interaction. Assistant A-1's use of paralinguistic communication as she helped the student can be described as very quiet, calm and soft. The student did not exhibit frustration or a behavior problem with the reading task. After the students finished his portion for the story, Assistant A-1 returned to her seat. During the read aloud, two students engaged in a side conversation and Assistant A-1 shushed them.

After the students finished reading the story aloud, Assistant A-1 posed the post-reading questions to the class. As discussion continued and students called out, Assistant A-1 commanded the students to, " Shhh... Raise your hand". The students immediately stopped calling out and they both raised their hands. The "shushing" and the verbal command were effective in redirecting the task at hand. As one student was standing next to the desk during the instruction, Assistant A-1 told the student "You have to sit down". The student grunted and was annoyed. Assistant A-1 empathized with him and said, "I know, I know". As a result the student complied without any further behavior outbursts.

As Assistant A-1 posed the questions and engaged in a discussion about the text, one student called out and she ignored him. He did not stop calling out and he was not reprimanded by any staff members. As another student answered the question correctly Assistant A-1 praised the responding student with, "good job". At one point during the questioning process, Assistant A-1 went to the board to spell a word for the class. This upset one student as he told her to not use the board. She made light of the matter by laughing and saying "okay, okay" rather than reprimanding the student. After the questions were answered, Assistant A-1 gave students the task of coloring the gingerbread men. She told student to get their crayons.

During the observation several other staff members of the school entered the classroom to drop off papers or hold side conversations. These interruptions did not seem to impact the learning process, as it is typical for many staff members to circulate throughout classrooms during the day. During the coloring observation, one staff member commented to the students "she is a very good teacher, you need to listen to her. I love how you are coloring that house." This staff member stood close to the student and squatted down next to him as she spoke to him. This staff member's communication with the class not included in the data gathering because this staff member was not a member of the classroom. However, it is noted that her communication was positive.

During Observation 1 of Classroom A, Assistant A-2 was not active in the lesson. She left the room several times; it was apparent to the researcher, that she was helping other staff members with morning check-in and issues in the hallway. Assistant A-2 only used two forms of communication techniques during the first observation in Classroom

A. Both forms of communication were linguistic and the paralinguistic communication of these statements were both negative and given in a tone. Assistant B went to give a student pencils that he grabbed out of her hand. She immediately reprimanded the student and said, "First of all please don't grab them out of my hand". In another example after a student made an inappropriate comment, she said, "[Target student's name], is that appropriate? Do we have to say that? Let's rephrase things or not say them at all." Both instances produced neutral outcomes, because neither child reacted to her reprimands.

Assistant A-3 was not the same substitute "floater" who was present in the class during the other observations. This substitute during the first observation in Classroom A, sat passively in the classroom, and Assistant A-3 played no role in the class and did not utilize any communication techniques during instruction.

Summary and Analysis: Observation 1, Classroom A

During observation 1 of Classroom A, Assistant A-1 took over the role as the instructor for the literacy block because the teacher was absent from school. Students responded well to Assistant A-1 in the role of "teacher". Communication techniques that were most used in the first observation of Classroom A were linguistic and paralinguistic communication. The following sections provide data on the number of instances in which each of the communication forms was used during the first observation in this classroom.

Linguistic Communication. Linguistic communication was used to address behaviors a total of twelve times and paralinguistic communication was used a total fifteen times. During Assistant 1-A's instruction, she redirected students a total of four times and in

each instance of linguistics communication where a redirection took place, it lead to a

positive outcome as the students complied. Assistant A-1 used positive language in four

instances, complimented a student once, used empathy to calm a student once, and

redirected students four times, bringing her total of linguistic communication to ten.

Assistant A-2 used linguistic communication to redirect student behavior a total of two

times.

Paralinguistic Communication. Any instance where a verbal word is spoken,

paralinguistic communication will also always occur. Therefore, the data for

paralinguistic communication will always be at least the same number as the linguistic

tally. Assistant A-1's paralinguistic communication during observation 1 was even toned

and calm in every instance that she used linguistic communication that impacted

behavior. She neither raised her voice nor gave an annoyed tone to the students at any

time. She spoke quietly to help the struggling reader and she praised him quietly.

Assistant A-1 "shushed" students three times, making the total of paralinguistic

communication of all staff members for the first observation, fifteen.

Nonlinguistic Communication. In nonlinguistic communication: Assistant A-1 used five

forms of nonlinguistic communication. She moved next to the struggling reader to help

him as he read, she also sat down and returned to the lesson once the students did not

want help at the board. Both of these nonlinguistic forms of communication of ignoring

inappropriate behavior resulted in calming the students. Assistant A-1 also ignored

inappropriate behaviors on two occasions (when students yelled at her to sit down, and in

one instance when a student called out). As she ignored both of these behaviors there

was a neutral outcome. Assistant A-1 also used nonlinguistic communication that reinforced the school-wide behavior modification program. She rewarded students by handing out "bucks" early in the lesson and this encouraged more students to raise their hand and make prediction about the story, resulting in a positive outcome.

Classroom A: Second Observation

The second observation of Classroom A was a total of thirty-seven minutes. Students entered the classroom at the beginning of the day and put their homework folders in the designated bin, and hung up their jackets and backpacks. As the students settled, one student stood on her chair in her cubby. Assistant A-1 reprimanded the student instructing her to sit down. Assistant A-1 sang a fun and soft song that referred to the student by name and indicated in the song that she did not want her to fall and get hurt. The playful and creative reprimand had a positive effect as the student complied and took her seat. Teacher A circulated throughout the classroom collecting the students' homework folders. Teacher A directed the students to come to the front of the classroom to the head table. Most students complied, some students continued to get settled and put away their belongings. In order to get all of the students to join the head table, Teacher A individualized her command by referring to each student by their first name. She said, "[Name of student], [name of student], [name of student], come on down." This command worked as all students complied and moved to the head table.

After the students sat at the head table one student asked Teacher A if she wanted them to make good choices today. Teacher A reinforced this question and said, "Do you

have to ask me that? You already know that." One student made an inappropriate comment following this discussion; Teacher A ignored the student's comment.

One student in Classroom A exhibited more behavior problems than any of the other students in the class. This child was at his desk playing with Legos rather than joining his peers at the table for their lesson. As the student played with the Legos, he asked Teacher A what she thought of his creation. Teacher A answered the question by telling him she thought his creation looked like a reach extender. After her response, Teacher A neither reminded nor required the student to join the others at the head table. This student remained at his cubby involved in his own activity. As the student remained at his cubby, Teacher A began the instruction for the lesson.

Teacher A started the lesson with the routine format by providing students with the day of the week, the date, and any other important announcements for the day. This information was also visible for students as it was projected on the SmartBoard. Teacher A strayed away from the announcements to ask students about their evening. The teacher and students engaged in a short discussion about dinner and evening plans that was off topic from the academics. During this discussion, one student came into the classroom; who seemed very upset. It appeared as though this student had cried earlier. He went straight to his cubby and sat down with his head in his hands. At this point, Assistant A-2 entered the classroom for the first time during the instruction and followed the student to his cubby. Assistant A-2 softly rubbed the student's back and said to him, "Are you okay?" The student did not respond to her. Assistant A-2 exited the classroom. It was

apparent to the researcher that she was helping with check-in and issues that took place in the hallway for most of this observation.

Teacher A sat at the head table facing the students who were also seated around the table. She started the Reading/Language Arts lesson for the day by telling the students, "This week we are working on cause and effect and dictionary work. As we wait for [named student], [named student], [named student] we're going to read a story about a football player and we are going to find out what the causes and effects are in the story." At this time, the non-compliant student who was playing with the Legos at his cubby, joined the table, but the other students put their belongings away and focused on getting settled at their cubbies. Teacher A instructed a student to read the first paragraph aloud to the class. Teacher A helped the student with one word during the read aloud. The student was a fluent reader and did not struggle with the reading task. The next student called upon to orally read was the non-compliant student who was also the student who struggled the most with the reading task. As the student read aloud, Teacher A leaned over in her seat and tracked the print for the struggling reader. As she helped the student read, the student who read before him was coloring his paper and not following with the class. Teacher A took the crayon from him and said, "I am going to put this here because we are reading now". Her comment was direct but she had an even and calm tone. The student complied and followed along with the rest of the class. Teacher A returned to help the student with the reading task and continued to track the print with her finger.

At this point in the instruction, Assistant A-1 walked over and sat next to the student who was reading. After the student read his paragraph, the next student started to read his paragraph. The students knew to read in a round robin manner without being instructed to do so. After the student read, Teacher A read aloud to finish the story. As Teacher A was reading a student raised his hand but was not called on. He interrupted Teacher A's reading to ask his question which was a football question, but not related to the story. Teacher A redirected the student and said "Are you following along?" The student stopped talking and complied by following along in his packet. During the reading of the story, one student commented on the story. He used a profane word and corrected himself. Teacher A thanked the student, "Thank you for correcting yourself." She also addressed his comment and they had a short discussion about the NFL and salaries of football players. The discussion was held at the head table, with every student listening. The discussion of the NFL was off track and therefore Teacher A redirected the students, "Ok! Let's get back to the story." Teacher A continued reading the story. As she read, a staff member came in to the classroom and took a student with her for some type of pull-out (related services). Teacher A and the students were not affected by the staff member entering the class. As another student entered the classroom from his bus, Teacher A welcomed him, "Good morning [name of student]." The student did not respond.

The non-compliant student interrupted Teacher A and asked an unrelated question about her bagel. She answered his question and told him she is saving the bagel for a snack and then she returned to reading the story. Interestingly, this student was not

redirected and the unrelated question was not ignored. Teacher A finished the story; at this time, the daily-morning announcements came on the loudspeaker. Teacher A got up from her seat to enter the attendance electronically. This movement was the only recorded instance during observation two, where Teacher A got up from her seat. As Teacher A moved toward the desktop computer, the non-compliant student as well as another student got up and followed her to the computer. The students remained with her until completed her task. After completion of the attendance, Teacher A took her seat, but the students did not sit back down until teacher A said, "Do you know what I like? I really like the way [student's name] is on task." This comment, redirected the one student to take her seat at the circular table but the non-compliant student continued to ignore her instruction and did not sit down.

A student who recently arrived to the class posed some questions about the story that they were reading. Teacher A praised the student, "Yes, good listening". A student asked if he could ask a question and Teacher A ignored his request. She said, "Let's read the questions and do this together." One student made an inappropriate comment about answering the questions all incorrectly on purpose and he laughed. Teacher A said, "I am not finding it funny, you are hurting my feelings."

At this point, the non-compliant student moved the "area" of his cubby and wandered around the classroom. Teacher A asked, "Can you get on task, bud?" The student continued to wander and asked unrelated questions about a toy. Teacher A said, "I know, I know, but I don't have it right now, but we are not concentrating on that we are concentrating on our work right now." The student stopped his questioning but he did

not comply with the lesson. He continued to walk around the room. Teacher A continued to go over the questions with the class and ignored the behavior from the student. Assistant A-1 appeared to have a well-established relationship with this student based on the findings from Observation 1. Assistant A-1 went over to the student and bent over to quietly speak to him, she stood within a close proximity. Although what Assistant A-1 said to the student was inaudible, the student complied and rejoined his peers at the circular table. Assistant A-1 sat in her chair behind the students and watched them.

Teacher A continued to review the questions with the class. She asked one student, "Did you write a full sentence? I like that." The student who had been exhibiting non-compliant behavior commented that the student did not write a full sentence. Teacher A ignored the negative comment and continued to make connections to the story and discuss the answers with the class. The conversation shifted to a topic of having good grades in order to get into college. One student spoke about his grades. Teacher A said, "Are we going to talk about our grade in front of everyone?" The student did not stop talking and shifted his conversation about an unrelated and off task topic. Teacher A said, "No because it's not for students...Are you on task? Did you circle letter "B" for number 3? I want to make sure we are all doing what we are supposed to be doing and on task." The student stopped talking after Teacher A made this comment.

All but one student continued to work well during the instruction. One student asked Teacher A if he could earn free time later with another teacher. Teacher A said, "If you are making good choices, following directions, in area, earning points...you can go to [Teacher's name]." The non-compliant student addressed Teacher A and pointed out

that he thought Assistant A-1 was giving out "bucks". Teacher A said to him, "We are giving out these. She would love to give you bucks but you are not earning them." This infuriated the student and he screamed and back talked the teacher and walked out of the classroom. Assistant A-1 followed the student out of the classroom. Teacher A ignored the inappropriate behavior of the student and continued with the instruction. The students seated at the table were all on task and continued to answer the questions and engage in the discussion. Assistant A-3 walked over to the students and said, "please write in full sentences." Teacher A helped a student spell a word.

One student asked Teacher A about appropriate language in the classroom. She responded, "I prefer you not say it because it is not a positive phrase." Teacher A told the students, "In five minutes we will earn a stretch and a piece of gum." She set the timer. It was noted that Teacher A continued to use language that reinforced the behavior management program. Words like "earned" and "positive phrase". The students "earn" rewards rather than have rewards taken away. The specific word choices used by the teacher seemed to be deliberate. Students continued to answer questions, Assistant A-3 helped students with spelling.

The non-compliant student re-entered the classroom and Assistant A-1 trailed him. Teacher A did not acknowledge the students re-entry. A student at the table asked Teacher A about Physical Education class. She said, "Are we talking about gym right now? What subject are we in? Language Arts, so what are we focusing on?" The student responded correctly. "When we are in gym, we will focus on gym." At this point, Assistant A-1 handed out "bucks" to those students seated and working at the table. The

non-compliant student that just re-entered the classroom stood by the computer and

rummaged through papers. Assistant A-1 went over to the student and spoke to him

quietly. The researcher could not hear the words that were spoken to the student, but the

student went to his cubby seat with a piece of paper, sat down, and started to color.

The following transcript conveys what happened next during the second observation:

Teacher A: "[Name of student], if you are going to sit at your desk you need to do

LA, you can't color. You can color on break and when you are at home."

Student: No response/reaction. He continued to color.

Timer/Break: The timer went off and Teacher A allowed the students to stretch and gave

the students at the table a piece of gum.

Teacher A: "Make sure your gum goes in the trash when you are done with it."

Assistant A-1: (to non-compliant student): "I hope you make a good choice."

Student: He got up from his seat and put the paper away, but walked back over to

the papers that were next to the computer.

Teacher A and Assistant A-3 ignored the student's behavior. Assistant A-2 was

not in the room at this time, it was apparent that she was helping staff elsewhere, and she

walked in and out of the classroom randomly and did not impact instruction.

Another staff member walked into the classroom. The non-compliant student

walked back to his desk in the cubby, with a new piece of paper to color. Teacher A

went over the last question with the group. She asked, "Who was missing in their

family?" The non-compliant student was the first to answer the question. His response

was immediate and correct. Teacher A appeared surprised and said, "Great [student's

name]! Do you want to fill that in on your paper?" The student commented that he did not have a paper. The student's paper was left at the table and at no point during instruction did any of the staff members bring the paper over to the student or require him to retrieve it. The student stayed at his desk and continued to color his paper.

Teacher A redirected a student at the table who was throwing crayons, "Please don't throw them, it's causing issues". The student complied. Teacher A asked a student who just entered the classroom late to school, to put his homework folder on her desk. Teacher A also said "[Non-compliant student's name], if you do not do your work you are not earning your rubber bands". The rubber bands were used as a behavior modification plan that specifically was put in place for this student. However, it was noted at that point in the lesson that the non-compliant student, who was still off task, had not been given the worksheet. Teacher A said, "The next thing we are going to talk about is using the dictionary...dun dun dun." "We are using the dictionary to help us find the definitions of words that we may or may not know." "One more activity before you transition." The non-compliant student continued to wander throughout the classroom. The other students worked independently on the dictionary activity at the table. That was the conclusion of the second observation of the Reading/Language Arts instruction for Classroom A.

Summary and Analysis: Observation 2, Classroom A

Observation 2 consisted of the teacher engaging students in several reading activities at the head table. Teacher A used language that was positive and attempted to redirect students that were off task. The non-compliant student refused to participate in

the Reading/Language Arts lessons, and the staff was unsuccessful with getting this student on task. The following section summarizes the specific types of communication used during observation 2 in Classroom A.

Linguistic Communication. During Observation 2 of Classroom A, Teacher A used a total of twenty-six linguistic communication techniques. Teacher A commanded students in two occurrences. Teacher A's commands did not have a positive outcome until she named students and directed the command to each student individually. Teacher A used positive language in five instance, thanked students for doing the appropriate behavior twice, and also referenced to students to use the appropriate behavior twice. Teacher A referred to the behavioral management program (either individual program or school wide) on five different occasions. Teacher A also reprimanded students a total of ten times. In seven of these occurrences the reprimand had a positive impact and students complied, but in three occurrences, students did not comply. Assistant A-1 used a linguistic communication a total of three times. The first instance was before instruction when she sang a reprimand for the student to not stand on her chair. In the other two instances that occurred, Assistant A-1 spoke to the non-compliant student and the words spoken were low in volume and could not be heard. Assistant A-2 was missing for most of the second observation. She only used linguistic communication once, when she asked the upset student if he "was okay?" Assistant A-3 only used linguistic communication twice, when she offered an instructional command to the student to reinforce the teacher's instructions and when she helped students with spelling. For both of the instances, the students complied with Assistant A-3.

Paralinguistic Communication. Teacher A, Assistant A-1, A-2, and A-3 all did not shush

students or use any other paralinguistic cues. There was no paralinguistic communication

that occurred that did not involve the actual spoken words. All of the staff members in

the classroom used the same technique of paralinguistic communication during the

observation, which consisted of quiet, even-toned, and comforting volume of language.

Nonlinguistic Communication. Teacher A used nonlinguistic communication, which

impacted behavior in ten instances during Reading/Language Arts instruction of

observation 2. Teacher A ignored students who posed off task questions or gave

inappropriate comments in seven occurrences. The data also indicated that Teacher A did

not ignore the non-compliant student in two instances where he asked unrelated topics or

gave an inappropriate remark. She responded to him in two of these instances but she

ignored other students who portrayed the same behavior. Teacher A also used

nonlinguistic communication when she took a crayon away from a student in one

instance; handed out gum as a behavior management reward, and she leaned over to help

a student track print. Assistant A-1 used nonlinguistic communication in nine instances.

Assistant A-1 moved more than any other staff member in Classroom A during

observation 2. Assistant A-1 moved and sat behind the class to watch over the students

on two separate occasions, she sat at the head table next to the non-compliant student

who also struggled with reading and she also got up to move toward the non-compliant

student throughout the classroom on three occasions. It was apparent that her movement

with the student made some positive impact on his behavior. Assistant A-1 ignored

students who did not follow instructions a total of three times and she handed out "bucks"

to reinforce the behavior management reward system once. Assistant A-2 used nonlinguistic communication when she softly rubbed the back of the student who was upset with his head down. The soft touch had a neutral effect on his behavior. Assistant A-3 only used nonlinguistic communication in one instance where she moved to sit with the students at the head table.

Classroom A: Third Observation

The third observation of Classroom A was one hour and eight minutes. Observation three took place on the 80th day of school and the school celebrated with a school wide 80's day. Teachers and staff members dressed in 80's clothing and lessons and activities were based on the 80's theme. Teacher A had pictures of 80's related toys, TV shows and known people of the decade on her SmartBoard with the morning announcements. Teacher A also had 80's music playing in the background. Students were immediately engaged upon entering the class and asked questions about the pictures of Super Mario Brothers and Ghostbusters. Observation 3 of Classroom A started with the same non-compliant student from observations 1 and 2 cursing about a student who took his belongings. Teacher A reprimanded the student, with the word "language". The student back talked and continued to complain about his missing card. Assistant A-2 walked over to the student and asked him, which card was missing. She said, "which one [name of student]?" The student walked out of the classroom. At this point, Teacher A ignored the student and the behavior. Assistant A-2 followed the student out of the classroom. The student stood in the doorway between the classroom and the hall. Assistant A-2 said to the student as she pointed at him, "You're going to go back in the

class and sit down. You don't have two choices." He did not comply and at that point,
Assistant A-2 approached him and walked him with her hand on his shoulder to the
hallway and the quiet room.

Teacher A directed the students in the class, "Who's making the right choice, the
right choice would be jackets hanging up and sitting at the front table." Teacher A was
seated at the front table and directed the students to join her for the lesson. Most of the
students complied after they put their belongings away. At that point Teacher A engaged
in a conversation with the students about the decade of the 80's. They asked her
questions and she responded and gave them examples. During the discussion, Teacher A
said, "Somebody forgot to throw their gum wrapper out yesterday." A student, who was
seated at the head table, threw the gum wrapper out. Teacher A used a playful and happy
tone (a high inflection in her voice) with the students during the third observation. When
asked why she was dressed in a "crazy" way. She responded, "Because today is the 80th
day of school!" At this point, the students, Teacher A and Assistant A-1 were all seated
at the head circular table.

Teacher A: "Today is the 80th day of school...Today in the computer lab, I have a

                 website of all the different cartoons and toys that [I] used in the 80's...but

                 in order to make it to the computer lab we have to make good choices

                 during Language Arts."

                 [Teacher A referred to the appropriate behavior that must occur in order

                 for students to earn time in the computer lab.]

A Student: Raised his hand to ask a question.

Teacher A: "[Name of student], thank you so much for raising your hand."

               [Teacher A answered his question, which was related to the toys in the

               80's. This conversation continued for another several minutes.]

Non-compliant
Student: [Re-entered the classroom; He stood next to his cubby.]

Teacher A: [Teacher A began the lesson after the discussion about the toys ended]

               "So in LA today we have a few things we are going to work on."

Another
Student: Enters the classroom (Just arrived to school on the bus).

Teacher A: "Hi, [name of student]. Nice to see you. I like your blue jacket."

               She continued with the instructions for the lesson. Teacher A told the

               class that today they are going to work on their spelling words by making

               flash cards to study their spelling words. Teacher A continued to be very

               playful as she told the students how to fold their paper and choose

               crayons.

               She said, "Come over dah, dah, dah, dah and pick your favorite color!"

Students chose their color and Teacher A assisted the students as they folded and

cut their papers. The students at the table were on task and engaged in the lesson. One

student even commented that he enjoyed the lesson. Teacher A said, "Cool. I'm glad

you like it. It makes me happy when you like things." One student entered the classroom

from his bus; he was seated at his cubby and then got up to put belongings away.

Assistant A-2 said to the student in an annoyed tone, "[Name of student, this is your last

chance. Do you want your breakfast?" The student was irritated and responded in an

angry tone "Noooo!" Assistant A-2 did not reprimand the student for his angry response. This student then went to the head table and worked on the assignment. As the students worked on their assignment, the non-compliant student wandered throughout the classroom and sucked his thumb. The staff members ignored his wandering.

It was a playful and fun morning. One student got up from his seat and danced to the Michael Jackson song that played in the background. Teacher A said, "You can take a dance break." The student attempted to pick the table up while dancing, teach A redirected him, "No, don't pick the table up. You don't need to." The student complied. At this point, two other students (in addition to the non-compliant student) wandered around the room. The staff members did not direct these students to sit down or to return to the lesson.

One student at the table made an inappropriate comment, Teacher A said, "Appropriate or inappropriate?" The student realized that he was being inappropriate and apologized. Teacher A asked another student if he needed help and gave permission for another student to dance to the music. She said, "Take the dance break dude, just take the dance break." Her tone was very playful and upbeat. The classroom environment for the third observation can be described as laid back and fun-loving. She instructed the students to choose a marker and write their spelling words onto the cards. Teacher A explained that the students would study for their words this week by using their cards.

Interestingly, during this time in the lesson one student continued to dance around the classroom and the non-compliant student was in his area coloring at his cubby. Assistant A-1 walked over to the student, leaned down and softly asked him, "Do you

need to take a break?" The student cursed at her and talked back to her. She continued to stand behind him and speak with a calm and even tone. "Come on, [name of student]. Do you need a break? Let's go take a break." The student ignored her suggestion. She continued, "Your options are: you need to sit down and do your work…" He interrupted her and yelled to leave him alone. "You need to do your work." The student who was dancing around the classroom started to moon walk. The dancing was praised by Teacher A, and Assistants A-2 and A-3. The non-compliant student commented that he was not doing "nothing wrong". Assistant A-1 corrected the student's grammar in an attitudinal tone and said to him, "Well, you aren't doing "anything"." She got the assignment from the table and put it on his desk. The student's behavior worsened and he got up and walked towards the hallway to the quiet room. Assistant A-2 walked over to intervene in the situation and she gave the student a compliment. Assistant A-1 and A-2 guided the student out of the classroom by putting a hand on his back walking him to the hallway and into the quiet room. Teacher A ignored the problematic student and continued with the lesson at the head table. The other students were very calm and each student worked independently on their spelling cards. At times, some students asked questions referring to the 80's and the pictures on the SmartBoard, but each student remained on task even during the nonacademic discussions. Teacher A remained seated throughout the entire lesson. Teacher A continued to help guide students to complete their spelling cards. In the hallway, the non-compliant student displayed upset behavior by screaming; the door of the quiet room was slammed shut.

The lesson continued and one student made an inappropriate comment. Teacher A said, "if it's not appropriate, please don't say it." The student, who danced earlier, got up from his seat and danced again. "If we are making good choices, during snack time we'll have Dunkin' Doughnuts." At that point the researcher left the room to observe another class. Twenty-five minutes later the researcher re-entered the classroom; Teacher A still remained seated at the table but shifted the lesson to a writing assignment about working together, the sport of football and the Super Bowl. Teacher A said, "To make it to the Super Bowl, football teams may work together. What are the disadvantages and advantages to working together with other kids at school?" Students engaged in a conversation about helping one another. During the discussion, Assistant A-1 stood at the doorway; Assistant A-3 was seated at the table with the students and Teacher A. Staff members at the table helped the students with their answers. One student walked over to the doorway to where Assistant A-1 stood and he began bumping into her with his body. She said, "Are you showing you missed me by doing this?" She allowed it to continue for a few seconds longer and then said, "This will lead to a gym restriction." The student ceased the behavior.

The non-compliant student finally re-entered the classroom after his earlier disruptive episode. Teacher A welcomed him, "Hi [name of student], welcome back." The student gave no response.

Some students wandered throughout the classroom and one student accidently knocked into the SmartBoard and knocked it out of alignment. Teacher A said, "Please don't touch the SmartBoard." She got up and fixed it and then sat back down at the table.

Assistant A-1 said, "If we can't make it til gym, we will have gym restrictions or alternate gym." Teacher A ended the writing lesson early and changed instruction so that students only had to listen to a book that she would read aloud to them. Teacher A later explained to the researcher that she shifted to the read aloud because too many students were antsy and out of their seats. Her intention in shifting the instructional activity was to calm the students.

Another instructional sequence followed:

Teacher A: "You may sit at your desk or at the table. We have a few more minutes, it is your choice. You may sit at your desk or the table. If you are sitting at your desk you need to have your ears open. [Name of P.E teacher], will be here in eight minutes. I am going to read a story called *It's Not Easy Being Big*."

A Student: Raised his hand; asked to get a drink.

Teacher A: "Yes, [name of student] thanks for raising your hand. You may get a drink in here."

Teacher A read the story from her seat at the head table. All students sat quietly and listened to the story. The children's book was about being small and being big. Teacher A read with inflection in her voice and at an even pace. She paused appropriately and it was easy to understand her. She did not show any of the pictures of the story and she did not move to any student in the class, she remained seated at the head table.

After she finished the story, Teacher A engaged the students in a discussion. She posed questions like, "How does that story make you feel?" Two students did not want to give a reason for their responses and once probed further they both became very annoyed and back talked the teacher. Teacher A gave the one student the option to whisper her response in her ear. The student refused and Teacher A said, "Well I can't hear you." One student gave a very thoughtful response. Teacher A shared her thoughts on the story and linked it to her height, as a shorter person and the height of Classroom B, Teacher B, because he is very tall. After she discussed her thoughts on the book Teacher A reminded students of their spelling test Friday. She told the student that if they had their spelling cards at their desk they could line up for Physical Education.

Summary and Analysis: Observation 3, Classroom A

Students were excited and full of energy during observation 3 of Classroom A. The teacher was playful and fun loving as she celebrated 80s day with the students. While the teacher modeled how to create spelling flashcards for the students, she also used language that reinforced the behavior modification program. The students appeared to be too rambunctious and the teacher switched the lesson to end with a read aloud. The following section further discusses specific communication techniques that were used in observation 3 of Classroom A.

Linguistic Communication. The staff members used many different forms of linguistic communication to address behaviors during the third observation. Teacher A used a total of twenty-six forms of linguistic communication. Teacher A redirected or reprimanded students and the students complied on three occasions, on two occasions where she

reprimanded or redirected students there was a neutral outcome. In three instances Teacher A referred to the behavioral management program and used language such as you can "earn" and encouraged students to make the right/appropriate choice. Teacher A thanked students for showing the appropriate behavior on two occasions, praised a student once and used a positive comment once. She joked with the students throughout the lesson but this was specifically indicated on two occasions in her language and she gave permission for students to dance on two occasions. Teacher A's fun loving demeanor produced positive results for the most part, because almost all of the students (except for one) were on task and completed the assignments during the majority of the instruction. Teacher A also helped students a total of four times at the table, and commanded students three times. On one occasion, Teacher A mentioned to the class that someone forgot to throw away their gum wrapper from yesterday and a student took the initiative to throw the gum wrapper away for her. Teacher A complimented a student on his clothing and she also welcomed the non-compliant student back to the classroom after he returned from a behavior episode. Assistant A-1 use linguistic communication a total of seven times. She spoke to the non-compliant students regarding his behavior on four occasions. One of these occasions she used negative language as she corrected his grammar, in one occasion she gave him options, and on the other two occasions she recommended that he take a break with her. She was not effective in any of these instances. She praised a student for dancing on one occasion and she referred to the behavior management program on two occasions. Assistant A-2 used linguistic communication a total of four times. Assistant A-2 redirected a student using negative

language when she said this is your "last chance" and "you don't have two choices". Both of these instances where negative language was spoken to the students, they both did not comply and actually acted up by talking back. She complimented the non-compliant student once, while he was in a behavior and it had no effect. Assistant A-2 praised the student who was dancing on one occasion. Assistant A-3 sat at the head table and helped students a total of two times. This was her only interaction in the third observation.

Paralinguistic communication. For the majority of the observation, the staff members used even-toned and calm paralinguistic communication. On one occasion Assistant A-1 was annoyed with the non-compliant student and as she corrected his grammar she spoke with a bit of a tone. She said to him, you aren't doing "anything" with stress on the word "anything". The student's behavior escalated and he walked towards the hallway, out of the classroom. On two occasions Assistant A-2 was annoyed and had a harsh tone while she told one student it was his "last chance" if he wanted his breakfast and when the non-compliant student was acting up she said in a tone, "you don't have two choices". There was no usage of paralinguistic communication that did not involve actual words that were spoken. Therefore the total number of paralinguistic communication for this observation exactly reflects the number of linguistic communication that was used.

Nonlinguistic communication. Teacher A used nonlinguistic communication a total of four times when she ignored inappropriate behavior from a student. Teacher A only got up from her seat during instruction to adjust the volume of the music on the computer and to put in her attendance via the computer. Assistant A-1 used nonlinguistic

communication in seven instances. Assistant A-1 moved to the non-compliant student and leaned down to his level to speak with him on one occasion. She guided the student with her hand on his back to the hallway on one occasion. Assistant A-1 allowed the student to knock into her for several seconds while she stood at the doorway until redirecting him with a verbal command. She also ignored inappropriate behavior from the non-compliant student on four separate occasions. Assistant A-2 used nonlinguistic communication also on seven occasions. She reprimanded a student as she pointed her finger at him; this caused the behavior of the student to worsen. Assistant A-2 also ignored inappropriate behavior on four occasions, and softly touched the back of a student to guide him out of the room on two occasions. Assistant A-3 did not use any nonlinguistic communication techniques. She sat at the head table during the duration of the third observation.

Classroom A: Fourth Observation

The fourth observation of Classroom A took place on a delayed opening school day due to the inclement weather. Students arrived mid-morning and there were very few students who attended school because of the weather. Observation four of Classroom A lasted twenty-five minutes. Teacher A addressed students and commanded them to unpack their belongings. "Alright, unpack your back packs, put your folders in your bin." Teacher A also complimented a student as he first entered the classroom. She said, "I like that shirt, you look handsome." Teacher A went to her same seat, at the circular table to begin instruction. A student asked Teacher A how to pronounce a word that he heard on television show that morning. She helped him pronounce the word. Once she

was seated Teacher A began to review the schedule for the day and it was also posted on the SmartBoard.

As the students were settled, the student who asked about the pronunciation for the word on the television show continued to discuss the show and asked unrelated academic questions. Teacher A high-fived a student for remembering something she told him earlier in the school year. Shortly after the discussion came to an end, teacher A began the Reading/Language Arts lesson. "There are three different writing prompts we choose from. You can decide." She read them the topics and allowed students to choose their writing topic. One student asked if he could hand out the pencils and Teacher A allowed it. Most students chose the topic that was about computers. Teacher A got up and showed the students what an old computer looked like from long ago. The students were engaged and interested in the lesson. The student who was consistently non-compliant from observations 1, 2, and 3 was not present when observation 4 took place.

Teacher A said, "So you can see what a computer really looked like and how it evolved. Draw a sketch of what you think it will look like". Students chose a writing prompt on the topic of a computer form the future. One student was quite creative as he suggested a hollow keyboard. Teacher A praised his idea, "Ooow I really like that." "How do you draw that?" Teacher A also drew her own picture and shared it with the class. Students explained what their computer does that makes it stand out. They give creative responses. The conversation went off topic and one student made an inappropriate comment. Teacher A redirected him, "No we don't talk about negative stuff. We leave it at home." The redirection did not work as he continued to tell his story.

Teacher A attempted to redirect him again, "Nooooo, keep it at home." The student then complied.

Assistant A-1 was not present for the fourth observation. It was apparent to the researcher that she was helping with student check-in from the buses. Teacher A-2 went over to the head table to sit with the students and engaged in an off-topic conversation that was TV related. One student made a violent gesture of a gun with his hands. Teacher A reprimanded the student and said, "Please don't do that." At this point the students completed their drawings and wrote their response. The Physical Education teacher arrived at the classroom to take the students to gym. Therefore, the Reading/Language Arts lesson ended.

Summary and Analysis: Observation 4, Classroom A

Teacher A was the only staff member who used communication techniques that were related to behavior during Reading/Language Arts. During this observation there were many students missing from the class, and in particular the non-compliant student was also absent. Since the non-compliant student was absent from this observation, there were fewer behavioral issues and thus fewer communication techniques used. Due to the fewer students present, Assistant A-1 decided to help with the check-in process rather than stay in the classroom. The following sections summarize the specific communication techniques that were used during observation 4 of Classroom A.

Linguistic Communication. Teacher A used linguistic communication in seven instances. She commanded students twice, redirected and or reprimanded the student three times,

and she complimented students twice. It was a small group of students and they all listened to her and complied.

Paralinguistic Communication. Teacher A had a positive and happy tone with the students during the observation.

Nonlinguistic communication. Teacher A used one form of nonlinguistic communication, when she high-fived a student who remembered something personal about her form earlier in the school year.

Classroom B

Classroom B was structured very differently from Classroom A. Classroom B was set up with only cubbies positioned throughout the classroom. Instruction was provided either with the students seated at their individual cubbies or they brought their chairs to the front of the room and sat facing the SmartBoard. The three staff members (Teacher B, Assistant B-1 and Assistant B-2) were in constant motion throughout the classroom during all of the observations.

Classroom B: First Observation

The first observation of Reading/Language Arts instruction in Classroom B was a total of 50 minutes. When the researcher entered the classroom, the teacher was ending instruction of the morning writing assignment that allowed the students to write about commonalities they share with the new student who started that day. A student rocked the cubby with his feet and Teacher B looked at the student in a stern manner and in a calm and even tone he said, "hey". The student stopped the behavior. Teacher B asked students to make connections to the new student's interests of Michael Jackson. Students

were called on to share their thoughts and similarities with the new student. During

discussion, two students engaged in a side conversation. Those two students were not

immediately reprimanded and their behavior was ignored by all of the staff as several

students shared. Teacher B eventually shushed the students who were talking and the

students stopped. Also, during discussion, one student tapped loudly on his cubby.

Teacher B moved and positioned himself so that he stood next to the student. Teacher B

put his hand gently on top of the student's hand and the tapping behavior stopped.

As the classroom discussion changed to students discussing their favorite movies,

one student began to make inappropriate comment about a specific film. Teacher B

briefly ignored the student but then as the student continued speaking, he redirected the

student and said, "Let's keep it appropriate". The student complied. At the end of this

writing lesson for the Reading/Language Arts period, Teacher B addressed the behavioral

management program of his class as he asked Assistant B-1, "Do you think our boys

earned marbles?" "If we can have a good transition into reading, we are going to put the

marbles right into the jar. Do you think we can have a good transition?" Students did not

verbally respond but they complied and transitioned into the second portion of the

Reading/Language Arts class by taking out their novels. Assistant B-1 did not respond to

Teacher B's question. One student exhibited an angry nonverbal response that the class

had to start reading. The student was angry because he was under the impression that

they were not going to have the reading portion of class today due to it being *Polar*

Express Day and there were plans to watch the movie in the afternoon. Teacher B

addressed this student and in a calm tone stated, "I said we aren't going to have Science

and Math today, because of *Polar Express* Day." The student stopped his complaints and took out his book.

Students already had at their desks, a worksheet of questions; the same questions were also posed on the SmartBoard. Teacher B did not have to address students to take this work out and begin. It seemed that this procedure was routine for the students. Teacher B began the lesson by asking the students, "Who can tell me what we're reading?" Students called out answers. Teacher B and students engaged in an open discussion about the novel they were reading which was about the life of Amelia Earhart. Teacher B posed questions such as, "What was her plane called?" "Who can tell me what happened to her?" During the discussion, Teacher B thanked a student for raising his hand and he rewarded other students in the class by handing out "bucks" to reinforce the behavior modification program with the students' use of participating in the discussion. Teacher B had a question on the SmartBoard that was related to chapter seven. He instructed the students to read the question. One student could not find the chapter and complained to Teacher B. Teacher B walked over to the student and helped him find the chapter. Teacher B then asked the students to catch the new student up with the plot of the novel. Teacher B referenced the behavior management system again, "Twenty "bucks" to whoever can tell me what happened in chapter 1" and the students immediately called out answers. He praised them by saying, "great". As Teacher B continued to pose questions to the class, he walked and stood next to each student as they gave their answer. He commented, "Great memory" to a student who remembered specific details from the novel.

During this part of the instruction, Teacher B ignored misbehavior from one student. One student pushed his cubby and continued to knock into the cubby, this student then wandered throughout the classroom. The student was reading his novel and followed along with the class but his physical behaviors (wandering throughout the classroom and kicking the cubby) were ignored by the staff members. It was not until the student kicked the cubby much harder and louder after several seconds passed that he was reprimanded for the action. Teacher B said to the student, "Are you sure you are going to be able to stand? I don't want to see you pushing that". The student complied.

After the review of the story was completed, Teacher B instructed the students to read aloud. He called on one student to read and praised him as he read. He said, "Sounds great." Also, as the student read aloud, some other students engaged in side conversations. Teacher B shushed the talking students but they did not listen. Teacher B shifted his lesson and allowed students to read independently or in pairs. This shift in reading format was never given as a command to the students, they started to read in pairs or independently on their own and Teacher B allowed it. Teacher B circulated throughout the classroom as the students were reading. As two students were reading in pairs, Teacher B praised the students and said "Good job" and "Nice job reading out loud." One student asked Teacher B to help him with a word. That student read orally and it was quite loud in volume in the classroom. Teacher B went over to the student and helped him with the word. He put a comforting hand on the students arm, and then tapped his arm and said, "Do you want to go in the back and read with [named student]

so you are not reading so loud?" The student was annoyed and grunted but he complied and moved to read with the other student Teacher B suggested.

At this point in the lesson the researcher recorded that Assistant B-2 circulated throughout the room and stood near students as Teacher B instructed. Assistant B-2 told moved around the classroom with rarely contributing to instruction, he told students what page to turn to and listened to them read. Also, up until that point, Assistant B-1 sat at the desk and did not contribute to the lesson. She did not move from the desk until a student complained, whined and struggled with finding an answer. Assistant B-1 got up from her desk and went over to the student. She said, "What's the matter? You want me to help you? Come on now [name of student], we are going to have a god day." She also gave a soft touch to his back. The student complied and stopped his complaints.

One student was counting his "bucks" and wandered throughout the classroom. The student did not participate in the instruction at that time. Teacher B redirected the student and sent the student to read with a classmate. The redirected student complied easily and the two students read together.

Students responded to questions that were posed on the SmartBoard. Teacher B asked "Are we writing down important facts?" "We should be writing down important facts". The student who was complaining earlier continued to whine that he could not find the page. Students called out the page number to him but the student insisted that he still wanted help from Teacher B. Assistant B-1 went over to the student to help him and said "What's the matter [Name of student]?" Teacher B said, "[Name of student], please wait. Thank you for your patience." After Teacher B was finished helping the one

student he was currently with, he then went over to help the complaining student. Once Teacher B moved and stood next to this student to help him, he complied.

During this time, Assistant B-2 circulated the classroom, helping students who were reading in pairs. He asked the students, "You want to read?" as he stood next to the students while they read. Assistant B-2 suggests, "How about you read, [Name of student]?" This student complied. As Teacher B continued to circulate throughout the classroom, he assured one student that he read the correct words and praised him, "Yes, good job".

The same complaining student started to make loud and fake hiccup noises from the side of the classroom. One student was angry at this distraction and yelled at him to stop. Teacher B shushed the student quietly and walked over to the non-compliant student who appeared to be intentionally hiccupping. Once Teacher B stood with the student he stopped the noises. Teacher B praised this students work by saying, "That's good". The student asked Teacher B a question, and students again yelled at the student to be quiet. Teacher B, reprimanded the students in a calm and even toned manner and said, "Hey, he is asking a question to me." The students stopped and returned to their own work. Teacher B addressed the class, "Stop right here, everyone is going to tell me an important fact. What have you learned so far?" Students raised their hands and gave answers. As the students answered his questions, Teacher B circulated around the room and stood next to each student as the student gave their response.

Teacher B redirected the students back to the question on the SmartBoard. Again, he offered fifty "bucks" to the students who could answer the question. One student

called out several answers. Teacher B ignored him for some time and then said, "Well maybe. Don't say it out loud; let's find it in the story. Point it out for me". One student then gave the correct response and Teacher B asked Assistant B-1 to give the student fifty "bucks". Teacher B then went on to pose another question to the students. He leaned over one of the cubbies to speak to a student and gave the student a key word to help him find the answer. The student wanted to know what page to look for the answer. Teacher B asked a student who knew the answer if he should give the student the page? This request by the teacher seemed to place positive acknowledgement on the student who had the answer correct.

Teacher B circulated around the room to make sure each student found the answer to the question on paper before he gave the correct answer aloud. One student screamed and he shushed him. The student apologized. Teacher B pointed the answer out to one of the students and had him read it for the class. During this time one student got up out of his seat and interrupted Teacher B about an unrelated topic. Teacher B ignored the unrelated question; walked with the student back to his seat at his cubby and told the students they will all transition in five minutes.

The complaining students whined and asked to get on the computer. He got up out of his cubby and moped around the class. Teacher B walked over to his cubby and the student went back to sit down as Teacher B checked his answers. Teacher B asked Assistant B-2 to take another student for a walk. Assistant B-2 took the student for a walk. The lesson ended as Teacher B went to the last pair of students who remained working at their cubbies. He helped them with their final question and commented

positively on their answers "good" and "very good". One of these students from the pair

asked Assistant B-1 to give his peer his "bucks". She responded: "I put it on his desk so

it does not get confused. Thank you for looking out for your friend." Assistant B-1

thanked the student for looking out for his peer and his rewards.

Summary and Analysis: Observation 1, Classroom B

In addition to the difference between the physical structures between Classrooms

A and B, the adults in Classroom B were constantly roving about the classroom as they

interacted with students during instruction. It was noted that Teacher B used

nonlinguistic communication to alter students' inappropriate behaviors during the lesson.

The following sections summarize the specific types of communication techniques used

during the first observation in Classroom B.

Linguistic Communication. During observation 1 in Classroom B, Teacher B used thirty-

one linguistic communication techniques during Language Arts/ Reading instruction that

had an impact on behavior of the students. Teacher B, reprimanded students seven times

and in each instance, except for one, where a reprimand was used, there was a positive

outcome and the students complied. Teacher B used five commands, thanked students

for raising their hands twice and used positive words to praise students nine times.

Teacher B was recorded putting positive acknowledgement on a student who had the

correct answer in front of the entire class. This was noted when Teacher B said, "[Name

of student], should I tell them what page it is on?" Teacher B also calmed an annoyed

student through linguistic communication when he explained that they have reading

portion of class today. Teacher B referred to the behavioral management program in five

occasions. Three instances when Teacher B referred to "bucks", adding marbles to the jar or preparing students to transition this resulted in a neutral outcome, but in two instances when Teacher B offered to hand out bucks, this had a positive effect as more hands from students went up and they participated. Assistant B-1 used linguistic communication that affected behavior a total of six times. Assistant B-1 did not use any communication techniques until one particular student acted out. She addressed him and encouraged him for the remainder of the Reading/Language Arts class. All of Assistant B-1's linguistic communication was effective in calming and helping the student. Assistant B-2 played a minor role in the classroom. He circulated throughout the room but only used linguistic communication in three instances of helping give a page number and asked students to read.

Paralinguistic Communication. Teacher B used consistent paralinguistic communication. He consistently spoke in an even and soft tone through all thirty-one linguistic communication techniques that were recorded. Teacher B also shushed students three different times throughout the lesson. Therefore, Teacher B used a total of thirty-four paralinguistic communication techniques in observation one. In two instances where he shushed the students they stopped their side conversations. One student even apologized. In another instance where he shushed students who were speaking, they did not comply. Assistant B-1's paralinguistic communication was always calm and soft. She never shushed the students or made any other noises to impact behavior, so her paralinguistic tally is the same as her linguistic communication. Assistant B-2's paralinguistic

communication was always very soft and he spoke quietly and calmly to the students that he helped.

Nonlinguistic Communication. Teacher B constantly circulated throughout the classroom. He was recorded using nineteen different nonlinguistic communication techniques to help alleviate behavioral problems. In six occurrences Teacher B walked over to students as they read, answered their questions or stood next to them as they spoke during discussions. Teacher B pointed to the novel one time, leaned over a cubby to help a student in one occasion and he handed out "bucks" on one occasion. Teacher B softly touched students a total of three times. Each time Teacher B touched a student, this had a positive result. The student either complied when asked to move, or stopped the distracting behavior. Teacher B ignored inappropriate behaviors in observation 1 a total of seven times. At times the behavior escalated and then Teacher B used linguistic communication or paralinguistic communication to reprimand the student. Assistant B-1 used nonlinguistic communication a total of three times. She moved to help the student in two different occurrences, and she handed out "bucks". In only one instance where she moved to help the problematic student did not receive a positive result, because the student still wanted Teacher B to help him even though Assistant B-1 was standing next to him to help him. Assistant B-2 was recorded using one nonlinguistic form of communication as he deliberately walked over to a group of students to help them.

Classroom B: Second Observation

Observation 2 of Classroom B lasted only twenty-four minutes. At the beginning of the observation the students appeared to be completing a writing task that was

affiliated with an article they read about Austin Chapman, a deaf man, and his experience of hearing music for the first time. The students were learning about communication for the month and what it meant to "communicate". At the start of the observation, one student ran and jump-kicked a cubby. The adults in the classroom ignored the behavior. There was disorder in the classroom, as students were wandering around the class, discussing a topic of a spider that was on the teacher's desk and overall it was very loud. Teacher B addressed the class, "I need everyone back at their desk cause we are moving around". He then told Assistant B-1 about the spider on his desk and that if she sees it he will bring it outside. Another student intentionally knocked a pencil box from a student's hands.

Teacher B: "We need everyone at their desk. [Name of student], is at his desk.

"Thank you [name of student], thank you [name of student] for helping [name of student] pick up his pencils." Teacher B did not reprimand the student who knocked the pencils out of the student's hand.

"You are going to do a listening experiment. We need quiet, that means stay in your area. Everyone needs one of these in front of them." He held up a worksheet that coincided with the lesson. He verbally addressed the students who showed the appropriate behavior and were ready to learn.

"[Name of student] is not leaving his area, [name of student] is ready to go, [name of student] is ready to go." The students became more settled after the redirection was verbalized.

"Here is the experiment. You are going to close your eyes. When you close your eyes you are going to listen to a piece of music and you are going to write it down, what you feel when you hear that sound. We are becoming Austin Chapman who just heard his first sound. Now don't talk. Think about what you feel."

Students: Appeared ready to listen. Many of the students stood in their "area" around their cubbies, but were not seated at their desks. One student threw a pencil.

Teacher B: [Ignored behavior of student who threw pencil.]

He played the song from his desk computer as students wrote their feelings.

At the stop of the music, two students wrestled each other. Teacher B got up from his desk and walked over to the students. He did not say anything, but the behavior of the students stopped. One student screamed and this was also ignored. Teacher B said, "You are writing down what you feel." A student fell to the ground and this behavior was also ignored. One student yelled to the class how the song made him feel and Teacher B said, "Good, write it down."

Assistant B-1 did not play a major role in the second observation. However, Assistant B-2 was more involved. At that point in the lesson, Assistant B-2 whispered to a student who was standing on his chair, "Hey, sit in your chair." The student complied. Assistant B-2 stood next to this student because it was apparent that the student could not sit still. Students wrote their feelings for the song and Teacher B was ready to play the

next song for the lesson. He said, "When you are ready to move, raise your hand."

Teacher B, walked back to his desk to play the next song. The students were seated after

the command but not all of them raised their hands and/or stop talking. One student

threatened another student by verbalizing a physical threat; the staff ignored the threat.

Teacher B told the students to close their eyes and used humor to engage the students.

He said, "This may be the best song in the entire world." It was obvious that the students

thought this was hysterical because the song was a boy-band type pop song that they

were not interested in. The students laughed.

After the song played Teacher B instructed the students to write their feelings

about the song next to number 2 on their worksheet. Teacher B circulated throughout the

room to observe what the students wrote on their papers. He told one student as he

pointed to his paper, "write that instead of [this] it is more appropriate." The student

complied and changed his answer. Another student predicted that the class would share

their answers at the end and Teacher B said, "You are right, we are going to share at the

end." During this time, there were several misbehaviors that occurred. One student

jumped back and forth over his chair, one student wandered around the classroom, one

student ran and slid on the ground and one student was seated on his desk. Teacher B

said, "Ok now let's come on back." All but one of the students stopped their behavior to

comply; two students commented that they "were ready". Teacher B individually pointed

out the student who continued to misbehave. "Number 3, Oh [name of student] is not

quite ready." The student complied after hearing the redirection.

Teacher B played the next song, which was upbeat and the students danced to the song. One student stood in his chair and as the music played, Teacher B said, "ah ah" and the student sat down. When the song ended Teacher B again circulated around the room. The following sequence of dialogue and actions occurred immediately thereafter:

Teacher B: "Ok number 3. Write down exactly how you feel."

Student: "Hyper"

Teacher B: "That is good. I also noted that all of you jumped out of your seat."

Teacher B continued the procedure of playing another song on the computer and having the students jot their feeling related to the music. "Who's ready? Hands up."

Students: [Inattentive to teacher; screaming and talking.]

Teacher B: [After stopping the music.] "OK, I am going to start it over." (He re-started music on the computer.)

Students: [Acting out— some screaming; one falling on the floor; one running laps in classroom;

Teacher B: [Ignored all student behaviors.]

Assistant B-2: Stood next to the student's cubby who was running laps around the classroom and the close proximity of Assistant B-2 resulted in the student taking his seat.

Teacher B: "OK, how do you feel?"

Students: wrote on their papers.

Teacher B: [After playing anther song:] "Hands up when you're ready. Ten minutes

until we transition to the computer lab. Hands up and shut your eyes."

The last song that was played was a beat boxing song that the students enjoyed.

Teacher B knew that the students liked this song and he let the song play for longer than

the other songs. He said, "I am going to let this one play and write down what you feel

for number 5." Teacher B circulated to see the students' responses. Teacher B then said,

"Austin did not hear anything until he was 9 years old remember?" He asked the students

to share.

One student suggested that students stand at the front of the room to present their

answers. Teacher B liked that idea and let the students share their work. As each student

shared, Teacher B asked students if they had similar answers to the answers currently

being shared. Several students shared their work but not all of them wanted to present.

At the end of the lesson Assistant B-1 gently pushed a student to sit down and said, "Sit

with me." The student sat with her. Teacher B ended the lesson and said, "What did we

learn today?" Students were speaking over him and he shushed them. One student said

he was not going to listen. Teacher B ignored the student who talked back. Teacher B

asked again and no student gave a response. The students put their work away and

prepared to leave the classroom to go to the computer lab. Teacher B did not answer his

own question or pursue questioning of the students; he did not verbally bring the lesson

to an end.

Summary and Analysis: Observation 2, Classroom B

Teacher B did an excellent job motivating the students during observation 2.

Students were engaged and enjoyed the interactive lesson. Teacher B used a myriad of

communication techniques to help keep students focused and on tasks. Teacher B also

ignored many inappropriate behaviors during the lesson. The following sections

summarize the specific communication techniques that were used during the second

observation of Classroom B.

Linguistic Communication. Teacher B used linguistic communication that impacted

behavioral issues, a total of twenty-four times. Teacher B used eighteen commands

directed at the students. In six instances, these commands did not work. For example,

when Teacher B told students to put their hands up when they were ready, in many cases

the students did not comply and did not stop talking. Once Teacher B directed the

students individually and referred to them by using their name the students complied.

This occurred in five instances. In four instances students complied without the need of

being named. In three examples Teacher B referred to students who showed the

appropriate behavior and by singling out the appropriate behavior, this worked with the

other students complying to the task. In one instance Teacher B used language that

referred to use of appropriate words. Teacher B also used humor once, praise twice, and

thanked students twice. Assistant B-1 only used linguistic communication in one

instance when she told a student to sit down. Assistant B-1 was not an active staff

member in the classroom with the students during this second observation. Assistant B-2

only used linguistic communication once when he told a student to quietly sit down.

Paralinguistic Communication. Paralinguistic communication is used whenever verbal words are spoken. All of the staff members during observation 2 used even-toned, quiet paralinguistic communication. Their tone was very calming and soothing; they did not ever yell or raise their voice. The only paralinguistic communication that was used that did not involve actual spoken was on two occasions. Teacher B shushed the students and he used a phrase, "ah, ah" to get a student to take his seat.

Nonlinguistic Communication. Teacher B and Assistant B-2 circulated throughout the classroom during the entire observation. Teacher B stood behind students are read their responses and gave them feedback after each song he played. Teacher B ignored inappropriate behavior on seven occasions, even when a physical threat was spoken. Teacher B walked over to students who were wrestling in one occasion and the students complied. Assistant B-1 impacted behavior of a student as she softly pushed a student down to take his seat. This was effective and the student remained seated. Assistant B-2 walked over to a student who was in a behavior and the student complied.

Classroom B: Third Observation

The third observation of Classroom B was a total of sixty-one minutes. Since it was a school wide 80's day, Teacher B was dressed in 80's garb and the students seem to thoroughly enjoy his appearance. At the start of the class, a student complimented Teacher B on his outfit and Teacher B gave the student a high-five.

The Reading/Language Arts lesson for the day was geared to the theme of the 80's; specifically the students were reading about the style of the 1980s. One student who was reading out loud was distracted by side conversations. Teacher B went and

stood next to the student as he read and his close proximity alleviated the complaints from the student.

Teacher B showed the students visuals as they read the narrative. Teacher B engaged in a discussion with students about the different styles of the 80's and compared them to styles today. The students were on task and seemed engaged. During the discussion, Teacher B continued to compliment the students with remarks such as, "Yeah!" and "Great connection". Teacher B attempted to have another student volunteer to read. One student commented that he already read. Teacher B replied: "Yes, you did read. Thank you."

Some students talked loudly out of turn and Assistant A-2 said "guys" and shushed them. The student complied. One student wandered around the classroom and Teacher B used "bucks" to get the student back to his seat. This motivated the student to comply with attentive behavior. At that point Teacher B sent for Teacher A to come into the classroom to show off her 80's outfit. Teacher B used Teacher A as an example and engaged students in a discussion to help the students get a better understanding of the 80's style.

After Teacher A left the room, Teacher B redirected students to the reading task. He told the students that they are now going to "read about some musicians and actors and actresses who are still around today." At that point one student was up out of his "area" and he was kicking his legs in the air. Assistant B-1 walked over to the student and he went back to his seat. She stood behind him after he was seated as the class continued to read the story. After the narrative was complete, Teacher B directed the

students to the questions. The classroom was loud and many students were speaking. Teacher B said, "Just listen, just listen." The students complied. Teacher B circulated around the room as he posed the questions with the students. Two students screamed and the staff ignored them. Teacher B said, "I am walking around to see, write it down please." One student started to slap paper at his desk and talked to Assistant B-1 about how he did not know what to write down. Assistant B-1 said, "Do people wear their hair like that now? No, write it down." One student in the class screamed an inappropriate phrase and cursed. That student's outburst was ignored by all staff members.

As the students continued to work on the questions, one student threw a pencil, got up out of his seat and walked around and threw his bucks on the ground. Assistant B-1 said, "Mr.[name of student], back in your seat please." The student refused to listen. Assistant B-1 attempted to redirect him again, "Come here let's talk little man". This was playful and with a very even and calm tone. The student told her that she is not helping him. Assistant B-1 said, "I'm standing here to help you and your over there hiding in your closet, silly goose." The student jumped on his seat. "Be careful you are going to fall." He complied and stood next to his chair and Assistant B-1 helped him complete the questions. The student spoke abruptly about not having a pencil and he did not care. Assistant B-1 said "We had two really good days in a row. I would really like to have another good day." The student stopped the behavior and he answered the question with Assistant B-1's help.

At that point another student, who Assistant B-1 gave attention to in the previous observations, got up out of his seat and walked over to her for help. She said, "You need

to give me a few minutes. When I go back to my desk." He listened to her and went and sat back down at his desk in his cubby. Assistant B-1 finished helping the student she stood behind and then helped the student to his left.

Teacher B continued to circulate to help the students with the answers to the questions. One student darted out of his seat claiming that he was finished with his questions and he handed the paper in and threw his pen. The student also moved his chair and then proceeded to run around the classroom. He positioned himself so that he stood right next to Teacher B. Teacher B ignored the student's behaviors. The same student hung on Teacher B's arm and followed him around the room. Teacher B allowed the student to hang on his arm. Teacher B directed the students to the front of the classroom so that they could be positioned to see the SmartBoard, "Ok, it looks like everybody is done...not quite done. Bring your chairs up front, bring your chairs up. You need your notebook or a pen or pencil. Please bring it to your chair with you." Most of the students complied and the student, who was hanging on Teacher B, took his seat next to Teacher B's desk.

One student who did not want to move to the front of the classroom announced that he could see from the back. Teacher B ignored the student and after a few seconds the student complied as he grabbed his seat and moved to the front to join the others. Teacher B explained that TV commercials during the 80's were "fun". Teacher B explained the next activity: he would show the students a commercial and they would guess what the commercial was promoting or selling. Students wrote their answers on their sheet in front of them. One student stood next to Teacher B and screamed at another

student to move. Teacher B ignored the behavior and helped the student spell a word.
Teacher B told students to notice the different colors and style as they watch the
commercials. Teacher B made a joke about the commercial and the students and staff
members laughed. Teacher B seemed to have a dry sense of humor that entertained the
students.

The same student continued to hang on Teacher B's arm. Even though the student
was hanging on the teacher he was still engaged in the lesson and he wrote his answers
for each commercial. Teacher B allowed the student to hang on his arm for a few
minutes. However, at that point he slightly moved the student off to the side of his desk
without saying any words to the student. The student stopped hanging on the teacher.
The student joked with Teacher B and he joked back, pretending to pour his water on the
student's head.

The students laughed at the next commercial in which a woman was selling panty
hoes. Teacher B helped students with writing their predictions as they watched the
commercials. The one student who stood with Assistant B-1 earlier in the lesson
suddenly got up and ran to his cubby. Assistant B-1 followed him to his cubby. The
student was angry that she came over to check on him and he said he was tying his shoe.
She told him, "I'm just seeing what you are doing. Are you alright?" The student tied his
shoe and then returned to his chair at the front of the classroom.

The lesson proceeded and one student stole another student's pencil. Assistant B-
1 said, "What happened to yours? That's not yours." She took the pencil from the student
and handed it back to the student from who it was taken. The student who stole the

pencil jumped up out of his seat; air punched, got a new pencil from his desk and chewed on the pencil. Teacher B continued to keep most of the students engaged and on task. He probed the students and asked questions that allowed them to think outside of the box and predict the purpose of the commercial before the commercial played for too long. At that point the same student who had been hyper during this observation, (next to Assistant B-1) continued to repeatedly drop his pencil and pick it up. The student's behavior was ignored by the staff, therefore his behavior escalated and he jumped out of his seat and ran to the back of the classroom. Every student was on task except for the one non-compliant student, the staff continued to ignore his behaviors.

Before moving on to the next commercial, Teacher B addressed this hyper student, "[Name of student], are you ready?" After Teacher B addressed the student personally, the student complied by going to his desk and writing his prediction. The last commercial was about TV guide; the students did not know what a TV guide was. Teacher B explained the TV guide and he poked jokes geared towards Assistant B-1; she and the students laughed.

At the end of the lesson, Teacher B told the students to turn in their papers. Every student turned in their paper and then students ran to the computers for the free time they earned before transitioning to their next class. Assistant B-1 told the class she is going to put marbles in the jar because they did such a great job "participating and paying attention." She also thanked them and said, "two handfuls for a great session."

Summary and Analysis: Observation 3, Classroom B

Teacher B engaged students in another interactive lesson during observation 3. Even though there was much commotion in the classroom, Teacher B and Assistant B-1 worked well with reinforcing students to stay on task. Both Teacher B and Assistant B-1 used many different communication techniques to help behavior issues in observation 3. Each specific communication technique that was used is further described in this section.

Linguistic Communication. Teacher B used linguistic communication, which impacted behavior of students during Reading/Language Arts class, a total of eleven times. Teacher B used positive praise twice, thanked a student once, redirected a student once and joked with students three times. Teacher B also used commands that students complied to a total of four times. Assistant B-1 was an active staff member during this third observation. Assistant B-1 primarily stood next to and worked with an extremely hyper student who struggled with focusing. Assistant B-1's presence helped calm the student and keep him on task. Assistant B-1 used linguistic communication a total of eleven times. Assistant B-1 used linguistic communication of a reprimand or redirecting a student a total of six times. In one instance, Assistant B-1 reminded the student that he had several "good days" this past week. The student responded well to her and complied with all but one of her redirections. Assistant B-1 referred to the behavior management program on two occasions, and thanked students once. Assistant B-1 also helped the hyper student by showing that she cared for him in two examples when she said "I don't want you to fall" and I came over "to see if you're okay". Assistant B-2 only used linguistic communication once when he said, "guys" to quiet the class.

Paralinguistic Communication. The paralinguistic communication that was used by all of the staff members was calm and even toned. The staff members never showed anger or had a negative tone in their voice. The only use of paralinguistic's that did not include a verbal phrase was in one instance where Assistant B-2 shushed the students.

Nonlinguistic Communication. Teacher B used nonlinguistic communication a total of fifteen times during the third observation. All of Teacher B's nonlinguistic communication deemed to be effective with the students. Teacher B circulated the entire lesson. He stopped to help students and stood next to them a total of four distinct times. Teacher B ignored inappropriate behavior a total of six times. Teacher B also gave a high five to a student, and used the behavior modification program of giving out "bucks" once. Teacher B also let a student hang on his arm in two different occasions and at one point he slightly moved the student off of his arm and to his side so that he could move to the front of the classroom and direct more students. Assistant B-1 ignored the same students who showed inappropriate behavior on six occasions, the same as Teacher B. Assistant B-1 also moved to help the student on two occasions and she used the marbles to represent the behavior management program and signify that the students earned their reward. She gave the class two handfuls of marbles because she felt that they behaved so well.

Classroom B: Fourth Observation

Unfortunately, due to the inclement weather and delayed opening, there was only one student who was present in Classroom B and therefore Reading/Language Arts class did

not occur. The one student who was present played a computer on the game. There was

no data to report on for the fourth observation.

Table 4.1:

Classroom A Summary of Data

	Teacher A	Assistant A-1	Assistant A-2	Assistant A-3
Linguistic	59	20	7	4
Non Linguistic	15	20	8	1
Paralinguistic	59	23	7	3

Table 4.2:

Classroom B Summary of Data

	Teacher B	Assistant B-1	Assistant B-2
Linguistic	66	18	5
Non Linguistic	42	13	2
Paralinguistic	71	18	6

Interview Data

The teacher from Classroom A and the teacher from Classroom B were the only

two teachers who were interviewed for the study. The interview questions are found in

Appendix D. The questions asked teachers about their classroom environment, their use

of communication techniques, communication techniques of paraprofessionals, and

meetings.

Question #1 asked participants about the cubbies (a cubicle type work space where visibility of other students is blocked to avoid distractions). and general arrangement of the classroom. Teacher A admitted that she does not use the cubbies as much as other teachers do. During the observations in Classroom A, the researcher noted that Teacher A instructed most of her lessons with the students as a group at the head table. Teacher A also confirmed that key place for instruction in her comments during the interview. Teacher A reported, "A lot [of the students] aren't familiar with working with other people. In the very beginning of the school year I taught them that this is our community. We work together to get to the same goals." Teacher A instructed students primarily at the head table but she also gave students the option to sit at their cubbies throughout the school day. Teacher B reported that at first he did not like the cubbies because he was used to standard desks but he admitted to liking them now because they do not take up as much room as desks. Teacher B said, "They are large and heavy and it gives kids their own area." The only problem Teacher B reported about the cubbies is that at times students' feet go under the desk area and the student who shares the cubby across from them feel as though their space is being invaded.

Question #2 asked the teachers about the position (and purpose) of the cubbies in relation to creating fewer outbursts. Teacher A explained that the cubbies are a good way for the student to calm down. Teacher A said, "Many of the students have pictures, coloring materials and different focal points in their areas that help them to calm down." She said she redirects students to their cubby before they have an outburst. Teacher B expressed the difficulties in positioning the cubbies. He explained that he and his staff

had to move the cubbies around and position them so that each student can see the SmartBoard.

Question #3 asked the teachers when they realize that a student is at the height of their tension and needs to be restrained, removed from class or sent to a Quiet Room. Both Teachers A and B agreed that each student is different. Teacher A described that many students in her classroom are attention "getters" because they do not get attention at home. She explained that each day is different and that something might be different in the home environment which serves as a trigger. Teacher A described that she also will determine the mood of the students and change the lesson depending on their behaviors. During the interview, Teacher A elaborated on the effects of daily tension within the classroom. Teacher A discussed the importance of coming back to school "refreshed" each day. She shared that although some days she felt emotionally and physically drained, she found it good to go home think about the tense day, rewind and reflect, but also not to "dwell on it". Teacher A admitted that this was the best advice she has been given and she tries to apply this distressing mindset each day.

Teacher B indicated that each student in his room has their own "way of letting us know" (that they are at the height of their tension). Teacher B said that some students shut down and some tap their pens. Teacher B reported that he knows which student he can give a soft touch to, in order to help ease them and he discussed the importance of knowing each student very well from reading their personal files.

Question #4 and #5 asked teachers A and B about their training in regards to communication techniques. Teacher A explained that she felt she learned techniques

through many careers she has had in her past. Teacher A said that through the *Handle with Care* training she learned how to talk students down and she told them from the beginning of the year that she does not want to touch them or restrain them. This topic sparked a conversation between the researcher and Teacher A. After further discussion about the topic of restraints, Teacher A indicated that there are fewer restraints with the new schedule of students eating a late lunch after completing most of their academics. Teacher B was not prompted to specifically talk about the *Handle with Care* training and interestingly, he indicated that he did not have any formal training in communication techniques. Teacher B felt that he learned the most through his undergraduate classes for education. Teacher B also remarked that, "I think the best way to learn is through simple hands on training, you have to adapt to every day."

Question's #6- #9 asked teachers about their and their staff's communication techniques. Question #6 asked teachers if they felt they learned communication techniques through courses in college or other teachers or colleagues. Teacher A felt as though she did not learn that much about communication techniques in college. She felt that the environment of being in education teaches the most effective ways of varying communication techniques. Teacher B felt that he learned a lot from another colleague while working at the school. Teacher B referred to his training in college as a high school History teacher. He said that he attempts to talk to the students like they are in middle school already; he treats them like they are older.

Question #7 asked teachers which communication technique they found to be the most effective with their students. Teacher A felt as though constant redirection,

guidance of making the right choices, and focusing on positive things were highly effective in her experiences with students.

Teacher B expressed that he balances the techniques he uses with raising his voice. Teacher B said he tends to get quieter when he is angry. He reported that because his students are used to a hyper-active environment, he has to repeat himself often. Teacher B also thinks the use of visual aids and a bright classroom help.

Question #8 prompted the teachers about their feelings in regards to the staff in their classrooms and their communication techniques of the staff. Teacher A felt as though Assistants A-1 and A-2 were extremely helpful in calming the students, talking to them and guiding them to make the right choices. She commented that they had been there longer than she. Teacher A reported that when she is working with students as a group, Assistants A-1 and A-2 are there to help the students and take them out of the room if necessary. She reported that assistance in removal of highly disruptive students allows her to continue teaching, and the instructional climate is not lost.

Teacher B commented that Assistant B-1 takes on the "motherly" role for the class and Assistant B-2 takes on a friendly role with the students as he is playful and can relate well to the students. Teacher B responded that he sees himself as the authoritative role; he said these role distinctions among himself and the two assistants in his classroom work well for daily functioning of his class. Teacher B continued to speak about his perception of his "fatherly" relationship with students. He said he felt that he is "good with the students' because he holds an authoritative role and many of these students do not have fathers in their lives." When asked, "Do you think it is important to set a good

example for them to look up to you?" He quickly responded, "Absolutely". He went on to explain that he puts academics second because he wants to try to help them with life and becoming good people.

Question #9 asked the teachers how often they hold meetings with staff to discuss communication techniques. Both teachers A and B agreed that they do not have actual formal meetings where they discuss communication techniques. Both teachers responded by saying that they meet with their staff on a daily basis to discuss students, behavioral contracts and other related issues but specific communication techniques are not discussed.

Question's #10-#15 focused on the paraprofessionals in the school. The teachers were asked to share their perceptions of the paraprofessionals' use of communication with the students.

Question #10 asked teachers if they find the paraprofessionals in their classroom to be effective. Both Teachers A and B agreed that the paraprofessionals are effective. Neither teacher elaborated on how they might define effective communication of paraprofessionals, or whether or not they noticed progress from less-effective to more-effective communication with the paraprofessionals. Teacher A expressed her wish for money in the budget to hire Assistant A-3 as a teacher because she feels the assistant is "doing a great job."

Question #11 inquired how long teachers have worked with the paraprofessionals. Teacher A is new, so she has only worked with the staff for one year. Teacher B said this is Assistant B-2's second year and he has worked with Assistant B-1 for six years. He

also reported that Assistant B-1 has been his head assistant for three years. Teacher B indicated that he and Assistant B-1 have worked together so long that, "she knows when there is a problem exactly what to do together. She may take the student immediately out of the room and I don't have to even say anything."

When asked in questions #12 if the paraprofessionals ever argue with the students both Teacher A and B said no. Teacher A said that the paraprofessionals in her classroom try to guide the students to make the right choices and Teacher B said "only if necessary".

Question #13 sought teachers' responses about whether or not paraprofessionals in their classrooms ever make situations worse. Teacher A shook her head and said, "They are very positive in the classroom". Teacher B said that they do not make it worse but that it is a bit of a problem with having a lot of people in the classroom. He said, "I send students with some of them to go for walks and get them out of the room. We are constantly having to move tables and cubbies when too many things are in the room and it just can be too much".

Question #14 asked teachers to provide examples of positive uses of paraprofessionals in the classroom. Teacher A said that the paraprofessionals are very good about directing the students even if it is not something she had planned for them to do. Teacher A indicated that Assistants A-1 and A-2 both have educational backgrounds.

Teacher B said that paraprofessionals take students for walks; when the paraprofessional and a student walk together as a calming activity, negative situations are

usually avoided. Teacher B also expressed the view that the paraprofessionals are detailed oriented and creative co-workers.

Question #15, the final question of the interview, asked the teachers about the Crisis Aides in their school. Teacher B told the researcher that because of budget cuts, there is no longer anyone who is actually given the title of the Crisis Aide. He explained that Crisis Aides are now one-on-one assistants for students. Teacher A added to this and explained that these staff with the role now as one-on-one assistants can float around the school and help out where they are needed.

Summary and Analysis of the Interview Data

Both interviewed teachers reported using the cubbies in their classrooms as places to help calm individual students. However, they reported that room size and/or proximity of a cubbie to other students and other furniture could be problematic when trying to dissipate inappropriate behaviors from one or more students. Both teachers addressed the "tensions" of their special education classrooms as being situational and dependent on individual students' needs. Interview responses indicated that both Teachers A and B felt confident about knowing their students personalities and behavior triggers as well.

One interviewed teacher had commented on the received training about communication techniques; one had not. Both teachers discussed the need to adapt to daily situations within their instructional environments by using appropriate communication with their students. Additionally, both teachers found that they learned much about communication techniques from their colleagues and while on-the-job.

Teachers A and B described the paraprofessionals who work in their classrooms as helpful and effective. Both seemed sincerely appreciative of the efforts the paraprofessionals displayed on a daily basis. The teachers specifically lauded the paraprofessionals for the variety of positive ways the assistants de-escalate students' outbursts.

Survey Data

There were 22 staff members employed at the school, 19 of whom returned the completed survey. The anonymous survey (See Appendix C) asked the staff members to rank linguistic, nonlinguistic and paralinguistic communication that they feel is the most effective with their students. The staff members were asked to rank the techniques on a scale from 1 (the most effective) to 5 (least effective). Staff members were also provided space for to include optional comments. Data was coded so that scores of 1 and 2 were grouped as "highly effective" indicators. A score of 3 was coded as "somewhat effective" and scores of 4 and 5 were grouped to show "ineffective" determinations.

Survey Question #1 focused on linguistic techniques that might be used to help calm students. Survey choices were: praise directed at a specific student, praise directed at more than one student, sarcasm, friendly joking, and validating expected behavior. The majority of responses (89%; n = 17) regarded the praise of one specific student as highly effective. Two responses indicated this linguistic technique as ineffective. For the use of praise directed at more than one student to be highly effective (n = 5); 31% found it to be somewhat effective (n=6), and 42% relayed that the technique was ineffective.

Only one (1) staff member indicated that the use of sarcasm was highly effective. Another respondent found sarcasm to be somewhat effective. Survey results indicated that the majority of respondents (n = 17) considered sarcasm an ineffective tool.

Friendly joking with students was rated as highly effective by 21% of those who responded (n = 4). Five (5) respondents found it to be somewhat effective. Most of the respondents (52%) felt that friendly joking was an ineffective technique.

Only one (1) staff member responded that validating expected behavior as ineffective. 57% of staff members found this to be highly effective and seven (7) respondents found it to be somewhat effective.

Four (4) staff members used the optional space for commentary on linguistic communication techniques. The following comments were provided: "Rewarding the students works the majority of the time". "Each student responds differently." "Praise makes students feel good about themselves and makes it easier to stay on task and continue appropriate behavior. Sometimes sarcasm and joking can escalate the situation." "Never sarcasm."

Survey Question #2 measured nonlinguistic techniques that are helpful in calming students. Survey choices were: high fives, pats on the back, wait time, smile, nod or thumbs up, and silent mouthing of a command. Eight (8) staff members found high fives to be highly effective. Six (6) staff members (31%) found high fives to be somewhat effective in calming students and the remainder staff (26%; n=5) found high fives to be ineffective.

Interestingly, when asked about touching in regards to pats on the back; 36% of staff responded that pats on the back are ineffective and 36% responded that pats on the back are highly effective. Five (5) staff members (26%) found pats on the back to be only somewhat effective.

The staff shared highly different views on the effectiveness of providing wait time to calm a student. Almost half of the staff (42%; n = 8) found wait time to be ineffective. 36% of staff found wait time to be highly effective and four (4) staff members found wait time to be somewhat effective.

The most effective nonlinguistic techniques that the majority of the staff felt calms students were a smile, nods or thumbs up. 78% (n = 15) found these nonlinguistic techniques to be highly effective. Two (2) staff members reported these techniques as ineffective and two (2) staff members reported them as somewhat effective.

The majority of responses (84%; n = 16) responded that silent mouthing of a command was ineffective. Two (2) staff members found this to be somewhat effective and only one (1) staff member found the technique to be highly effective.

Five (5) staff members wrote optional comments about nonlinguistic communication techniques. The comments that were provided included:

"Kids respond well to physical reinforcement-high fives etc." "Patience is key." "I place students names on the board without speaking, then stare at the class for a few seconds and draw smiley faces next to the names of students making good choices." "Giving students time allows them to think and make decisions w/o being pressured."

"When angered they usually don't want to hear commands and don't like to be touched."
"Direct eye contact with a specific student."

Each of the five optional statements was an excellent example of the use of nonlinguistic communication. None of the five techniques shared by the teachers were similar, therefore it may be deduced that teachers recognize which nonlinguistic technique works well with the students in their classrooms, and uses the technique to effectively communicate.

Survey Question #3 surveyed staff members about the most effective paralinguistic techniques used to calm students. Survey choices were: whispering, raising the volume of your voice, shushing students, using choppy emphatic delivery of words, and soft singing. The majority of staff members, (84%; n = 16) responded that whispering was highly effective with calming the students. One (1) staff member indicated that whispering was an ineffective technique and two (2) staff members indicated whispering as somewhat effective.

52% (n = 10) of staff responded that raising voice volume is ineffective when calming students. Three (3) staff members found raising the volume of your voice to be somewhat effective and 31% (n = 6) responded that it is highly effective.

Five (5) staff members responded that shushing students was highly effective in calming students. Five (5) staff members found shushing to be somewhat effective and 47% (n= 9) found it ineffective.

The paralinguistic technique of using choppy emphatic delivery of words was found to be highly effective by five (5) staff members, and somewhat effective by eight

(8) staff members. Six (6) staff members responded that choppy emphatic delivery of words was ineffective when calming students. This paralinguistic technique received a fairly even distribution across the three categories of effectiveness.

The staff surveyed strongly identified soft singing as ineffective in calming students: twelve respondents (63% of the staff, made that indication). However, six (6) staff members found it to be highly effective and only one (1) staff member responded that it was somewhat effective. Five (5) staff members wrote optional comments when responding to paralinguistic communication. Only two of the comments (#3 and #5) provided explanations about the staff's indications on the survey about soft singing. Comments included:

"Every child responds differently."

"I don't sing [smiley face]."

"Working w/ older kids- they don't respond as well to quiet speaking." "Soft singing- doing something they would not expect like song/dance."

"Raising your voice or shushing a student usually escalates a situation."

The final question of the survey was open ended for the staff members. It asked them: please describe what you feel is a strength in your communication with students in establishing good relationships with them.

As analysis of the 18 statements (Appendix E) provided by the staff was conducted by the research. The substantive content of the statements was categorized into three main areas: (1) active and attentive listening; (2) normal and respectful speaking tone, and (3) demonstrating appreciation of the student's current interest (such

as musical preference). Six entries were categorized as active and attentive listening; eight (8) were categorized as normal and respectful speaking tone. The third category, demonstrating appreciation of the student's current interest, had three comments entered in the category.

Additionally, joking with students, received only 1 comment. It did not lend itself to inclusion of the three major categories. Appendix E displays all of the comments and presents them based on the categories described here.

Table 4.3 provides a thorough overview of data analyzed for the 3 questions posed in the survey regarding the effectiveness of linguistic, paralinguistic and nonlinguistic communication techniques. The column labeled "technique" contains key terms/phrases posed in each question. The category of *highly effective* reflects a combination of scores rated 1 or 2. The category of *somewhat effective* reflects the medial score of the survey, 3. The ineffective category reflects a combination of scores rated 4 and 5, the lowest rankings provided to participants.

Table 4.3
Survey Data Regarding Effectiveness of Communication Techniques

Question	Form of Communication	Technique	Highly Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
1	Linguistic	Praise directed at specific student	17	0	2
		Praise directed at more than one student	5	6	8
		Sarcasm	1	1	17
		Friendly joking	4	5	10
		Validating expected Behavior	11	7	1
		High fives	8	6	5
2	Nonlinguistic	Pats on the back	7	5	7
		Wait time	7	4	8
		Smile, nod or thumbs up	15	2	2
		Silent mouthing of a command	1	2	16
		Whispering	16	2	1
3	Paralinguistic	Raising the volume of voice	6	3	10
		Shushing the students	5	5	9
		Using choppy delivery of words	5	8	6
		Soft singing	6	1	12

Summary and Analysis of Survey Data

The staff members responded that the most highly effective form of linguistic

communication was praise directed at a specific student. Analysis of survey data showed

that the second highly effective linguistic communication technique was validating

expected behavior. The staff responded with sarcasm as the least effective linguistic

communication technique. The staff found smiles, nods and thumbs up to be highly

effective nonlinguistic techniques. The least effective nonlinguistic technique was determined as silent mouthing a command. When surveyed about their use of paralinguistic communication, staff members responded that whispering was highly effective and soft singing as least effective.

Chapter V

Discussion of Findings

This chapter includes a discussion about the findings of staff members' use and perceptions of communication techniques in the Reading/Language Arts class for elementary students with behavioral and emotional disabilities. The information provided in this chapter synthesizes the data presented in chapter four. Limitations of the research are discussed and recommendations for future research are explored. This research addressed the following three questions:

Research Questions

1. Which form of communication (linguistic, nonlinguistic, paralinguistic) do special education staff members use most frequently?

2. How does the form of communication used by teachers and/or paraprofessionals affect students' behavior in the special education Reading/Language Arts classroom?

3. How do teachers and paraprofessionals perceptions of their communication practices with their special education students during Reading/Language Arts class align with observed practices?

Discussion for Research Questions One

Data revealed that staff members used linguistic, nonlinguistic and paralinguistic communication with behavioral and emotionally disabled students. The most frequently

used communication technique was paralinguistic communication. Paralinguistic communication was accounted for on 187 occurrences. Paralinguistic communication was accounted for in each instance where linguistic communication was used. Paralinguistic communication was also accounted for when staff members elicited a message, even if actual words were not spoken. Staff members used paralinguistic communication to help show their emotions based on their pitch and delivery (Owens, 2008). Examples for which paralinguistic communication was used without saying actual words were noted when staff members shushed students or produced utterances such as saying "ah-ah".

Linguistic communication was the second most frequently used communication technique by staff members in relation to behavioral incidents during Reading/Language Arts class. Linguistic communication was used a total of 179 times by the staff members. Specific forms of linguistic communication that were used most frequently included: positive praise, acknowledging appropriate behavior and referring to the behavior modification program of the school. Staff members were also observed reprimanding and redirecting students, and commanding students to perform specific tasks.

Nonlinguistic communication was the least used communication technique by the participating teachers and assistants who participated in this study. Staff members used nonlinguistic communication during behavioral situations; in Reading/Language Arts class a total of 101 times. Nonlinguistic cues are proven to be very effective because a soft touch will evoke immediate attention of a child who is off task (Miller, 2000). Examples of nonlinguistic communication that was most frequently used includes

circulating around the classroom, standing within close proximity of the non-compliant students, squatting to speak to a noncompliant student and also soft touches were used to help calm students.

It was not surprising that staff members used each of the three forms of communication and combined forms while conversing and interacting. The researcher was impressed that the teachers' and staff members' linguistic communication was consistently positive toward the students. Daily classroom disruptions caused by students emotional reactions and non-compliant behaviors cannot be easy to handle each and every day, even by professional educators. The professionalism observed by the teachers and assistants was commendable. The most important findings for research question one was that the most frequent used communication technique was paralinguistic communication. Staff members used both praise and reprimands when interacting with the students. The researcher observed that the paralinguistic and linguistic communication used was consistent with the training that the staff received from the behavior management programs.

Discussion for Research Question Two

Each use of communication technique varied when measuring effectiveness. As stated by both teachers during the interview process and written as commentary on the survey, each student is different and not all communication techniques work the same for each student. According to the researcher's observations, the following analysis describes the effectiveness of the communication techniques used by the staff.

Linguistic Communication. Classroom A and Classroom B both provided instruction, with the teacher using linguistic communication by calling on students to share. The discourse of the instruction was basically the same for Reading/Language Arts in both Classrooms A and B during every observation. The classrooms were similar in that the teacher called on students to answer questions and the classroom instruction was a group instruction with the same structure of conversation initiated by the teacher. Cazden (1988) reported that this type of classroom is not always effective for students with disabilities. Even though students seemed participatory at times, for the most part, many students were out of their seat and engaged in off-task behavior on a frequent basis during the observations. The students who attend the participating school are diagnosed with behavioral disorders; their triggers for acting out/or off-task behavior may be very situational. However, the researcher noted that instruction was not provided in ways that reflected best practices (such as using modeling followed by guided practice; differentiating instruction within the small group, or even working one-on-one with students). Reading by students was only observed as oral round-robin turn-taking. The researcher's field notes reveal that instruction was generally conducted in a whole-class framework, with teacher-posed questioning as the general instructional technique. There was an absence of strategy instruction as well as gradual release of responsibility to the students. It is the researcher's opinion that the teachers and assistants observed in both elementary special education classrooms managed behavior and instruction; exemplary teaching was not a condition of instructional procedures.

Research indicates the importance of staff members using positive reinforcement when communicating with students (Taylor-Greene et. al, 1997, & Wilmshurst & Brue, 2005; Levy & Chard, 2001). The staff members used positive reinforcement on many occasions. They used language that pointed out appropriate behavior of students who were on task, so that off-task students would recognize praise given to their peers and comply. However, the data analyzed as a result of this ethnography revealed that frequent positive reinforcement implemented by the teachers tended to produce a neutral effect. In many of these occasions where positive reinforcement was used, students did not respond but they also did not exhibit escalated behavior.

Staff also complimented students frequently and welcomed students back to the classroom after leaving for a behavior incident. Staff members used positive comments to students who answered questions correctly or who read aloud for the class. The frequent use of compliments is aligned to tenets of Selznick's research (2009) that states it is important to show success and verbally praise a child when they do something correctly. However, the use of positive comments and recognition by staff had the same effect as use by the classroom teachers. The positive comments had a neutral effect on students.

In many instances the staff members used language that showed empathy and comfort to the students. The staff used comforting phrases such as "I know, I know", "Are you okay?" "What's the matter?" etc. In most of these instances the student did not respond and there was a neutral outcome. However, it can be assumed that if the staff did

not show attention and empathy towards these students, there could have been a behavior incident.

Staff members used reprimands and redirected students throughout each observed class. In almost every incident where reprimands and redirecting students occurred the students complied. On several occasions when students did not comply, the teachers referred to students by name. This second request seemed to have more influence on the students, because once the command was individualized, the students complied. Although this finding was noted in most incidents, it was not true for every student in every instance. For example, the non-compliant student from Classroom A did not comply during observations 1 and 2 even after being redirected on several occasions. Assistant A-2 redirected and spoke to the student on two occasions during observation 1 and four separate occasions during observation 2. The assistant was unsuccessful in her linguistic communication because the student remained non-compliant.

Staff members reprimanded students by tactfully putting ownership on the student and referred to the positive behavior rather than telling the student what it was that they did wrong. For example the staff posed questions like: "Are we being appropriate?" " Do you have to ask me that (about making good choices), you already know that." "Appropriate or inappropriate?" This usually had a positive result as the students noticed that they were being inappropriate and they stopped their behavior. In some cases, the students even apologized.

In every instance where a staff member used negative language, the staff member was not effective. When Assistant A-1 corrected a student's grammar, and when

Assistant A-2 said to students on separate occasions, "this is your last chance" and "you don't have two choices", the students' behaviors escalated. Clearly, negative responses by adults to the students' actions did not have the desired altered effect either attitude or behavior.

It seemed that the behavior management programs set in place by the school motivated the students to comply. It is important for special education teachers to use behavior modification programs so the students are given the incentive to work (Lingberg, Walker-Wied, Forjan & Beckwith, 2006). The overall positivity of the behavior management program was implemented on a school wide level. Each morning the announcements acknowledged students for exhibiting appropriate and positive behavior on a school-wide level.

The non-compliant student from classroom A who was very upset for not earning "bucks' during the Reading/Language Arts lesson, increased his inappropriate behavior once he noticed that he was not going to earn the bucks. Rather than complying with classroom expectations, his behavior worsened and he walked out of the classroom. In two examples where Teacher B offered to hand out bucks if students complied, more hands quickly were raised and students were eager to participate.

Data analysis revealed that Teacher A was inconsistent with her linguistic communication techniques. On several occasions she ignored students who posed unrelated and nonacademic questions or comments. However, when the non-compliant child asked an off-topic question, she responded to him. Research indicates that such inconsistency sets a bad example, especially for the on-task students. It is vital for a

teacher to show consistency with her language (McCarney & Cummins Wunderlich,

2006). The mixed messages implicitly sent by the teacher and received by the students

were triggers for extended non-compliance rather than promoting appropriate behaviors

and/or language from the students.

Nonlinguistic Communication. Research indicates that standing in a face-to-face,

shoulder-to-shoulder position will create a challenged position for the acting out student

(Crisis Prevention Institute, 2005). A challenged position leaves the student on the

defensive and the feeling of defensiveness can escalate situations. The staff members did

not stand in a face-to-face, shoulder-to-shoulder position during the observations. There

were also no physical outbursts that occurred. The appropriate and non-hostile stance of

the staff members may be the reason why none of the students engaged in physical

outbursts. Assistant A-1 was observed on several occasions in an effective stance,

because she took herself low to a student's level and was able to speak quietly to the

student without the class hearing her words.

Many of the staff members circulated throughout the classrooms and followed

students who were non-compliant; this is highly effective with special education students

(Harwell, 1989). The staff in Classroom B was more active in circulating around the

classroom than the staff in Classroom A. Teacher A never rose from her seat to either

help students who were exhibiting an undesired behavior or to assess students' learning.

Teacher B constantly circulated and informally assessed the students work and offered

them feedback and commentary as he walked around the classroom. It is assumed that

the behavior struggles with the non-compliant student in Classroom A could have been

avoided if the Teacher got up and engaged him in the lesson. Again, it is the researcher's assumption that the teacher's passivity of staying in her seat may have tempted the consistently non-compliant student in Classroom A to seek the teacher's attention by his misbehavior. Although, the student eventually received the attention of an assistant to either speak with him or escort him to the quiet room. Teacher A did not engage with that particular student during any of his outbursts.

According to Selznick (2009), when a child shows areas of struggling in academics, problems such as acting out will occur. Interestingly, in Classroom A it was apparent that the most non-compliant student was the student who struggled the most during the task of reading. Another interesting point is that this non-compliant student did not engage in any misbehavior during observation 1, when Assistant A-1 provided the Reading/Language Arts instruction. During observation 1 of Classroom A, Assistant A-1 moved next to the student and squatted next to him while he read. She softly spoke and encouraged him and she helped him track his print with her finger. Her close proximity made the student comfortable as he complied and he was on task this entire lesson.

Teacher A leaned over the table to help this same student track his print while reading during observation 2, but overall she was not successful in her nonlinguistic techniques because the student did not comply for the duration of the lesson. During observations 2 and 3 of classroom A, the same non-compliant student was a significant behavior problem and was not on task.

One of the most frequently used forms of nonlinguistic communication during the observations for this study was the act of deliberately ignoring a student who was

engaged in a non-compliant or misbehavior. Teachers A and Teacher B were observed ignoring inappropriate behavior a total of 31 times. Some of the students' behavior that was ignored included asking unrelated questions or making comments, wrestling, throwing pencils and making physical threats to another student. It seemed as though because the staff worked with behavioral students, that they did not reprimand or acknowledge every poor behavior that was exhibited by the students. Perhaps this was due to a pick-your-battles philosophy. According to interview and survey data, a rationale for the inconsistent responses by the adults seemed to be based on the difference among students and recognizing individuals' traits. Results of this study revealed that by ignoring the behaviors there was never a positive impact. At times, the behavior ended but for the most part the non-compliant students continued their misbehaviors of either throwing pencils, wrestling or kicking.

A few times Teacher B used linguistic communication to reprimand students after ignoring the behavior for a few seconds. In one instance where students engaged in side conversations, Teacher B ignored them but as they continued to be a distraction and the story became more inappropriate, he verbally redirected them. Teacher B also ignored a student who was loudly kicking his cubby. After the kicks became more violent, he verbally reprimanded the student. In another example when a student was reading very loudly and distracting nearby students, Teacher B ignored it for some time and then recommended that the student move to sit with another student and read more quietly.

The school-wide use of a quiet room gave the students a location to calm down and provided opportunities for instruction to flow in a non-disruptive manner.

Throughout this study, the quiet room was only observed being used for the non-compliant student of Classroom A. Research indicates that it is best for students who are in a discipline situation to cool down in their own space (Lindberg, Walker-Wied, & Forjan Beckwith, 2006). When the child returned to the classroom after cooling down in the quiet room, his disposition was calmer, however he continued to not comply with the lesson.

In one instance where the non-compliant student answered an academic question correctly, he was told by staff to write the answer down on his paper. However, the student did not have the worksheet at his cubby. The staff did not provide the student with the worksheet in front of him once he was out of his seat and at his cubby during both observations 2 and 3 of Classroom A. Since the staff did not help the student and provide him with his worksheet, it is unknown how they expected him to comply and be engaged in the lesson. It was assumed by the observer that the staff wanted the student to get his own worksheet from the head table, but he did not get his paper and on both occasions he was not involved in the lesson. This technique of purposefully ignoring and/or not helping the student succeed was obviously ineffective.

At times the staff members touched students to redirect them. The use of nonlinguistic cues can be more effective than the spoken word alone (Rosa, 2002; Miller, 2000). Teacher B used many soft touches during the observations. He gently touched a student and pushed him down to take his seat, he also touched a student as he was tapping his pencil and the behavior stopped. Assistant A-2 softly touched a student's back when he was upset with his head down on the desk. Even though the student did not respond to

the touch and it produced a neutral effect, the student seemed aware that the assistant was comforting him. Generally, the soft touches seemed to be effective in calming students during the observations for this study.

Interestingly, Teacher B also allowed a student to hang on his arm throughout his instruction. The student who hung on his arm was the same student during the interview process that Teacher B indicated that he responds well with physical touch. This same student was redirected a few times during the observations with a soft touch to his back. It is apparent that Teacher B plays a fatherly role with the students. The way that the student was hanging on his arm was a similar situation that would occur between a father and a son. Teacher B allowed this physical touch and it was extremely effective. The student sat next to Teacher B's desk, and hung on his arm for a good portion of the lesson. Throughout the duration of the lesson the student did not exhibit any misbehaviors; he remained on task with the instructional tasks.

Paralinguistic Communication. The staff members never yelled or raised their voice. Yelling is proven to be an ineffective approach when trying to talk to a student in a discipline situation (Lindberg, Walker-Wied, & Forjan Beckwith, 2006). All of the staff members used calm and even-tones while speaking with the students. The calm and even rhythm of their voices allowed the students to feel safe and there were no physical outbursts that occurred.

The staff members exhibited evidence of an annoyed tone on only three occasions. For each occasion where a negative tone was used, the outcome was also negative. Assistant A-1 had an annoyed tone when she corrected the grammar of the

non-compliant student. This sarcasm resulted in the student's behavior heightening and he walked out of the classroom. According to Miller (2002) an insult can insinuate an opposition attention. This supports the negative result from the use of her paralinguistic communication.

Assistant B-2 had an annoyed and negative tone when she spoke to the same non-compliant student and said, "You don't have two choices." Assistant B-2 also had an angry tone when she asked another student in Classroom A if he wanted his breakfast and "this is your last chance." In all of these cases the annoyed tone resulted in the student either back talking or the behavior worsened.

A kidding and joking tone and the use of sarcasm from Teacher B proved effective during each of the observations in his classroom. However, the sarcasm that Teacher B used was never directed at making fun of a student and it was never negative.

The staff members were effective with other forms of paralinguistic communication that was used which included utterances or shushing. In almost every instance where a staff member shushed a student, the talking stopped and the student complied. Other utterances such as saying "ah-ah" to a student who was sitting on his desk and singing a reprimand to a student also worked positively in both of these cases. The most interesting findings of research question two were the positive results that were attained when staff members used nonlinguistic cues, provided students with praise, and used a comforting tone of speech. The staff members were effective when they helped students with a calm demeanor and even when reprimanding students, the staff members remained composed.

Discussion for Research Question Three

Staff members were accurate with many of their perceptions of communication techniques and their observed practice. Teacher A indicated during the interview process that she attempts to redirect students and guide them into making the right choices, and focus on positive things. This statement aligned with observed practices. She used many statements that required students to make the appropriate choice; she also focused her linguistic communication on pointing out positives. Teacher A also praised students and she thanked students after they made the correct choices.

Teacher A was also accurate with her description of the staff members in her classroom in regards to their use of communication techniques. She commented that her assistants are "better at talking with students and getting them to cool down". She also said when she is working with students as a group, the assistants are able to help students and take them out of the room if necessary. It was apparent in the observations that Assistant A-1 worked well with trying to alleviate the problems with the non-compliant student. She handled the student much better than Teacher A. It was also observed that the assistants were available to take the non-compliant student out of the room and it did not impede the learning process for the other students. The researcher found it interesting that Teacher A focused on students making correct behavioral choices, but did not mention responses to instructional questions or directions. It seemed that behavior management was her main priority. Additionally, Teacher A was aware of the strengths the assistant possessed in calming the consistently non-compliant student; it seemed that Teacher A relied on Assistant A-1's abilities in more than circumstance. Although

Teacher A praised the assistant's efforts, she did not address the helpfulness of those efforts in maintaining continuity of the Reading/Language Arts lesson she conducted. The value of instruction was never addressed as an item of importance.

Teacher B was accurate with his description of having a fatherly role with the students. The fatherly role that Teacher B shares with his students is very effective. It is important that students who struggle know that there are other adults beyond their immediate family who care about them (Selznick, 2009). Teacher B also acknowledged during the interview process that he repeats himself several times, uses different techniques on each student and uses many visual aides. All of these comments were accurate to observed practices.

Observed practices were also in alignment with the school wide survey. 89% of the staff members responded that praise directed at specific student was highly effective. Praise was highly effective with the students because praise was constantly provided to the students of the school and there were no significant problems with behavior in regards to a physical component. Staff members were observed given small amounts of praise to students for completing simple tasks. This is effective because even pointing out the smallest strengths to students allows them to see the positive over the negative (Selznick, 2009). It is assumed that if there was a lack of praise in the classrooms, that more students would be off task during instruction and there would be more students being sent to the quiet room.

Eleven staff members responded that validating expected behavior was highly effective with students. This was true to observed practices. In almost every instance

where a staff member indicated the appropriate behavior or acknowledged the student who showed the appropriate behavior, other students complied.

Whispering was another category that 84% of staff members responded as being highly effective with the students. This was true to the observations. When the staff members quietly whispered to the students as they spoke, it seemed to help calm the students. When this occurred it also allowed for only that specific student to hear, rather than the entire class.

Eighty percent of the staff members responded that silent mouthing a command is an ineffective communication technique to use with their students. Silent mouthing of a command was never used during any of the observations. It was apparent that students who have behavioral disabilities as well as some having attention difficulties would not respond well to commands or reprimands that they could not hear.

Eighty-nine percent of the staff members responded that sarcasm was an ineffective communication technique. Staff members were only observed using sarcasm on a few occasions. Teacher B used some sarcasm while he was also friendly joking with the students, and it was found to be effective. Friendly joking occurred throughout each school day and was helpful in creating a happy environment and kept students on task with the lesson. Friendly joking was observed the most throughout the two observations conducted on 80's day; the joking and kidding manner seemed to keep students involved in the learning process. It was interesting that 52% of staff members responded that joking with students is an ineffective technique because it seemed to be very effective with the happiness and learning process of the students.

Pats on the back were effective but only seven staff members responded to pats on the back as highly effective on the survey. Seven staff members said that pats on the back are ineffective. Soft touching is extremely helpful when working with students of special needs. In human relationships, touching expresses tenderness and shows emotional support (Miller, 2000). Specific examples of pats on the back were not observed, but in observed instances of soft touches, this was highly effective.

Staff members were also inaccurate with some of their perceptions of communication techniques and their observed practice. During the interview process, Teacher A indicated that she tries to diffuse students and redirect them to their area before they have an outburst. This redirection was not indicated in any of the observations in Teacher A's classroom. The students willingly and on their own went to their cubby area without any linguistic communication provided by Teacher A. As stated above, Teacher A's reliance on her classroom assistants to handle disruptive student behaviors was consistently evident.

When asked if the assistants are helpful. Teacher A indicated that Assistant A-3 is "fantastic" and should be hired at the school. Based on the observations, this staff member did not play a major role in the instruction or assistance of the students. Teacher A did not elaborate on what qualities she found to be fantastic about Assistant A-3.

Shushing was observed to be an effective paralinguistic form of communication, even though 47%, staff members responded that it was ineffective. The findings of smiles, nods and thumbs up were also inaccurate to observed practices. 79% of staff members found this technique to be highly effective. The observations indicated that

staff members smiled at students but it was never on an occasion where a smile was used in replace of a linguistic command. A smile was only offered if the staff member was laughing with the class or in a manner that was not directly related to a behavior. Therefore smiles, nods and thumbs up were never recorded in regards to impacting behavior during the observations.

The most interesting finding for research question three was that staff members were fairly accurate when identifying their most effective communication techniques. Interestingly, shushing students and pats on the back were two distinct communication techniques that were observed to be effective with students and staff members did not find these to be highly effective. It was also interesting that 79% of the staff members found thumbs up, smiles and nods to be effective communication techniques. Thumbs ups and nods were never observed and smiles were only observed when students and staff engaged in a funny conversation, not to help a behavior situation.

Limitations

This research study had several limitations. One limitation to this study is that results may not be able to be generalized to a large population because a small sample size was used. Twenty-two surveys were distributed but only nineteen were returned. A total of two interviews and seven observations were conducted.

A second limitation was that only two teachers were observed. These teachers taught in grades K through five. Including additional teachers who teach the same grades, and expanding the observations to include teachers of higher grades could yield data differently from the outcomes determined by this study.

A third limitation may be considered when accounting for the type of school in which this study took place. An ethnographic study in general education classrooms may provide different data regarding the communication forms used by teachers to instruct students and to alter their behaviors.

A fourth limitation could be attributed to the possible hesitancy of the participants to criticize their school and colleagues. Although the classroom teachers were interviewed by the researcher, their comments were concise. Neither teacher embellished responses for which the interview question focused.

Recommendations for Further Research

There is a need for more research in areas of communication techniques and best practices for students with behavioral and emotional disabilities. Researchers with linguistic and psycholinguistic backgrounds would be able to analyze cause-and-effect relationships between teachers' utterances and actions and the outcomes for students' responses. In addition to helping to inform teachers in behavioral schools, the information rendered on communication techniques may be able to be generalized to other school settings.

Handle with Care was the program that the staff was trained and certified in for this study. The teachers felt as though they learned other techniques from colleagues, in their every day lives of teaching and even in past careers. Further research could help substantiate areas of specific training that should be included in programs geared toward training educators about interacting with students with disabilities. Generally, the

effectiveness of such programs should be evaluated based on the schools' needs and types of populations served.

Recommendations to Educators

It is imperative for educators to be consistent when working with students. It can be very confusing to children when allowing one student to complete a task that another student is reprimanded for attempting. It is important to decline from showing favoritism to a particular student and to treat each student in the room fairly. Students' sensitivity to teachers' actions and treatment of themselves and others is recognized by students, if they are unable to verbalize their awareness of such actions.

It is important for teachers (and their principals) to recognize that teachers who work with special needs students should not remain stationary while facilitating instruction. Teachers should circulate throughout the classroom in order to help keep all students on task. When there is a behavior occurring it is best that the teacher also stays involved in attempting to redirect that student to the academic task. It can be very confusing to young students if the teacher ignores the students when they are in misbehavior. The teacher is in charge of the classroom and should be involved in all aspects of the learning processes.

The onus on every classroom teacher is to provide valuable instruction and to carefully manage student behaviors so that quality teaching and learning takes precedent on a daily basis. Educators must prioritize the development of lessons that are interesting for students, that meet the students' immediate learning needs, and that maximizes

students' engagement during the lessons. Teachers' ability to regularly implement "best practice" lessons is a key factor in defraying behavior issues that arise in classrooms.

In order to help teachers reach their best instructional potential, their frequent participation in professional development workshops that focus on differentiated instruction and flexible grouping. In order to best reach all levels of learners within a mixed ability classroom, it is essential that teachers understands how to appropriately group students and provide them with meaningful lessons. In regards to literacy, elementary educators should stay abreast of instructional methods in areas of teaching phonics, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension strategies. The early skills needed to unlock the code of written language are crucial components of literacy, especially in the primary grades. Teachers' expertise in providing balanced instruction of the skills and strategies necessary to develop effective readers must be evident. In order to ensure that students stay on task, it is imperative that the reading material that is given to students is on their appropriate reading level. A teacher who has several assistants in the classroom can use those assistants to help facilitate instruction. Small groups with assistants monitoring instruction in the classroom, allows for more individualized remediation to occur between a teacher and struggling reader.

Teachers should always communicate effectively with the staff members in their classrooms. Even though the participating teachers of this study commented during the interview process that they have daily meetings with their assistants, there was no distinction of meetings that discussed the communication techniques used to assist their

students. Literacy coaches can help classroom teachers and assistants work well together and model the best ways to provide instruction to a mixed ability group.

Teachers and assistants should be encouraged to video or audio tape their classroom lessons and review their practices in order to critique their techniques and discuss what works and what does not work with their students. The information provided from video or audio recordings could be shared at faculty meetings and raise discussions of effective use of communication techniques school wide. Teachers should also observe their colleagues in order to get an insight of other classrooms and learn from their peers.

Summary

This chapter provided discussion of the research that gave insight to the researcher's queries and findings about useful communication techniques. The discussion was based on the questions that framed this study regarding communication forms used in elementary classrooms of students with behavioral and emotional issues. A section on limitations of the current study was included. The chapter concluded with two sections of recommendations: one for future researchers, and one for practicing teachers.

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Appendix A
IRB Approval Letter

Widener University

Memorandum

To:

From: Robert Wellmon, PT, PhD, NCS
Vice-chairperson & Secretary
Widener University Institutional Review Board

Date:

RE: **Protection of Rights of Human Subjects Review**

This letter serves to inform you that your research application has been reviewed and **approved** by the Widener University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of the rights of human subjects. You may begin data collection as proposed in your application.

The authorization to solicit participants for this study is in effect for one year from the date of approval contained in this letter and is eligible for renewal or extension. The Widener University IRB must receive continuing review requests no later than 14 days prior to the meeting date before the expiration of approval to be placed on the IRB agenda. This form can be found on the IRB website www.widener.edu irb. Should you fail to attain approval to continue the study prior to the expiration date, all research activity must cease until an approval to extend the study is obtained.

If, for any reason, the approved research data collection method changes, regardless of how minor, except to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects, you are required to notify the IRB, in writing. Please, remember that the IRB and Widener University accept no responsibility for liabilities associated with this study. Ultimately, responsibility rests with the principle investigator(s).

Upon completion of the study, a final written report of the research is to be submitted to the IRB. This form can be found on the IRB website www.widener.edu irb. The members of the IRB extend their best wishes for your successful completion of this research project. If you have any questions, please e-mail me at rhwellmon a mail.widener.edu or call 610-499-1295.

R. Wellmon

Robert Wellmon, PT, PhD, NCS

Cc: Dr. Barbara Patterson

Appendix B
Observation Checklist

Check List Key: Verbal Communication: Commands (C), Argumentative (A), Positive Reinforcement (+), Blame (B), Mocking (M), Talk over a student (TO), Sarcasm, (S), Repeating, (R), Reprimands (RM), Negative comment (NC), Positive comment, Praise (P).

Nonverbal Communication: Hand on hip (HH), Eye rolling (ER), Stern stare (SS), Eyebrow lift (EL), Throw arm up (TH), Face-to-Face Stance (FF), Standing in personal space (PS), Pointing (PO), Hugs (H), Touch of comfort (T)

Paraverbal Communication: Inflection (I), Whine (W), Stern (S), Yell (Y), Loud speech (LS), Clear choppy, distinct speech (D), Attitudinal (A), Lip smack (LS), Sigh (SI), Grunt (G), Shushing (SH), Whisper or low speech (WHL).

Time intervals	Verbal	Nonverbal	Paraverbal	Notes

Class: _____ Date: _____

Start time: _____ End time: _____

Appendix C
Staff Members Survey

<u>Verbal, Non verbal and Paraverbal Communication</u>
<u>Usage in the Classroom</u>

The purpose of this survey is to provide information regarding staff members' opinions and experience with certain linguistic, nonlinguistic and paralinguistic techniques that are used in the classroom with students. Please respond to the following 4 questions by explaining and providing as much information as possible.

1.) Which 5 linguistic (verbal) techniques do you find to be most effective at calming your students? Please number your choices from 1 (most effective) to 5 (least effective).

_____ praise directed at specific student

_____ praise directed at more than one student

_____ sarcasm

_____ friendly joking

_____ validating expected behavior (ex: thank you for waiting)

Optional comment:

2.) Which 3 nonlinguistic (nonverbal) techniques do you find to be most effective at calming your students? Please number your choices from 1 (most effective) to 5 (least effective).

_____ high-fives

_____ pats on the back

_____ wait time

_____ smile, nod or thumbs up

_____ silent mouthing of a command

Optional comment:

3.) Which 5 paralinguistic (paraverbal- intonation, tone etc.) techniques do you find to be most effective at calming your students? Please number your choices from 1 (most effective) to 5 (least effective).

       _____ whispering

       _____ raising the volume of your voice

       _____ shushing the student(s)

       _____ using choppy, emphatic delivery of words

       _____ soft singing

Optional comment:

4.) Please describe what you feel is a strength in your communication with students in establishing good relationships with them.

Appendix D
Questions for Interview with Classroom Teachers

Emotional/ Behavioral

- What do you think about how the classroom is set up with cubbies?

- How are the cubbies helpful in creating fewer outbursts?

- When do you realize that a student is at the height of their tension and needs to be

  restrained, removed from class, or sent to a "quiet room"?

Training

- How do you feel about your communication training?

- What was the most helpful tool that you learned during your training?

Communication

- Do you feel that you learned communication techniques through other means such

  as your courses in college? Or from other teachers or colleagues?

- What communication techniques do you find to be the most effective with your

  age group of students?

- How do you feel about the staff in your room in regards to their use of

  communication techniques?

- How often do you have meetings with your staff and discuss communication

  techniques?

Paraprofessionals

- Are the paraprofessionals in your classroom effective?

- How long have you worked with the staff in your classroom?

- Do you find that the paraprofessionals in your classroom ever argue with students?

- Do the paraprofessionals sometimes make situations worse?

- What are some examples of helpful and positive uses of the paraprofessionals in your classroom?

- Are the crisis aids helpful?

Appendix E
Staff-perceived Communication Strengths in Establish Good Relationships with Students
(Optional Statements in conclusion of Staff Survey)

Active and Attentive Listening

1. "Listening to what they have to say."

2. "Making good eye contact, repeating what the students said."

3. "Listening, validating feelings; never dismissing them."

4. "Listening when they are in crisis and validating their feelings in order to help them deescalate. Also to abandon any form of agenda when they are having a melt down. They need to know you hear them, they are safe and directions are simply geared to calming them down only. NO reprimanding while they are in crisis. This is something that I've learned and helps greatly!"

5. "Active listening."

6. "A strength of communication with my students is to talk in a normal (not demeaning) tone and truly listening to why they are upset/acting out. Kids appreciate the feeling of someone truly listening."

Normal and Respectful Speaking Tone

1. "Earn the respect of students before communication consequences."

2. "Clear rules and expectations."

3. "Soft, slowed-speaking."

4. "Most of our students respond best to constant praise and calm tone of voice. In a select few, joking and sarcasm does work well but overall it makes it worse."

5. "Getting their respect from the beginning and everything else will run smooth. I have gained respect from most of kids. I try to talk with them one on one to get them to understand why they are in the quiet room. Talk them down and calm then down."

6. "Never say anything you can't or won't follow through with. Validate their feelings, don't be judgmental, and listen to them."

7. "Talking to them with respect."

8. "Validating their feelings (important!) and then asking them to think of how they could've handled [the] situation differently (i.e not telling them what to do or how to feel.)"

Demonstrating appreciation for Student's Current Interest

1. "Staying up to date with popular music, etc. -- they like to talk about popular music...makes them feel like you care about their lives."

2. "Positive reinforcement, relating with common interests, excited voice/praise."

3. "I like to talk about their goals and their likes. Something that they want to earn for themselves or their class."

Joking

1. "Joking around w/ the students works w/ me."