NLP Non-verbal Matching

Supervisory conferences in communicative disorders: verbal and nonverbal interpersonal communication pacing

Author: Farmer, Stephen S.

Abstract
The present research investigated a supervisor's use of verbal and nonverbal Interpersonal Communication Pacing (ICP) during the Entry Phase (first 5 minutes) of Communication Disorders (CD) conferences. Pacing was the supervisor's matching a majority of the verbal and nonverbal dimensions of the supervisee's communication. Verbal pacing included Reactive Language and Primary Representational System (PRS) matching; nonverbal pacing was done through nonverbal mirroring. Verbal non-pacing included instructive language and PRS non-matching; nonverbal non-pacing included the limited use of nonverbal mirroring. Utilizing a posttest-only control group design, 78 undergraduate and graduate CD students were randomly assigned to the experimental group or control group of one of the four experimental conditions. The experimental group subjects had received training in identifying ICP behaviors. Each of the four experimental conditions involved the subjects viewing a videotape of the entry phase of a CD supervisory conference, judging the presence or absence of the supervisor's ICP, and rating the type and quality of her communication strategies. The Condition I videotape depicted a conference wherein the supervisor paced a majority of the verbal dimensions of the clinician's communication but not the nonverbal; in Condition II, nonverbal but not verbal; in Condition III, both verbal and nonverbal; in Condition IV, neither verbal nor nonverbal. Results of statistical analyses (p=.05) suggested that subjects trained in critical observation of ICP identified the salient pacing feature of the four experimental videotapes more accurately than untrained subjects and hierarchically differentiated the four pacing styles which might have resulted from an unintentional training bias. Trained subjects judged the comprehensive pacing style (verbal plus nonverbal) to be the most effective, followed by nonverbal pacing only, verbal pacing only, and no pacing. Overall, subjects did not judge qualitative differences in semantic differential continua among the four conditions. Academic status, amount of clinical practicum experience and proficiency in Reactive/Interactive therapy techniques had no significant effect on identification of salient verbal and nonverbal ICP features. The investigation supported the observation that ICP is associated with effective CD conference communication but that training in identification and use of ICP techniques is a necessity.