



UNIVERSITY OF MALTA  
Institute of Linguistics

May/June 2008 Examinations



**LIN 1063 Academic Reading and Writing in English**  
*(Social Work and Social Administration)*

Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2008

12.30 – 14.00

A. *The following are details of **FOUR** sources. Write them in the form of a reference list following APA style on the sheets provided.*

*N.B. The fourth source is on the next page.*

*Authors:* Lee Victor Hedges; Ingrid Oklin  
*Book title:* Statistical methods for meta-analysis  
*Date of publication:* 1985  
*Publishing house:* Academic Press  
*Place of publication:* Orlando, FL

*Note:* Indicate italics by underlining.

*Authors of essay:* F. Cunha; J. Heckman; L. Lochner; D. Masterof  
*Date of publication:* 2006  
*Essay title:* Interpreting the evidence of life cycle skill formation  
*First and last page numbers of essay:* 307-451  
*Title of whole volume:* Handbook of the economics of education  
*Editor of the volume:* Edward Hanushek; Francis Welch  
*Publishing house:* Elsevier  
*Place of publication:* North Holland

*Authors:* J. D. Coie; G. Krehbiel  
*Title of article:* Effects of academic tutoring on the social status of low-achieving, socially rejected children  
*Title of journal:* Child development  
*Volume number:* 55  
*Date of publication:* 1984  
*First and last page numbers:* 1465-1478

*Author:* Not identified  
*Title of document:* Assessing readiness  
*URL:* <http://www.ciera.org/library/reports>  
*Date of retrieval:* 15/9/2001  
*Date of publication:* Not available

*B. State whether the following statements are TRUE or FALSE by filling in the blank space on the left of each statement. In the case of questions about referencing skills, state whether the statements are TRUE or FALSE according to the APA Style Manual:*

- a) \_\_\_\_\_ a) The full name of a writer (i.e. name and surname) needs to be given in an in-text reference.
- b) \_\_\_\_\_ b) Signposting statements are statements explaining the organisation of a document.
- c) \_\_\_\_\_ c) In academic writing, it is customary to find more paraphrases than quotations.
- d) \_\_\_\_\_ d) A summary often forms part of a conclusion to an academic paper.
- e) \_\_\_\_\_ e) An electronic source should not include a date of retrieval if it has a date of publication.
- f) \_\_\_\_\_ f) It is permissible to change end punctuation in a quotation to fit the syntax of the sentence.
- g) \_\_\_\_\_ g) A bibliography is another term for a reference list.
- h) \_\_\_\_\_ h) [sic] can be used after an incorrectly spelt word in a quotation to indicate that the spelling was incorrect in the original text.
- i) \_\_\_\_\_ i) Two essays from the same collection of essays need to be referenced separately.
- j) \_\_\_\_\_ j) In a quotation, British spelling can be changed to American spelling and vice versa.

*C. On the following **two** pages you will find an introduction to a paper taken from the journal Communication Education entitled “The effect of teacher confirmation on student communication and learning outcomes” by Alan K. Goodboy and Scott A. Myers. You are required to critically analyse the introduction, pointing out any elements in it that you consider important and commenting on its effectiveness or otherwise. Write your answer on the sheets provided.*

College instructors have the opportunity to make a significant impact on students' lives. Arguably, the main goal of instructors should be to foster learning, although some critics of education argue that this goal is frequently overlooked (Sykes, 1995). While student learning is an imperative outcome in the classroom, instructional communication researchers have also focused on affective outcomes. Effective teaching involves engaging in positive instructor behaviors (e.g., clarity, immediacy, and humor) that increase both student learning and affect (Kramer & Pier, 1999; Nussbaum, 1992). One effective teaching behavior that impacts learning and affect is teacher confirmation. The purpose of this study is to extend teacher confirmation research by examining student communication behaviors resulting from confirming teacher behaviors through an experimental investigation. Specifically, this study examined the effect of teacher confirmation on student motives to communicate with instructors, student class participation, student challenge behaviors, and student learning outcomes (i.e., affective learning, cognitive learning, state motivation, and student satisfaction) in the classroom.

Teacher confirmation is the process through which instructors communicate to students that they are recognized and acknowledged as valuable and significant individuals (Ellis, 2000). Although the study of confirmation is rooted in the interpersonal communication context (Laing, 1961; Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967), instructional scholars are beginning to assess the value of confirmation in the instructional communication context (Ellis, 2000, 2004). Laing (1961) explained that confirmation is a process through which individuals are endorsed and will "vary in intensity and extensity, quality and quantity" (p. 99). Confirmation (a) expresses recognition of an individual's existence, (b) acknowledges a relationship of affiliation with another individual, (c) expresses awareness of the significance or worth of another individual, and (d) endorses another individual's self-experience (Cissna & Sieburg, 1981, 2006; Sieburg, 1985).

Confirmation messages typically are grouped in three ways: recognition, acknowledgement, and endorsement (Sieburg, 1985). **Recognition** of an individual is expressed through immediate behaviors such as eye contact and touching while also including conversational opportunities to respond. **Acknowledgement** of an individual involves communicating in a direct and relevant manner, although not necessarily agreeing with another individual's viewpoint or opinion. **Endorsement** of an individual refers to any response that expresses acceptance of the individual's feelings as being true and accurate.

However, researchers have noted certain behaviors that are contrary to the notion of confirmation. **Disconfirmation** refers to a variety of behaviors that negatively impact self-experience and feelings of worth in three fundamental ways: indifference, imperviousness, and disqualification (Cissna & Sieburg, 1981). **Indifference** toward an individual involves denying an individual's presence (e.g., silence), avoiding involvement (e.g., nonimmediacy), and rejecting communication (e.g., interruptions). **Imperviousness** toward an individual refers to denying an individual's self-experience by trying to discredit feelings and expressions (e.g., "you're wrong, I know you better than that"). **Disqualification** toward an individual involves denying another individual's significance by disqualifying either the speaker (e.g., "you always mess things up") or the message (e.g., being ambiguous on purpose).

Confirmation research has focused on three communication contexts: interpersonal, family, and instructional. In the interpersonal communication context, marital partners' use of facilitative communication (i.e., empathy, respect, and genuineness)

is related positively to perceived confirmation (Cissna & Keating, 1979). Confirmation also is important for maintaining marital satisfaction. Weger (2005) discovered that withdrawal patterns from marital conflict are considered disconfirming and are associated inversely with marital satisfaction.

In the family communication context (i.e., parent-child relationships), confirming communication is associated with positive communication behaviors and perceptions in children. Adolescents engage in more open communication with parents when they feel confirmed (Dailey, 2006). Furthermore, Ellis (2002) discovered that parental confirmation is a positive predictor of children's self-worth, intellectual ability, and self-perceived attractiveness. Similarly, Schrodts, Ledbetter, and Ohrt (2007) revealed that parental confirmation is related positively to a family's conversational orientation and children's self-esteem, whereas parental confirmation is related negatively to children's perceived stress and symptoms of poor mental health.

In the instructional communication context, Ellis (2000) argued that student perceptions of teacher confirmation should be measured across three dimensions via the Teacher Confirmation Scale (TCS). The TCS is 16 items and measures three teacher confirmation behaviors: (a) responding to student questions/comments (e.g., takes time to answer students' questions fully, listens attentively when students ask questions or make comments during class), (b) demonstrating interest in the student learning process (e.g., communicates that they are interested in whether students are learning, communicate that they believe students can do well in the class), and (c) teaching style (e.g., uses an interactive teaching style, uses a variety of techniques to help students understand the course material). Although the TCS was initially 27 items including a fourth dimension of confirmation (i.e., absence of disconfirmation), Ellis (2000) deleted this dimension because it failed to cross-validate in separate samples.

To establish concurrent validity, Ellis (2000) found strong positive correlations between the TCS and perceived caring and immediacy. She also discovered that perceived teacher confirmation was related positively to students' affective and cognitive learning. Ellis (2004) then validated the TCS by exploring whether students' feelings of confirmation were a function of teacher confirmation behaviors. She found that the TCS was correlated positively with a previous measure of confirmation, indicating an isomorphic relationship. She discovered a negative relationship between perceived teacher confirmation and student receiver apprehension and positive relationships between perceived teacher confirmation and students' perceived cognitive learning, affective learning, and state motivation. However, these relationships were mediated by student receiver apprehension. Teacher confirmation reduced student receiver apprehension, which led to increases in perceived student learning and motivation.

Subsequent research (Schrodts, Turman, & Soliz, 2006; Turman & Schrodts, 2006) explored further the impact of perceived teacher confirmation on teacher perceptions and student outcomes. Schrodts et al. (2006) revealed that teacher confirmation had an indirect effect on student perceptions of instructor behavior. Perceived teacher confirmation increased students' perceived understanding from an instructor, which consequently increased student evaluations and perceptions of instructor credibility positively. Turman and Schrodts (2006) explored the relationship between perceived teacher confirmation and perceptions of instructor power, finding that perceived teacher confirmation was related positively to an instructor's perceived use of expert, reward, and referent power. Additionally, perceived teacher confirmation was related negatively to perceptions of instructor coercive power use but unrelated to the use of legitimate power.

- C. *The paragraph below is taken from a paper entitled “Introduced species in the Maltese Islands”, by Patrick J. Schembri and Edwin Lanfranco (1996). Paraphrase the contents, making sure you acknowledge the authors. Use the sheets provided.*

Two principles should guide local authorities concerned with preservation of local biodiversity: the principle that prevention is better than cure, and the precautionary principle. Once an exotic species becomes established, it is very difficult to remove; it is therefore better to be proactive and prevent establishment, rather than to be reactive and try to eliminate invaders after establishment. The precautionary principle suggests that in the absence of certainty, it is best to err on the side of caution. Thus an exotic species which has established itself elsewhere in the Mediterranean region may or may not do the same if introduced locally, however, it is best not to take the chance!