

**The Role of Eye Contact in Promoting Effective Learning in the Secondary School,  
Leonora Patricia Volmink, University of South Africa, 2015**

Non-verbal communication as well as verbal communication functions powerfully in the realization of an effective teaching-learning environment in the classroom. As little as 7% of communication takes place through the spoken word; most communication takes place through non-verbal and by means of paralinguistic cues. Non-verbal communication includes facial expressions, proximity and closeness, hand gestures, body language and, of great importance to this study, eye contact or the lack of eye contact. The importance of eye contact was highlighted in an early study by Janik, Wellens, Goldberg and Del’Fosso (1978) of the University of Miami, who found that 43% of a person’s attention during communication is devoted to making eye contact with the other person, while only 12.6% of a person’s attention is on the mouth of the other person. According to Carbone, O’Brien, Sweeney-Kerwin & Albert (2013), eye contact is referred to by means of various synonymous terms in the literature, such as gaze, eye gaze behaviour, visual attention, and eye-to-face gaze.

In the classroom eye contact is a very important non-verbal teaching technique, which not only enhances the learner’s attention but also helps the educators in the attainment of the desired learner results. A teacher’s eye contact with the learners provides the crucial opportunity to collect information about the learner, as well as his or her engagement in the lesson. The introduction of many easily accessible modern technological tools, such as computers, PowerPoint, iPads and cell phones, has diminished the need for sustained eye contact between a child and the parent, and the learner and the educator in the classroom. Digital multitasking increasingly interrupts eye contact; yet eye contact remains fundamental to human learning

[http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/20279/dissertation\\_volmink\\_lp.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/20279/dissertation_volmink_lp.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)