It is believed that classroom management will continue to pose a problem for novice teachers, especially those initiating their entry into the profession including beginning, preservice and student teachers. This paper delves into research for solutions to noted issues facing the novice teacher, specifically the student teacher, and hopes to uncover solutions that will assist all teachers regardless of level of expertise and years of experience as incidents of student misbehavior continue to rise. Classroom management problems have multiple root causes that often lead to copious horror stories across the educational schism, from novice to highly qualified teacher. A few of these stories are shared as well as the concerns of beginning, preservice and student teachers, and the role teacher preparation programs play in assisting these teachers – novices to the field – cope with increasing classroom disruptions.

Whether as Maybelline™ purports, she’s born with it…™, or it develops over time, teachers who are successful in disseminating their respective areas of expertise to America’s school aged youngsters, must also possess the ability to manage their classrooms. Over the course of nearly a decade, I have witnessed countless student teachers’ attempts to handle misbehaviors that occur during their student teaching experience. These 40-or more, overwhelmingly female English student teachers who attend universities in the southern region of the U.S. are eager and possess unique qualities to prepare them for their respective placements. Although not all are successful, it is obvious that many of those who are not, are unable to curtail classroom management. Subsequently, discussions about classroom management dominate student teacher-
university personnel pre- and post-conferences, online chats, emails, blogs and informal/formal gatherings. How can I get all students to pay attention long enough to hear instructions so that I am not repeating assigned tasks over and over and over? How can I get Crystal to stop talking without inciting a confrontation? What do you do when a student openly defies class rules? Whose fault is it if a fight breaks out in class? Under just what circumstances can I be asked not to return to work? These are all questions of considerable concern to university observers, directing teachers, beginning, preservice and student teachers, directors of student teaching programs, college of education instructors, and administrators at school and university levels.

National statistics further demonstrate the importance and far reaching effects of classroom management: a Florida study finds that 43% of first-year-teachers feel that they are minimally prepared or unprepared to manage their classrooms; two factors that influence whether new teachers will remain are (1) the amount of support and guidance given and (2) the assignments they are given; national studies show that 67% of recent graduates who start teaching at schools without student discipline support expect to teach for only 2 more years; beginning teachers are often assigned to teach the most difficult students or subjects in which they lack adequate preparation; teachers with 3 years or less of teaching experience were twice likely to be placed in schools with high percentages of minority students and those living in poverty, although the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) reports only 14 states require student teachers to work in multicultural settings (Bolich, 2001, p. 5-7). One of the biggest concerns of novice (beginning, preservice and student) teachers is the lack of preparation they received in classroom management, entering the classroom with only a
brief overview of a smattering of loosely associated approaches to classroom management (Lacina-Gifford, Kher & Yandell, p. 2).

Given the importance of classroom/student management, it is appropriate for teacher preparation programs to be concerned with the classroom/student management skills of preservice teachers (Huffman, Holifield & Holield, p. 121). In light of the limited number of hours available in most preservice teacher education programs and the relatively short amount of time preservice teachers, for example, spend in field placements prior to assuming their first teaching positions, looking outside of university classrooms for ways in which to support and extend preservice teachers' learning becomes more imperative (Siebert, p. 392). Therefore, rather than push preservice teachers off the proverbial ship without a lifejacket, teacher educators need to address disconnections between the methods course and life in the classroom before cynicism leads students to reject the former in favor of the latter (Meuwissen, p. 257). Since the student teaching semester remains a pivotal one for the student teacher, it is an opportunity to apply the knowledge and theory learned on campus to the "real" classroom (Clement, p. 47). Thus, whether science (Zuckerman, 2007), art (Bain, 2004), elementary, English or math, students feel they need to learn more about teaching strategies, classroom management, and student learning in order to become successful teachers (Bain, 2004, p. 44).

The methods novice teachers employ to some extent may depend on variables such as self efficacy, gender, prior training and placement. Henson (2001) suggests that the relationship between students' efficacy beliefs and classroom management may speak to ways in which an individual's expectation for success impacts classroom management
behavior, in other words, a teacher’s belief in his or her ability to positively facilitate student learning may affect how the teacher attempts to manage this context (pp. 4-5). Thus, the study finds that more efficacious participants report less interventionist attitudes toward classroom management (p. 25). A study conducted by Young, Milligan & Snead (2001) finds that males perceive discipline differently than females, student teachers were most likely to view discipline as democratic, whereas high school teachers more often than not viewed discipline as the least democratic, and subject area and years of experience were not significant factors in the various subgroups’ perceptions of discipline as democratic or autocratic (pp. 7-8). Further findings show that not only are teachers’ response to aggressive behavior in the classroom impacted by their prior training in classroom behavior management, teachers’ behavior towards aggressive youth is also thought to be impacted by certain individual characteristics, including the degree to which they feel comfortable or confident handling behavior problems in the classroom (Alvarez, 2007, p. 1120). Wait & Warren (2001) found that teachers trained in professional development or development research schools scored higher on ‘Management of Student Behavior’ on the NCTPAI than those trained in a traditional student teacher program (p. 10).

Competent teachers are well versed in classroom management and organization and use multiple teaching methods to accommodate students’ learning style preferences; whereas, novice teachers who are not as well versed are not able to endure the complexities and multiple dynamics of teaching (Irwin & Amobi). Because novice teachers are often less experienced in handling “bumby moments,” (moments in teaching that require a teacher to make an immediate decision about how to respond to a particular
problem in practice (Romano, 2005, p. 258)) they tend to further exacerbate the situation by overreacting or underreacting which leads to feelings of inadequacy. Therefore it is no surprise that 24 senior level undergraduate and 36 graduate students with teaching experience reported that their chief item of concern was classroom management (Gee, 2001). Effective classroom management strategies that address individual needs while protecting the interests of the learning community are, without a doubt, the most valuable skill set a teacher can have (Landau, p. 4). But what of those without such a skill set?

It has been such concerns that have led me to wonder about the whereabouts and success of student teachers I have supervised. I am confident that many are National Board Certified Teachers and making a difference in their schools and in the lives of students. However, there were those that give me pause. For example, I have supervised a few student teachers who were given extraordinary placements: Advanced Placement (AP), Honors, Advanced, Gifted and International Baccalaureate (IB). Unfortunately, many - non-educators and some educators alike - think that the school’s best and brightest are also the best behaved and best to teach. However, once faced with the daunting realization that honor kids, yes the smartest kids in school, need the same, if not more, class structure and management as any other level of student, novice teachers find themselves locked in conflict with their class and preservice and student teachers with their cooperating teacher and university observer as well. Especially when these teachers compromise by being overly friendly with students at the expense of not checking students’ misbehavior and not doing anything that may displease students (Irwin & Amobi).

One student teacher encountered so many problems with a gifted class she was
assigned that her cooperating teacher had to take the class from her. Because her teacher education curriculum does not include a class in exceptional student education (ESE), she was unaware of the characteristics attributed to gifted, AP or honor students. She wanted her class to be innovative; she wanted to treat the class more as a graduate seminar than an 8th grade Language Arts class. She quickly realized that students were failing to grasp simple concepts, thus failing exams. She falsely assumed that “gifted” meant academic “genius,” and it does not. Another student teacher had a different experience with an IB class. She performed well with her AP and Honor English classes, but was deathly afraid of teaching IB. I remembered the comments she made during a post observation meeting, “Those kids are way too smart for me. There is one guy in there who taught himself a dead language over summer and another who scored a perfect score on the SAT!” She was intimidated and nothing her directing teacher or I proposed convinced her that she had something to offer the near all male, all White class.

School placement is as important as the student experience itself. One student proved this dangerously true. The student teacher was placed at a school that became the symbol of “paradise” many administrators in a county dangled in front of their problem children. Those students who were constantly disrupting schools’ functions or bringing down the school’s test scores were dazzled into thinking that, despite their lack luster reading and writing and math abilities, they could become highly paid plumbers or mechanics without having to step into another classroom, or read another book. So, I was not terribly surprised when I received word that the student teacher had been threatened by a student and had to file her own police report because her principal felt that it was simply a case of teenage angst. The students who wrote the threatening letter to the
student teacher were prototypes of the many disillusioned students who often found their way to the school. They had been repeatedly retained and were looking at bleak futures without a high school diploma.

Unlike veteran teachers, student teachers have no support system, no network, and few legal rights. Where are the in-services and the workshops for “not yet beginning” teachers? Where are the workshops stating the do’s and don’ts of teaching? These should be standard procedures for the most vulnerable in the teaching profession. Counties across the country have added such workshops and more, yet numerous counties that need such intervention the most have not. However, in defense of those counties that attempt to include student teachers in pre-planning activities, many public schools in the southern region of the U.S. used to begin school during the first week of August, several weeks before the student teacher’s semester officially begins, and these highly informative meetings were in the past. Therefore, by the time student teachers and their university observers met, no one was in place to bring them up to speed. Also, the number of student teachers outnumbers local schools’ requests; many student teachers are then placed in surrounding area schools, which are likely to be in a neighboring school district or county. Each school district has its own policies and rules regarding student teaching and these policies can differ greatly. For example, in the space of three semesters, I had interns in four counties. Procedures for handling an incident such as the one above, varies from county to county depending on how administrators interpret and thus report (if it is reported at all) the incident.

Placement also becomes a problem when cooperating teachers are selected to receive student teachers based on their relationship with the principal, are in the throes of
graduate school or National Board Certification, and have ulterior motives for desiring a student teacher. Students placed with teachers who simply do not have the time to teach, let alone mentor a novice to the profession, further aggravate the problem when student teachers leave unprepared and lacking basic skills in classroom management, planning, professionalism, and content area. This is a reoccurring theme. Teachers are not aware of the liability they create when they foster such irresponsibility. I have had more than one student challenge his or her cooperating teacher’s final grade because they felt that their teacher failed to uphold their part of the agreement. It is at this point when both sides attempt to cover their tracks and wreak havoc during the most hectic time in everyone’s lives: the end of the semester.

For instance, one student never supplied lesson plans and clearly staged her lessons when I observed, when she would leave the teacher would berate her, but could not answer my questions regarding what she did to assist. The same would then be said of the teacher by the student. Neither had effective classroom management and this is where my conundrum began: Just whose teaching and classroom management am I assessing? Clearly, when a student teacher takes over a class in January, the class should be well under control, with of course the usual and expected disruptions (after all we are talking middle school). But when students are screaming across the class, tempers are flaring, objects are being thrown, swears are being uttered, whose fault is this? Another teacher literally turned over the reins for all her 6 classes on the student teacher’s third day because in addition to working a second job, she was completing her National Board Certification portfolio. The student still did not know where to park, where the cafeteria was, the bell or bus schedule, and had no earthly idea where to even begin with lesson
plans. The teacher simply told her the best way to learn is to “either sink or swim.”

Educationally sound pedagogy, right?

The last student teacher who highlights problems associated with improper placement deals with the age old culprit, race (or so we thought). Incompetent and nonassertive teachers, who lack classroom management skills, often do not have good control of their classes (Irwin & Amobi) regardless of its race, ethnicity, creed or color. The most frustrating student teacher I was ever assigned was probably also my most versed and learned; she loved words and literature, but had an excruciating time relaying effectively what she wanted her students to learn. Initially she was placed with a coordinating teacher who specialized in at-risk youths at a predominately ethnic minority school. The student teacher often failed to plan ahead in order to give herself time to think through her next day’s lesson and to see the big picture. Her lack of planning often left students and her cooperating teacher confused and puzzled regarding the purpose of assignments. Of the five visits I made to observe her, she taught vocabulary on four of them. In her attempt to prepare students for the High School Competence Test (now FCAT) that her eleventh and twelfth grade students were required to pass in order to graduate, she simply wasted too much time.

For example, students had to copy the list off the board, look them up, write sentences with them and then share their sentences with the class. The next day or two would involve a review of the words for a vocabulary test, and so on. This procedure was then repeated. Not once did students read - silently or aloud - while I observed; no one participated in group discussions or created essays or wrote in journals. They never once read or discussed literature, not even once. Students grew restless and impatient and
so did her cooperating teacher. She possessed no classroom management skills and was physically challenged by one of her students who accused her of being rude; the female student received a five-day suspension. Once, after nearly six weeks into her student teaching, she failed to show for work knowing that her cooperating teacher would be absent. She later confessed that she was just too intimidated by students and did not want to be alone in the class (although a substitute teacher would by law be present).

Another sign of her lack of management was visible when it came to her being mindful of her environment. She never noticed what was taking place in the classroom while she remained glued to the podium; she never “worked” the room or made herself visible or available to students. On one occasion two male students seated directly in front of me were preparing to battle. They cursed, yelled and talked about each other’s mommas, yet when asked why she didn’t intervene she said she did not notice or hear a thing. During her final observation, before being moved to another school to complete her student teaching, students were lined up at a student’s desk buying candy while others signed their classmates’ memory books. The cooperating teacher had boisterously warned the student not to sell the candy in class since it was against school policy before leaving the room (she did so in order that the student teacher could be observed alone). Again, according to her, she did not see this happening or hear the teacher’s warning, which all took place less than two feet from her.

After countless interventions and discussions, practice runs, class simulations, reviews of lesson plans, teaching strategies, revisiting work from previous classes, observing her fellow colleagues teach, etc. nothing worked. Thus, noticing the cooperating teacher’s frustration and the students’ lack of respect for her, I called my
supervisor upon leaving the school to arrange a meeting. When we – the cooperating teacher, my supervisor and I - asked how she felt her day had gone, she said that it had gone pretty well. The cooperating teacher and I were amazed! She was always positive and upbeat; seldom are these traits viewed as negatives, but they were blinding her from reality. The coordinating teacher relayed her frustrations with the student teacher through tears and felt that everyone had done all they could to assist her, but felt that she simply failed to listen to anyone or heed advice. So, we moved her. Her new placement offered very little relief even though the racial and demographic makeup of the school was the reverse of her initial placement. Subsequently, she was required to remain until the official end of school, almost two months beyond the official end of the semester. Many of the same problems persisted and her new cooperating teacher felt that although she was strong in her content knowledge, she needed to focus her energies into finding another occupation and did not want to jeopardize her students’ level of instruction any longer than absolutely necessary.

While experienced teachers insist classroom management is the most important class a new teacher should take, as it has been documented for more than 20 years, it is often the class most likely to be left out of truncated teacher education programs (Landau, p. 4). Landau reviewed the websites of 20 teacher prep programs and noted that only one had a course specifically titled “Classroom Management”, some of the upper division courses talked about classroom management but no specific strategies were included, and most upsetting was that since most classroom management courses were housed in special education programs, associating classroom management with only those who are classified as having special needs denies the mainstream students access to fair and
reasonable management practices (p. 7). Clearly, it is unfortunate that not all student teacher program curriculums require a course in classroom management; instead, it is presumed that classroom management techniques are covered in method and capstone courses taken prior to student teaching. A recently surveyed student teacher stated that although she completed the university’s capstone course and learned

“a bit about classroom management in theory and practice all we had to do was create a classroom management plan. We were not instructed on how to implement it or what to do if students won't comply to your plan… I don't even remember being taught classroom management but we did review many court cases that showed what teachers did in their classes in certain situations. We reviewed ethics but not specifically classroom management.” (Personal communication, April 2007)

Another student echoed similar sentiments regarding the class,

“We barely covered classroom [management]… It was discussed but it was not in depth like it should be because classroom management is essential to have in the classroom. There should be a course devoted specifically towards classroom management because I did not learn much about that in any of my courses. And the problems that I am having now are ridiculous. I could have been better prepared.” (Personal communication, April 2007)

However, perception is essential. Another student, a classmate of the previous two, stated that the class was more than sufficient in preparing her for her student teaching (Personal communication, April 2007). What makes their perceptions so varied? How have their
perceptions played out during their student teaching experience? Can you guess which one(s) is/are experiencing the most problems?

It appears that too often, reality simply doesn’t match student teachers’ expectations, and such disappointments are demoralizing and can cause teachers to be wary of new approaches and even create cynicism toward teacher education conferences, classes and pedagogical books (Alsup & Bush, p. ix). Preservice teachers often assume responsibility for helping instruction but attribute responsibility for difficulty elsewhere; so, when failure is encountered, preservice teachers are more likely to point to external sources, such as low motivation and home environment, which makes the outcome less threatening to the self (Henson, pp. 23-25). Student teachers may erroneously believe that they are simply a teacher’s assistant and not, a teacher in training as a hangover of their preservice placement. As Romano (2005) finds, preservice teachers tended to stand back and judge the experienced teachers’ actions when handling problematic instances in teaching; thus, they placed themselves in a truly observational role and imparted their opinions on the experience, rather than participating actively in the classroom activities (p. 274). Furthermore, as student teachers in universities and colleges across the country can attest, not all teacher education curriculums include classroom management classes. Data from Lacina-Gifford, Kher, & Yandell (2000) suggest that preservice teachers may not have developed a well articulated system for dealing with problem students thus may not employ strategies that were systematic enough to produce enduring effects, or be able to demonstrate an understanding of the motivational underpinnings of underachieving students (pp. 5, 7).
Student teachers, like many teachers at some point in their teaching journey, believe as did interviewees in a study conducted by Love, Henderson & Hanshaw (1996) that if punishment and rewards are given, students will ultimately behave; however, the problem with this extrinsic approach is that it does not change the long-term behavior of the child. Effective classroom management practices help to develop the intrinsic rewards for self-discipline, but preservice teachers are often torn between the theoretical applications they are being taught and the practice they receive during student teaching (Love, et. al). In a National School Board Association survey (1996) of 1,216 administrators, 54% of suburban and 64% of urban school officials reported more violent acts in their schools than five years before. While members of both groups were concerned about school violence, preservice teachers seemed more so, yet teachers, regardless of community type, rated student physical conflicts as the most serious as a result of attempts to educate children and youth with aggressive and violent tendencies in settings by teachers who are largely untrained to work with students with special needs (White & Beal, 1999).

Undesirable behaviors may be further intensified by teachers who insensitively demonstrate a lack of respect and consideration for students, treat students improperly or unfairly, and do not make their classrooms safe and inviting places for learning; therefore, teacher competency plays a paramount role and has considerable bearing on the quality of classroom discipline (Irwin & Amobi) and instruction given. Great danger is done to the spirit of novice teachers and their students when a lack of preparation results in classrooms becoming arenas for daily power struggles (Landau, p. 10). For instance, Alvarez (2007) finds that teachers with no training were more likely to report
negative affect when they viewed aggressive behavior as intentional, as compared to those with training. In other words, teacher stress reactions may be long-term by-products of the perceptual process taking place when students display aggressive behavior in their classroom, as well as precipitants of further classroom conflict (p. 1121).

Aggression may also be culturally coded. In studies performed by Downey & Pribesh (2004) they find that white teachers often misread black students' different behavioral styles (e.g., speech, dress, and energy level) as defiance, may also attribute to the student teacher’s lack of success. Scholars who work in this tradition have suggested that black students' skills and behaviors are not worse than white students', but simply different; unfortunately, the researchers find that race continues to matter in the classroom in two highly generalizable samples of students spanning the beginning of the schooling process through adolescence, and that the strain between black students and white teachers is evident as soon as black children begin kindergarten (pp. 277-279).

We must begin to seek realistic solutions to assist beginning, preservice and student teachers in meeting the demands of the millennia. Although they are aware of the difficult challenges that await them and place classroom management as their top concern (Cavanaugh, p. 43), they are unsure where to start tackling such complex issues since discussions on classroom management may have surfaced in education courses prior to student teaching, but was rarely pursued in any depth (Siebert, p. 389) and if it was, they often learned about classroom management in the confines of a college setting where emphasis was placed on normal management issues (Meister & Melnick, 2003, p. 87). Thus, we begin this process by anticipating the ways in which practicum experiences
defy methods instruction and seeking out opportunities to integrate them more effectively (Meuwissen, p. 257; Seibert).

For example, student teacher participants in a study performed by Meister & Melnick stated that when additional wrinkles in classroom management arose, such as the inclusion of special education students into the regular education classroom, being overwhelmed by time constraints and workload, and a lack of communication skills when dealing with parents and other adults when conflict arose (pp. 87-88) they had very few if any resources to which to refer. Not only did they attribute their under preparation to not having required college coursework in this area, or having impractical, theoretical coursework, but what their cooperating teachers taught them about management needed to be addressed (Clement, p. 48) by university officials. A frequent criticism of teacher preparation programs is that they sometimes lack adequate provision for transfer of training from university to school classrooms, even though they provide field experiences as the means for such a transfer (Anderson & Radencich, p. 66).

So what can be done? Clearly the minimalist approach to embedding classroom management into other courses does as great a disservice to new teachers as is done by ignoring the subject entirely (Landau, p. 11), and economic realities would also seem to dictate the need to explore ways in which various stakeholders in public education can network, collaborate, and leverage resources to maximize the limited resources available (Siebert, p. 392). Other avenues to explore are quality mentoring or induction programs, and some states mandate that first year teachers cannot be assigned to extracurricular and noninstructional activities, can receive extra time to work on assessments they must
complete, and are limited to the number of consecutive days they teach grade levels or subjects for which they are not certified (Bolich, pp. 8, 11).

If constructivist and proactive approaches are preferred over more interventionist and controlling methods on classroom management, then teacher education programs should seek methods to foster reasonable internal attributions for student success and failures and facilitate development of self efficacy (Henson, p. 28). Research by Moore (2003) and Bain (2004) suggests that preservice teachers, their supervisors, and their mentor teachers examine and discuss the rationale behind pedagogical decisions and differentiate between process and procedure in assessing student teacher efficiency (pp. 38-40). Preservice and novice teachers alike must learn that the ultimate goal in classroom management is to create within the class an atmosphere where individuals are free to learn, where each student knows why learning is important, and learn discipline themselves to stay on task and achieve the short-term objectives leading toward the long-term goals (Love, et al).

Attention must be paid to specific concerns when working with special populations. It is important that teachers uphold the heritage of his or her students, use well conceived, written and delivered lesson plans, establish a clear set of rules with consequences, use a reward system for cooperative behaviors, implement forms of differentiated instruction, maintain time on task, connect with individual students, and incorporate student interests into instruction (Murphy, 2007, p. 55). When preservice teachers were directly involved in the class, they were more keenly aware of how their actions might impact the students in the classroom or the outcome of the event (Romano, p. 274). Our classroom management efforts should reflect vision and respect for the
developing self-regulation of students in our care and responsibility for joining parents in encouraging character, as well as academic development, and consequences should not be inappropriately applied to students who have not yet had enough scaffold practice demonstrating desired behaviors (Lane-Garon, pp. 2-4). The more effective classroom managers monitored their students carefully and did not "turn them loose" without careful directions, stopped inappropriate behavior sooner and were able to establish their credibility early (Love, et al).

According to White & Beal (1999) strategies for pre-service teachers should include: (a) understanding and improving school climate; (b) mastering skills for nonviolent conflict resolution; using these skills themselves; knowing how to identify, respond to, and control their own anger, and how to express it constructively; (c) combating factors "that breed violent behavior"; (d) teaching impulse control; (e) giving students many opportunities to practice problem solving, reflecting appropriate decisions; (f) learning teaching methods that reduce violence; (g) knowing how to build students self esteem; and (h) learning to use local resources. Additionally, administrators must focus on identifying the core values of the school, creating rules and consequences using these values, modeling the values during interactions with students and staff, and eliminating interventions that violate the core values. Likewise, Alvarez suggests streamlining the training process; for instance, teachers whose school lacks clear policy regarding student bullying may require different training than those who have well established guidelines but want more strategies to teach students “prosocial” behaviors (p. 1123).
In programs that have proven successful, Wait & Warren (2001) find that student teachers had several practices that impacted their level of classroom management performance: (1) the formative, coaching nature of the evaluation processes. Interns had a regular opportunity to participate in a non-threatening discussion of their teaching practices. (2) witnessing and participating in daily reflections (p. 11). The pervading message from respondents in a survey conducted by Cavanaugh (1995) seems to be that new teachers need to know what to teach; next, they must be able to organize that information so that they can present it logically and coherently; and third, they must be able to manage the 20 to 30 students who will sit in each class and demand to be taught. Most respondent-teachers seemed to feel that one of the best ways to approach this need for awareness and understanding would be through a more substantial field component during teacher preparation (p. 44). Zuckerman (2007) provides a list of must-know’s as well: student teachers should be prepared with an alternative plan for a given learning objective, teachers should keep in mind a predetermined sequence of reactive strategies, beginning with subtle nonverbal strategies, such as signals and proximity, and, only when necessary, progressing to the more intrusive verbal strategies and teachers should confer in private with their chronically disruptive students to a) pinpoint the specific problematic behaviors, b) identify the appropriate behaviors, c) check for the student's understanding, and d) encourage a commitment to improve (pp. 13-15).

The integration of specific classroom management strategies and tools during the practicum experience required of preservice teachers before they can complete student teaching is a must for teacher preparation programs (Siebert, pp. 391-392). Furthermore, concurrent methods course and practicum experiences must provide students with a
forum for grappling with disconnections that arise and for revisiting what they know about teaching, learning, and their domains in the face of other influences (Meuwissen, p. 257). Based on the findings of a study conducted by Meister & Melnick (2003), it is apparent that teacher preparation programs need to pay particular attention to the following: Educate students in differentiated instruction, which will help with the diverse abilities in the classroom; Offer more in-depth study of the various disabilities of inclusion children; Offer more field experiences with a focus on working with children with special needs (i.e. one-to-one tutoring); Help students develop a philosophy of classroom management that is proactive, not reactive; Examine the correlation between effective instruction and good classroom discipline; Explore the different philosophies of maintaining discipline and their effectiveness in relationship to a person's demeanor; Get students more involved in adult situations throughout the course of their teacher preparation program; Stress the importance of communicating with parents, as well as involving them. Include reading in the content area across all curricular areas (93).

Clement (2002) offers a few additional solutions at easing classroom management issues for the beginning, preservice and student teacher: professors should teach general techniques for establishing management systems and how to decide on appropriate consequences for certain behaviors, cooperating teachers should be required to complete a class or a workshop in classroom management which could prove helpful so that a common vocabulary prevails, since teacher educators also train future administrators in graduate programs, a component in this training might include how administrators can support their teachers in the area of classroom management, cooperating teachers need to do much more than pass down hints and tips for the art of managing a classroom, they
should focus on published knowledge that will provide more than tricks for managing
today's diverse classrooms. (56-60) Peer coaching model allows student teachers to
interact professionally by observing each other's teaching and offering suggestions for
improving practice on a regular basis. It also means that students, at most, can teach only
half time. This arrangement allowed the teacher to observe one student teach and then
provide immediate feedback while the other took over the classroom. It also allowed for
increased teacher-student planning time (Anderson & Radencich, pp. 66, 72).

The Sevier County (Tennessee) website states, “In classrooms where teacher’s
expectations are reasonable and understood, students’ behavior tends to be appropriate.
For expectations to serve the roles they are intended the following six conditions must be
met:

1. Teach expectations situationally. When children are taught exactly what is
   expected of them when entering school in cafeteria, recess, class, etc. referrals for
   behavior problems decrease 40%
2. Expectations should be taught in a formal manner. Modeling, Role-playing, etc.
3. Expectations should be kept to a maximum of 4-5. Long lists don’t work
4. Expectations should be stated in instructive vs. prohibitive language. Ex. "Speak
   quietly" vs. "Don’t shout"
5. Expectations should be emphasized over rules. Emphasize the ‘positive’ vs.
   ‘negative’
6. Expectations should be respected by teachers. (teachers must consistently
   reinforce their expectations)
The site further states what we have often informed student teachers, “the ‘key’ to on-task behavior is to quickly engage students in the learning activity” and to practice active supervision which involves moving around the class and being close to students, looking about the class, and interacting with students. (www.slc.sevier.org/skill4em.htm)

In retrospect, the 40 or more student teachers have assisted me in identifying my teaching strengths and weaknesses. Simply being knowledgeable doesn’t make you a good teacher if you have no clue how to transfer the knowledge to your students. Arriving late and leaving early, doesn’t work either. If you are not committed to your students and to teaching, then you are actually doing more harm than good. Students are not as clueless as we would often like to believe; they can readily identify those teachers who care from those who don’t; they can also identify those who are biased, show favoritism, and are prejudice, and those who care only about their paycheck. If I learned anything from this experience it is that school districts and administrators need to continually fine-tune their policies and practices. Principals must realize that it would be to their advantage to create packets or a webpage on the school’s website for novice teachers that outline their duties, rights, responsibilities and expectations. Workshops and in-services should be videotaped, placed on the web or podcasted and if possible they should attend workshops geared toward their interests, and not necessarily those of interest to their cooperating or supervising teacher. Furthermore, the line between substitute and student teacher is in need of widening. Students are sometime used as “extras” and are never incorporated into the day-to-day functions of the school.

Administrators, cooperative teachers, university supervisors and prospective supervising teachers should be as straightforward as possible. When a student teacher is
visibly not ready for the roles and duties of being an effective teacher, supervising
teachers and administrators should inform the student teacher and observer as soon as
possible. The challenges ahead for the novice teacher are astounding and should not be
further complicated due to a lack of preparation in classroom management since it is the
crux of the teaching experience. After all, what good is it to know, but not be able to
impart due to constant class disruptions and unruly behavior?
References


---

**Author Note**

Clarissa West-White, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor at Florida A&M University in Midway, Florida.

Copyright 2007: Clarissa West-White, and University of Central Florida

**Article Citation**
