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Is Classroom Management Possible for Disabled Teachers, with or Without Accommodation?

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Abstract

Is classroom management possible for disabled teachers with or without accommodation? This, the central question of the following thesis, will be discussed in two large sections (literature review and qualitative study), which are divided into eight sub-sections.

The introduction addresses the legalities of disability in the United States today, focusing on three questions. 1) What is a disability? 2) What is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and what is its bearing on the employment of disabled teachers? and 3) What is reasonable accommodation, both as it is defined in the ADA and as it is applied in today's public schools?

In the next sub-section, General Techniques of Classroom Management, traditional and current disciplinary techniques are discussed as they relate to the thesis's central question. The secondary emphasis in this section is the similarity and contrast between classroom management techniques used by disabled and nondisabled music teachers.

Pre-service Teachers and Classroom Management, the third section, is concerned with how pre-service teachers address classroom management for disabled and non-disabled students. Particular attention is given to the perceptual changes many of these pre-service teachers underwent while working with the disabled student population. The section further discusses how this change relates to two central difficulties faced by disabled teachers: convincing potential employers of their ability to accomplish the work, and obtaining the necessary accommodations to perform their job once employed.

The final sub-section of the literature review discusses the struggles faced by disabled teachers. These struggles include finding employment and obtaining proper accommodations both during the interview process and after being hired.

The second section is concerned with a qualitative study of three blind and/or visually-impaired teachers and their experiences with classroom management. The method section discusses the types of questions the teachers have been asked (demographic, classroom management beliefs, classroom rules, accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and changes in classroom management). In the results section, many quotations have been taken directly from the teachers, and other answers, where similar between teachers, have been paraphrased. The discussion section compares and contrasts the results, and answers the question: Is classroom management possible for disabled teachers with or without accommodation? Classroom management is possible for disabled teachers, but only with accommodation, whether those accommodations are made by the disabled teacher or by outside forces. Also in the discussion section, the researcher concluded that the scope of this thesis must be limited only to blind and/or visually-impaired persons due to the limited nature of the qualitative study.

State University of New York
College at Buffalo

Is Classroom Management Possible for Disabled Teachers With or Without Accommodation

A Thesis in
Multidisciplinary Studies

By
Martha Ann Hazen

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
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Introduction

Classroom management is defined by Michael Medland and Michael Vitale (1984) as “encompassing all activities undertaken by teachers to ensure that academic materials are presented under maximally effective conditions for learning.” The same is defined in the *Encyclopedia of Education* (Guthrie, 2003) as “the orchestration of the learning environment of a group of individuals within a classroom setting.” For the purposes of this thesis, classroom management will be discussed in terms of a) general techniques considered to be effective for classroom management for a wide variety of teachers from varying subject areas, b) how pre-service teachers approach classroom management, and c) how both students and teachers with special needs generally react to, are perceived to react to, and work with and around standard classroom management beliefs and techniques. These three topics will be examined in order to answer the central question of this thesis: is classroom management possible for a disabled public school music teacher with or without reasonable accommodation?

To address the problem above and answer the question, several terms must be defined in detail, followed by a slightly more in depth look at the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act. Both acts of legislation will be considered, first as they were meant to be applied conceptually, and second as they have been applied in reality for the working disabled, specifically the working blind.

According to the *American Heritage Dictionary* (2007), a disability is “the condition of being disabled [or having an] incapacity.” It is also “the period of such a condition, a disadvantage or deficiency, especially a physical or mental impairment that interferes with or prevents normal achievement in a particular area, something that hinders or incapacitates,” and,

when speaking of the law, a disability is “a legal incapacity or disqualification.” For the purposes of this study, the first definition will be utilized most often. This definition will be discussed in two parts: what are the differences between disadvantaged and deficient, and what defines normal achievement for the population with which this study is concerned?

The central population for this thesis is all disabled American citizens currently living in the United States of working age (eighteen to sixty-four), with an emphasis on blind and visually-impaired individuals of that same nationality and age bracket. This population falls under the protection and assistance of two laws: the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (hereafter referred to as the ADA) was established in 1990 and was an attempt to extend the types of rights provided in the Civil Rights Act (1965) to persons with disabilities (Alvah, 2003). According to the *Gale Encyclopedia of Everyday Law* the ADA pertains to the following areas: “employment, public accommodations, transportation, services offered by governmental entities, and other areas” (Wilson, 2006). This vague language was intended to allow room for interpretation and expansion as needed so that the letter of the law could not be followed without following the spirit, as happened with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973), which Wilson also discusses in his article. Based on previous anti-discrimination laws concerned with race and gender, Section 504 determined that no program that relied partially or fully on federal funding could discriminate on the basis of disability.

According to the *Gale Encyclopedia of Everyday Law* (2010) there are currently 43 million disabled people in the United States. Of those only “two-thirds of employable disabled persons in the United States were employed in the late 1980s, and many of those employed were

not working to their full capacity to earn given their disabilities.” The *Gale Encyclopedia of Everyday Law* (2010) further states:

"[w]hat is different about the discrimination of disabled people as compared to other types of discrimination is that there is often a rational basis for treating disabled people differently from able-bodied people. Whereas there is usually no rational basis for treating, for example, a woman from South Africa differently from a woman from the United States, there may be a rational basis for treating a woman who is blind differently from a woman with good vision. The visually impaired woman may require the use of Braille, for example.

Another difference in disability discrimination is its intent. Many types of discrimination, such as racial discrimination, are rooted in hostility or hatred toward people who are different. But discrimination against disabled individuals more often is rooted in ignorance or apathy. Some people view disabilities with pity or discomfort, leading to behavior that may patronize people with disabilities. Other people simply fail to consider or understand the needs of disabled people, leading to benign neglect or misguided efforts to assist.”

In addition, until the advent of the ADA, the United States courts did not apply the Equal Protection Clause in the Constitution to disabled persons with the same consistency as to other protected classes like religion, gender, nationality, or race.

The greatest debate surrounding the ADA, and one focus of the qualitative study conducted for this thesis, is the issue of reasonable accommodation. All employers in the public or private sector with more than fifteen employees are required to provide reasonable accommodation for disabled persons. Reasonable accommodation is broken down into three areas: modification of the job application process for qualified disabled persons to apply for a job they want, modification of the manner in which the job is performed or the work environment to allow disabled persons to perform a job’s essential functions, and modification of the workplace to allow disabled employees equal access to benefits and privileges extended to nondisabled employees. The first type of modification includes applications being provided in multiple formats; the second includes adaptive office equipment or one employee taking on part of a disabled person’s tasks that a disabled person cannot accomplish because of the disability while

the disabled person takes on additional tasks he or she can complete; the third includes ensuring disabled employees have access to cafeterias, gyms, or training programs.

One final statement must be made about the Americans with Disabilities Act and reasonable accommodation. The ADA is not a free pass for disabled persons to have any job at any cost to employers. Disabled employees must first and foremost be the most qualified person for an available position. This includes basic requirements such as a truck driver having enough eyesight to read street signs or a telemarketer being able to hear and speak to customers over the phone. However, after these basic requirements, disabled people are expected to meet the same requirements as nondisabled people. For example, if a Bachelor's degree in elementary education is required, all applicants must have one. Beyond this degree, experience, personality, energy, lesson planning, and classroom management are meant to determine who is hired.

Once a disabled person is determined to be the most qualified person for a position, reasonable accommodation is determined by the employer and disabled employee. Sometimes this is a quick and easy exchange, especially with companies with a long history of working with disabled persons, including but not limited to certain branches of the federal government and businesses or organizations that work with or for the disabled community. If an employer considers requests made by a disabled employee to be unreasonable, said employer may file for undue hardship with the courts. According to the *Gale Encyclopedia of Everyday Law* (2010)

“[t]he employer must demonstrate that the specific reasonable accommodation being considered would cause significant difficulty or expense. The determination of undue hardship is made on a case-by-case basis, and courts consider such factors as the type and cost of the accommodation, the financial resources of the employer, the number of employees, and the overall impact of the accommodation on the employer's operation. An employer cannot claim undue hardship resulting from fears or prejudices about an individual's disability or fears that an accommodation would result in a morale problem with co-workers. An employer may, however, demonstrate undue hardship if an accommodation would unduly disrupt the work of other employees.”

Versions of the Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act have existed since the late 1960s. The laws born of these acts have assisted disabled Americans in terms of access to public facilities, education, and employment. For disabled people of working age (18-65 years) the ADA also provides the reasonable accommodation law to make employment not just easier, but in some cases possible at all. The following literature review discusses current classroom management techniques and some suggestions regarding reasonable accommodations for the disabled teacher.

The literature review will be comprised of three sections. The first will consist of generally accepted effective classroom management techniques that are used by nondisabled and non-disabled teachers alike. Section two will contain classroom management preconceptions, experiences, and techniques of pre-service teachers. The final section is a discussion of classroom management as it is perceived and used by disabled students and teachers in today's schools.

The method for this thesis is a qualitative study, comprised of sixteen questions. The questions are divided into four sections: demographics, general techniques and beliefs about classroom management held by the participating teacher, the accommodations the teacher makes for him/herself in order to carry out classroom management, and the accommodations the school and/or district make for the teacher in order to assist with either classroom management or related areas. A pre-service teacher, a retired teacher, and a teacher currently in the field were interviewed via emailed survey and over the phone. Responses were collated and analyzed by the researcher to answer the central question of this thesis: Is classroom management possible for a disabled public school music teacher with or without reasonable accommodation?

The United States has made tremendous leaps forward in terms of employment equality during the last fifty years, and America's schools have incorporated diversity into their curricula and hiring policies to a greater extent today than existed even twenty years ago. However, attention must be drawn to the continued gap between the growing number of disabled children in the classroom and the static number of disabled teachers in matriculated classrooms, music or otherwise. Beyond the benefit to disabled children of seeing models of themselves achieving in the wider world, disabled teachers provide models of inspiration for students struggling against those things they may consider insurmountable disadvantages: socioeconomics, single parent homes, and violence.

General Techniques for Classroom Management

The articles in this section will define standard and traditional classroom management techniques for general music, choral, band, and orchestral classrooms today. “Chorus: Snapshot of a Middle School Choir Director” (Keating, 2005) introduces the ideas for the first section of this chapter: standard classroom management techniques. Specific techniques discussed in this article include quick pacing, specific, immediate, and accurate feedback after students perform, music selected in response to the cultural diversity in the classroom, and the expectations for each rehearsal (“focus, posture, and mouth position”) clearly posted in the classroom.

This article is an excellent introduction to the standard classroom management techniques section not only because it presents several widely accepted techniques for choral, and, by extension all, teachers, but also because, taken as it is, directly from a specific rehearsal situation, it opens the way for several questions. What effect, if any, does the teacher’s relationship with his or her students have on classroom management? As a corollary, does a teacher’s personality affect classroom management? Keating (2005) states, “Shelton acknowledges that classroom management is key to making rehearsals successful. During his first years of teaching, he was giving students too much freedom, which made the situation miserable... Shelton said that with appropriate guidelines, everyone was happier, and they accomplished much more during the class period.” This statement seems to argue that students need the structure of classroom management, despite disagreement on the part of some pre-service and new inservice teachers.

Michael Medland and Michael Vitale (1984) state that classroom management encompasses

“all activities undertaken by teachers to ensure that academic materials are presented under maximally effective conditions for learning. Classroom management, therefore, first ensures that students’ social behavior is compatible with whatever academic programs teachers present and, second, motivates students to progress in academic achievement. Thus, classroom management is a necessary condition for student learning.”

“Excellent classroom management is, in a way, invisible classroom management but this makes it no less critical” (Medland & Vitale, 2005).

The next area of discussion surrounds the importance of teacher presence (also identified by the authors of the following articles as social intelligence, teacher delivery, and teacher intensity). Teacher presence involves balancing the needs of the students against the distraction of catering to many divergent voices, the need for teacher consistency, and the benefits of reflection on classroom management. The study, “The Influence of Social Intelligence on Effective Music Teaching,” conducted by Jay Juchniewicz (2010) was built on past questions raised by Gardner, Sternberg and other late twentieth century psychologists. However, instead of asking “what is social intelligence?” this study sought a correlation between social intelligence and effective teaching, particularly in music. For the purposes of this study music classrooms included choral, band, orchestral and general music instructors serving the kindergarten to twelfth grade range of public school students. Juchniewicz used two populations for this study. The first group was comprised of public school teachers in Florida determined by their supervisors (usually members of their respective educational boards) to be “exemplary” or “challenged.” This wording, purposely used by Juchniewicz, was intentionally ambiguous in an effort to attract teachers of all experience levels and abilities and also to not place any negative connotations on the teachers who were asked to participate in the “challenged” group. All teachers named by their supervisors were invited to join the study but were not told how they

were selected in an effort not to taint how they would react when videotaped. Forty teachers were selected from those who agreed to participate in the study: twenty “exemplary” teachers and twenty “challenged” teachers. The second group of participants in the study included forty-two pre-service teachers and forty-two in-service teachers. Both groups viewed the videotapes and unanimously agreed that 1) excellent classroom management is invisible, 2) classroom management is the deciding factor when participants labeled teachers ineffective, and 3) those teachers deemed exemplary had the highest social intelligence: the ability to work with other people (teachers, students, administrators). Juchniewicz concludes that social intelligence is the distinguishing characteristic of effective teachers.

The tenet of classroom management described in this study as teacher presence is sometimes identified as teacher intensity or teacher delivery. “The Effect of Focus of Attention and Teaching Experiences on Perceptions of Teaching Effectiveness and Student Learning,” is a study which “examined pre-service and experienced teachers' ratings and comments on teacher effectiveness and student learning after observing videotaped music classes” (Cassidy, 2005). The subjects for this study included seventy-eight subjects, comprised of full-time music teachers and college junior or senior music education majors who either had no practicum teaching experience, or had practicum teaching experience but had not begun student teaching. Each subject watched two videotapes of an elementary music lesson. The first video was focused on the teacher while the second was focused on the students. All participants were expected to complete a written rationale to support their conclusions. Experienced teachers rated the recorded teacher more harshly than the undergraduates did but both groups rated the videotaped teacher higher than they did the students, suggesting that they placed any blame for poor behavior on the students rather than with the teacher. The videotaped teachers who received the

highest ratings from both undergraduates and their peers were those who demonstrated the following qualities: quick pacing, a professional, consistent relationship with the students, and personable behavior. These characteristics are what the author calls “teacher intensity.” The results of this study are summarized by the article’s author as follows: “The study of music teacher behavior suggests that teaching with high intensity or high magnitude is an important component of teaching effectiveness and that a positive relationship between teaching effectiveness and teaching intensity exists.”

“The Magic of Motivation” is a summary of forty-six studies conducted over more than forty years (Madsen, C., 2003). The population for these studies was comprised of randomly selected pre-service and inservice music teachers at all levels, elementary through college. Each study focused on aspects of two broad, linked topics: teacher intensity and student motivation. Madsen states, “teacher intensity is defined as the ‘sustained control of the student/teacher interaction evidenced by efficient, accurate presentation and correction of the subject matter with enthusiastic affect and effective pacing” (Madsen & Geringer, 1989). Two of the major conclusions from these studies are as follows. One: students react more positively to high teacher intensity than the correct delivery of subject matter. Two: “[w]hen asking questions, the teacher as well as the student must know if the pattern of questioning and responses are to be factual or if they are to be creative” (Madsen & Madsen, 1999).

The article “The Effect of Accuracy of Instruction, Teacher Delivery, and Student Attentiveness on Musicians' Evaluation of Teacher Effectiveness,” (Madsen, K. 2003) is a study of the accuracy and delivery of teacher instruction and student attentiveness and its possible implications of how teacher effectiveness is perceived by various groups of students and professionals. The population for this study included one hundred sixty-eight middle school and high school students in choral, instrumental or general music programs, undergraduate music

education majors and experienced teachers. All students viewed eight videotaped segments. “Results indicated that the secondary students rated a teacher giving inaccurate instruction relatively high when the teacher demonstrated high delivery and the class was attentive” (Madsen, 2003).

In “Surveying Colorado Band Directors' Opinions of Skills and Characteristics Important to Successful Music Teaching” Miksza (2010), states that the purpose of this survey

“was to (a) gather band directors' opinions of skills and characteristics important to teaching and (b) examine the relative effectiveness of electronic versus paper survey methods. Survey respondents ranked lists of music, teaching, and personal skills or characteristics in order of importance and answered open-ended items regarding advice for first-year teachers and the struggles and rewards of band directing.”

The target population for this service study included all middle school and high school band directors in Colorado. The method was comprised of open-ended questions centered around the following topics: “maintain high musical standards, be able to motivate students, [and be] enthusiastic [and] energetic.” While “issues related to classroom management and student success were the most-often-cited struggles,” the conclusion of this survey was that personal and teaching skills are ranked much higher than musical knowledge in terms of effectiveness.

In *Tips: Discipline in the Music Classroom* (1989), R. Louis Rossman proposes the idea that to build classroom discipline, teachers must address the needs of the students. He states,

“Many students are discouraged by teachers, and discouraged children have difficulty learning. All too often, teachers point out what a student has done wrong rather than what he or she has done right. Mistakes are checked in red, but correct answers are unmarked...It is important to use encouragement rather than praise; praise is a value judgment, based on competition, but encouragement is an approach that focuses regularly on effort. Finally, teachers may transmit encouragement to students by serving as appropriate role models, thereby encouraging self-discipline and preventing many discipline problems in the classroom.”

“Classroom Management and the Disruptive Child” discusses classroom management approaches that relate to all students, preschool through twelfth grade (Buck, 1992). The first section of the article discusses the central question troubling many first-year teachers: why students misbehave. These reasons include boredom, frustration, a need for attention, the desire to win real or perceived power struggles, or a decision to stop trying to meet academic or social standards. The second section answers the general question, what is discipline in the schools today? Buck states that the following five components should be the building blocks of classroom management for all teachers:

“setting clearly defined classroom rules, consistently reviewing and applying those rules, structuring the classroom environment to increase student learning, engaging student attention by using effective teaching behaviors and challenging curricular content, individualizing instruction and adapting assessment techniques to individual needs, and providing feedback regarding student academic and behavioral progress in a constructive and positive manner with the use of positive praise, contingent rewards and increased teacher attention.”

The third section focuses on classroom management as prevention as Buck chooses three of the building blocks as focal points for increasing on-task behavior without employing negative reactions from the teacher. These three focal points are structuring the environment for learning, structuring the curriculum for learning and structuring the teacher's behavior to prevent student misbehavior.

In “Motivation in Middle School Choir” (Bowers, 2006) the author discusses the two major causes of disruption in middle school choirs: the inability of a teacher to select appropriate ranges for literature, and the necessity of developing an effective means of communication between a teacher and his or her students. The most effective way to make sure that all students, especially weak male singers with changing voices achieve success eighty percent of the time is

to stack four or even five closely-related parts on top of one another so that there is always a part available to the struggling singer. As for establishing effective teacher-student communication, the 1-2-3 method is ranked by Bowers as most conducive to maintaining order in the classroom. The 1-2-3 method is made up of the following: teacher direction, student response (verbal, nonverbal, or sung), and teacher response. This method, when used consistently and properly, with short teacher directions and concise and specific teacher praise, reduces off-task behavior and breakdown of communication between teachers and students.

In the case study “Playing for Pleasure,” (Abrahams and Head, 2005), the question is raised: how does a music teacher strike the balance between individual needs and the needs of the group (be it the rest general music students or the rest of the choir)? Two ideas are proposed: using the bureaucratic method as a means of forcing all students to rise to a specific level and the learning community model, which is characterized by a caring, concerned, and connected environment. The author hastens to explain the drawbacks to both models, indicating that there needs to be a middle ground reached, whereby students with different musical aptitudes and learning styles are given no special privileges but are offered opportunities to learn music in the way best suited to them. Applying similar methods as those used for students with disabilities appears to offer the best approach for maximizing retention of music program students as well as decreasing off-task behavior. Modifying work rather than degrading the music or the disabled student allows for optimum success. As stated in “Motivation in Middle School Choir” (Bowers, 2006), students learn most effectively when eighty percent of their success comes with medium effort, while twenty percent comes from being challenged.

The case study titled “No Way Out” (Abrahams and Head, 2005) addresses, on the surface, the importance of festivals in the music program. However, the underlying emphasis of

this case study is consistency in the classroom. A hypothetical situation is laid out this way: Ms. Burella, a new high school orchestra teacher, is attending her first scored festival. The rating she receives will, she believes, determine the support her school gives to her fledgling orchestra program. She has selected her repertoire based on the abilities of her students, emphasizing the talents of a virtuoso violinist. However, when Ms. Burella learns that this violinist got drunk in her hotel room, a “go home” offense, Ms. Burella is faced with a difficult decision. She can either uphold her rules and send the violinist home, which will cancel one of the pieces the orchestra was going to do, thereby throwing the festival, or she can decide to bend the rules. This case study is left open-ended for the purposes of discussion, but is immediately followed by a case study in which another music teacher chooses consistency over preferential treatment.

In “Marching to a Different Drummer,” (Abrahams and Head, 2005), the authors present a hypothetical case study about a band teacher who has been given a job after the previous teacher’s thirty-eight year career in that school. The new teacher, Mr. McAllister, faces the challenge of establishing and maintaining his own rules, especially for the upperclassmen who worked with the former band director. At the beginning of Mr. McAllister’s third year in the school, his tenure year, the band teacher feels he has walked the line between tradition and new ideas. However, there is a trumpet player in his marching band, the principal’s son, who has been a constant disruption for the past two years. Mr. McAllister has been more lenient with this student because of his concern for his job, but when the student begins the same disruptive behavior at the start of the new school year, he makes the decision to dismiss him from the extracurricular group. This has the effect of showing his consistency to the marching band, with all students at last being treated equally according to their behavior, and unifies the rest of the

players, although Mr. McAllister believes that two or three more upperclassmen may quit in solidarity. Again, the importance of consistency in classroom management is emphasized.

The purpose of the study, “Reflection on Practice: A Study of Five Choral Educators’ Journeys,” (Butke, 2006) is to understand how a reflective process affects teaching in the choral classroom. According to Butke, the five teachers selected for this study “exhibited the following characteristics: a passion for teaching and learning, interest in developing reflective habits, and commitment to lifelong learning.” Each middle or high school chorus teacher was asked to keep a personal journal guided by open-ended questions and to complete narrative exercises. The questions posed by Butke, and the conclusions found, are as follows. The first question is “[h]ow does engaging in a reflective process affect a teacher's consideration of new pedagogical, curricular, personal/professional, or critical approaches?” This study concludes that it encourages teachers to develop new techniques in their classrooms, and even different facets to those programs, such as a sight-singing unit, or a new way to communicate with parents and students. Beyond pedagogy, Butke discovered this type of reflection aided in improving classroom management. For example, two of the participating teachers used the pre-reflection technique to prepare to meet specific situations they faced daily in their classrooms.

The next question “[h]ow does the notion of problematizing a person's practice affect each teacher?” was posed. To affect change in a teaching practice, two steps must be followed. First, a teacher must identify the problem to be addressed, and second, the teacher must address the problem, both through reflection and through active work in the classroom. Butke’s third question, “[w]hat are the unique factors that affect reflective process in a choral classroom?” led to the responses that external and internal motivation affect reflection. In the case of this study, the five teachers involved were originally externally motivated by the study itself, and then to

different degrees intrinsically motivated as they saw the benefits of reflection in their daily teaching.

“How does a teacher's life history, current phase of development, and specific teaching assignment affect the reflective process?” is the fourth question. According to the teachers themselves, the tertiary reason was a formidable factor in the length and depth of the reflections. The final question is “[h]ow are teachers empowered to act upon their reflections?” Via external or internal forces, or a combination of these, each of the five teachers saw reasons to change his or her teaching practice for the better. The study’s cumulative findings were that constructive dialogues, for the purposes of study or simply reflection, may help teachers improve their classroom management and delivery skills. The influence of perfectionism, however, may enhance or restrict effective reflection and more constructive classroom management. Time constraints impeded all five teachers’ abilities to complete paperwork and develop lesson plans with which they felt satisfied and no amount of reflection was able to change this fact. The feelings of pleasure and pain experienced during the reflective process may or may not hinder a teacher’s ability to use reflection to improve the three areas of reflection: reflection-fore-action (preparation before meeting with students), reflection-in-action (reflecting as a new situation is occurring) and reflection-on-action (the reflective state many teachers are familiar with).

Many of the classroom management techniques discussed above are attainable for the disabled teacher; most without accommodation. For instance, the several forms of reflection just discussed are a technique that may benefit all teachers. Likewise, social intelligence as a form of presence in the classroom is available to disabled and able-bodied teachers alike.

However, some of the nonverbal cues discussed are impossible without accommodation. For example, proximity is a time-tested classroom management technique for redirecting a

student's wandering attention. If a teacher in a wheelchair cannot pass between closely-packed desks, or is in a chorus or band room with steps, this technique becomes impossible. As stated in "The Employment of Disabled Teachers (Kettle, 1986) many disabled teachers have been forced to leave their positions or work part-time because accommodations, some simple, were not made.

Pre-Service Teachers and Classroom Management

All pre-service teachers, nondisabled and disabled alike, enter student teaching with their own ideas of what classroom management means. Often these ideas are shaped by what they are taught in the methods classes they take as well as during their months of field experiences and student teaching. Each of the following articles discusses a separate issue studied by pre-service teachers, but bearing importance on inservice teachers' classroom management as well.

Directive versus negative verbal corrections have been widely discussed topics in music education along with studies that show the importance of nonverbal communication. Advice to pre-service teachers is compared to the self-efficacy they receive through the simple act of field experience. Comparisons of competencies necessary to teaching will answer the central question of this section: Is classroom management training and methodology fundamentally different for disabled pre-service teachers than for able-bodied pre-service teachers? Answering this question will help to answer one of the central questions of this thesis: is implementation of classroom management by disabled teachers fundamentally different than classroom management as it is implemented by nondisabled teachers?

(** Please be aware that, in this section, authors of the articles use the terms "special needs learners" and "students with special needs" to refer to students with disabilities. Within the

paragraphs discussing each article, these terms have been used by the author of this thesis to ensure clarity.)

The article “Teachers’ Verbal Corrections and Observers’ Perceptions of Teaching and Learning” (Henninger, 2002) is a study of observers’ perceptions of the type of corrections given by a teacher during a private lesson, specifically negative feedback statements versus directive statements. The author provides an excellent example of these two types of statements. “[I]f following a student's performance of a given passage a teacher were to comment, ‘The sixteenth notes were uneven. Try it again,’ the teacher's statements would be categorized as a disapproval or negative feedback statement (‘The sixteenth notes were uneven.’) and a directive (‘Try it again.’). If, following the same performance, the teacher were to have said, ‘Try it again, and make the sixteenths more even this time,’ these statements would both be recorded as directives.” For this study, twenty-five fifth grade students and twenty-five undergraduate students were taught to play an accompaniment to the theme from “Sesame Street” on the soprano recorder via directive statements and negative feedback statements; the students didn’t perceive any difference in the way they were taught, despite the present, and extensive, teaching literature to the contrary. Fifty-one music education undergraduate students from the Ohio State University in Columbus and the University of Texas at Austin watched the fifth graders and undergraduates learning the accompaniment. By random assignment, half of these students were asked specifically to listen to the teacher’s comments to the student. However, despite their training not one participant caught the difference in teaching techniques between directive statements and negative feedback statements.

The author suggests that the difference between experienced and novice teachers is not the amount of negative feedback given during a rehearsal. In fact, she proposes that effective

rehearsals must be filled with negative feedback or students cannot grow technically or musically. The difference, then, is two-fold: the pace at which negative feedback is followed by instructions on how to improve, and the opportunity to fix the mistakes made. The second discontinuity between experienced and novice teachers is particularly interesting because, according to Henninger, this topic has yet to be discussed at great length in the current literature, and may lead to difficulties in classroom management as students are frustrated with perpetuated errors. The importance of appropriate and clear teaching is discussed as it relates to classroom management; suggestions are given suggesting teacher intensity and delivery as a classroom management tool for pre-service music teachers.

In Hackworth's article, "Analysis of First-Year Music Teachers' Advice to Music Education Students" (2005), the author's purpose is to reveal the types of advice first-year teachers gave to pre-service music education students in response to a survey. The population for the study encompassed eighteen first-year music teachers of all grade levels. According to Hackworth, the suggestions of the mentor teachers were divided into five categories. "Each week, for seven weeks, thirty-four experienced teachers were asked, 'If you could give a new teacher some advice, based on your experiences this week, what would it be?' Advice for new teachers was sorted into the following five categories. [These] included comments pertaining to the advantages and responsibilities of having a job as a music teacher (J), the presence or absence of music learning (M), positive or negative social interactions with students (S), the presence or absence of personal teaching competencies (T), and things other than those previously mentioned and not related to teaching (O). The largest percentage of advice (54%) was found in the job-related category (e.g., "be prepared but also be flexible"). The next most popular area (27%) involved specific teaching suggestions ("always model the activity for

students") with over half of these coming from elementary teachers. Eleven percent of comments related to student behavior ("students are rowdiest the day before holidays"). Only 6% of the advice given by teachers fell into the music-related category ("work with untuned singers regularly by playing along on the piano"). The "other" category accounted for the final 2% ("your family should be your first priority")." Hackworth concluded that both mentors and the teachers or pre-service teachers they talked to achieved greater success in classroom management because of the advice both given and received. The first-year teachers found that discussing classroom management techniques (which fell into the job, music learning, teaching competency, and social interactions with students) encouraged them to use new techniques, as well as to use old techniques more consistently. For pre-service teachers, learning about these techniques from teachers out in the field lent credibility to the techniques and gave the pre-service teachers both more ideas and greater confidence.

The study, "Direct and Mediated Experiences: Effects on Classroom Management Self-Efficacy" (Bergee 2002), examined the effects of both direct and mediated experiences on pre-service teachers' classroom management self-efficacy. His method consisted of twenty-four quantitative questions called the Pre-service Music Teachers' Classroom Management Self-Efficacy Scale (P-CMSES). The population in his study included sixty randomly selected undergraduate music education students who had not yet student taught or were in the midst of student teaching. These students consisted of thirty-five instrumental majors, twenty-four vocal-general majors, and one student majoring in both. Bergee concluded that students involved in direct experiences (in an actual secondary classroom) gained and maintained greater self-efficacy than students who received mediated (videotaped) experiences, although since participants "expressed gratitude for the focus on classroom management, clearly a source of anxiety for

them...both direct and mediated experiences may enhance pre-service music teachers' classroom management self-efficacy. Mediated experiences, therefore, might serve as an effective bridge between the methods classroom and actual experiences in the field.” Disabled pre-service teachers would most likely benefit from both direct and mediated experiences as well. Direct experiences may prove of even greater help to disabled pre-service teachers who, according to Funk and Fletcher (1982) often have more extensive logistical concerns than their nondisabled counterparts.

For both pre-service and in-service teachers, nonverbal communication is one of the first lines of defense in terms of classroom management. In “Nonverbal Communication: Increasing Awareness in the General Music Classroom” (Battersby, 2009), the author identifies and explains nonverbal communication. Battersby presents the question “how are we communicating to our students and how do they really see us?” The author states that the “study of nonverbal behavior can be divided into three main areas: kinesics, or the study of the pattern of body movement in human interaction, coined by Ray L. Birdwhistell, which includes various movements of the body; proxemics, or the study of the ways that individuals use space in their environment, coined by E. Hall; and paralanguage, which refers to the extraverbal elements such as tone, volume, and hesitations that are associated with speech.” Seventy-five percent of a teacher’s communication is nonverbal; seventy-five to eighty percent of control techniques should be nonverbal because this eliminates wasted time and is less disruptive when used appropriately. However, when nonverbal communication is used incorrectly, students perceive favoritism or indifference. Battersby states that eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, body motion, posture, body comportment, and cultural context are the key aspects of kinesics and although eye contact is considered the most important nonverbal communication, Battersby

asserts that all nonverbal communication movements and expressions are necessary during each and every rehearsal. In “The Employment of Disabled Teachers” (Kettle, 1986) and “The Quality of Life”, Corbett (1989) both authors state that many disabled people may be judged and discriminated against based on their inability to appear normal as defined by society’s standards. By necessity body movements are different for paraplegics or a teacher on crutches, but these same movements are also different for a teacher with a hearing or visual disability. This difference can be used as a learning opportunity, but it is also true that a teacher with frozen facial muscles will not be able to smile his or her encouragement or frown a warning. Proxemics is also employed differently by disabled teachers, although not necessarily to lesser effect. For example, needing to have desks arranged in a circle rather than rows may encourage socializing... or group work and discussion. Finally, paralanguage will be affected by each teacher’s natural patterns of speech whether that teacher is disabled or not, although a teacher with a hearing disability may speak differently under specific conditions. For rapid rate of exchange, nonverbal communication is better than verbal, but students as well as teachers are capable of learning new signals and means of communication. Just as flickering lights means “quiet” to one teacher and clapping means the same to another, students are adaptable to a variety of techniques. It is not the technique but the clarity and consistency of the technique which is important.

The purposes of the article “Special Learners in Elementary Music Classrooms: A Study of Essential Teacher Competencies” (Hammel, 2001), are to

“identify teacher competencies used by practicing elementary music teachers when including special learners in classrooms, identify teacher competencies taught by college and university music education faculty during undergraduate elementary music education methods classes and field experiences regarding the inclusion of special learners, and identify teacher competencies considered essential for undergraduate elementary music education students

relevant to the inclusion of special learners and to develop a unit of study to address these competencies” (Hammel, 2001).

The population for this study included both pre-service and inservice music teachers. The method was comprised of four elements: (1) surveys of both elementary music educators and college and university faculty members who teach undergraduate elementary music education methods courses, (2) interviews with practicing elementary music educators, (3) observations of special learners included in elementary music classrooms, and (4) the collection of syllabi from college and university faculty members who teach undergraduate courses that focus on the inclusion of special learners in music. A competency is defined as a concept directly applicable to the practice of teaching, without which teaching becomes either difficult or impossible. This study included twenty-six possible competencies; fourteen were considered essential when applied directly to special needs students. All fourteen are listed here because they have a bearing on special needs (disabled) teachers as well as the students observed in this study.

- 1. acquaintance with various handicapping conditions (general knowledge)
- 2. knowledge of "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)" (legal aspects)
- 3. knowledge of music teacher's role on evaluation team (assessment and evaluation)
- 4. ability to develop and use informal assessment procedures (assessment and evaluation)
- 5. ability to monitor the learning process of all students (assessment and evaluation)
- 6. ability to evaluate program effectiveness for specific learners (assessment and evaluation)
- 7. ability to identify areas of particular difficulty for a student (assessment and evaluation)
- 8. ability to modify, if necessary, the instructional program to accommodate special learners (curriculum planning)
- 9. knowledge of how to modify the physical environment of a classroom for special learners (classroom structure)
- 10. ability to encourage appropriate social interactions among all students (classroom management)

- 11. knowledge of effective classroom management techniques (classroom management)
- 12. knowledge of appropriate materials for diverse learning abilities and styles (methods and materials)
- 13. ability to adapt material to provide for individual differences (methods and materials)
- 14. ability to communicate effectively with support personnel (communication skills).

Hammel concludes that, based on this study, a fifteen-week course was added to the university where she teaches. She suggests that the above-listed competencies are not the only ones essential for music teachers working with special learners, and that further studies should be conducted to follow up on her work.

Most of the above competencies can be applied to disabled teachers and divided into two groups: those competencies disabled teachers can oversee themselves, and those that must, due to cost or logistics, fall to their employers. However, even when logistics come into play, disabled teachers must still inform their employers. The following competencies are the sole responsibility of the disabled teacher:

- 1. acquaintance with various handicapping conditions: If the disabled teacher does not know the rudiments of accommodating his or her disability, it will be impossible for any employer to do so.
- 2. knowledge of Americans with Disabilities Act: The disabled teacher must know the rights, responsibilities, and limitations in this act.
- 5. ability to monitor the learning process: The disabled teacher must know when modification of accommodations is needed as soon as possible so that changes may be made with the least disruption both to his or her schedule and the school's schedule.

The following bulleted items are the responsibility of the employers (principals, human resources personnel, supervisors, and superintendents), with advice from the disabled teacher.

- 8. ability to modify, if necessary, the instructional program to accommodate the disabled teacher's needs (for example: an aide to make copies or grade papers)

- 9. knowledge of how to modify the physical environment of a classroom for a disabled teacher (for example: access ramps, florescent tape on edges of stairs for visually-impaired teachers)
- 10. ability to encourage appropriate social interactions among faculty
- 13. ability to adapt material to provide for individual differences (for example: LCD projector for a teacher unable to use an overhead for reasons involving either inability to manipulate overhead machine or transparencies)
- 14. ability to communicate effectively with support personnel: Occasionally, there are misunderstandings when a disabled teacher's needs are out of the ordinary and a third party may be helpful.

The purpose of the article “A Special Needs Field Experience for Pre-service Instrumental Music Educators” (Hourigan, 2007) was to examine, through a particularistic study, the process by which pre-service music teachers provide assistance to a student with special needs in a junior high instrumental class. The population included two instrumental music majors, a student with special needs, that student's parent, the student's current band teacher, and the researcher who was the music methods teacher, private lesson teacher, and coordinator of this fieldwork experience. The researcher developed three broad qualitative questions. First, what were the pre-service music teachers' perceptions of assisting a student with special needs as part of their fieldwork experience in an instrumental music methods class? Second, what were the music educator's perceptions of coordinating music majors to teach students with special needs? And third, what were the challenges faced by a student and a family of a child with special needs in a junior high band class? This study had two conclusions. One, that many pre-service (and possibly inservice) teachers would benefit from (i.e. become more comfortable with) working with special needs students. These music teachers would have an opportunity not only to learn how to incorporate these students' needs into their overall classroom management strategy but also lose or at least partially mitigate their own misgivings and preconceptions about the challenges and rewards of inclusion in the music classroom. Two, that although this study has the limitation of being restricted to a small population and therefore may have different results

with different participants (e.g. other pre-service music teachers may not respond as favorably and automatically to special needs students or to the concept of self-efficacy, and not all special needs students are automatically receptive to all teachers) the opportunity to expose pre-service teachers to new challenges cannot be ignored. Of special pertinence to classroom management is the following quote: “One particular issue that stood out to both of the pre-service teachers was that the special needs student was invisible in his band class. Karen (the first pre-service teacher to work with the special needs student) stated in her interview that the other students in the class “didn't really interact with me or Jason that much” and that students kept a “kind of polite distance” from him and never attempted to talk with him or get to know him. Students with special needs often face social challenges in the regular classroom. This is a concern both because a special needs student will be hurt just as much as any other by alienation but also because alienated students may be sources of discord in the classroom. Similarly, as a way to prepare other faculty and staff to work with disabled teachers, it may be helpful to have inservices specifically designed to meet this goal (Reiser, 1990).

The purpose of the article “An Exploratory Study of the Impact of Field Experience on Music Education Majors’ Attitudes and Perceptions of Music for Secondary Students with Special Needs” (Vanweelden, 2007) is to establish, via quantitative questionnaire, whether pre-service music education students’ perceptions and attitudes toward offering music to secondary special needs students from two subpopulations may be altered through an extended field experience. Three attitude and two subpopulation questions were asked. The attitude questions were as follows. (1) Can field experience change pre-service teachers’ comfort level with regards to working with students with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities? (2) Can field experiences change pre-service teachers' attitudes about their professional comfort when working

with students with special needs? and (c) Do field experiences change pre-service teachers' attitudes about their willingness to work with students with special needs? The perception questions were (1) Do field experiences change pre-service teachers' perceptions of whether their educational training prepared them to work with students with special needs? and (2) Do field experiences change pre-service teachers' perceptions of behavior and learning of students with special needs?" The population for this study included fifty-nine undergraduate music majors (general music, choral and/or instrumental concentration) enrolled in a course titled Assessment and Teaching Music: Secondary, at a large university. The results of this study included increased comfort and awareness of students with special needs and an increased ability to create activities that increased on-task behavior and decreased disruptive behavior. The population in this study found that classroom management for students with special needs was akin to classroom management for the general population. As noted by Vanweelden near the end of this article, "...good teaching is good teaching, regardless of the presence or absence of student disabilities." The author also concluded that, based on the pre-service teachers' answers to the questions above, although setting up field experiences can be logistically difficult, pre-service teachers who work with special needs students as part of their undergraduate degree develop more positive personal and professional attitudes toward working with special needs students in the future.

The articles in the previous section answer three questions. How are disabled people (students or teachers) first perceived? How can disabled people, especially teachers, ensure smooth integration and accommodation into the educational environment? What can other school staff (secretaries, principals, members of human resource departments, and superintendents) do

to help disabled teachers integrate with the school community as quickly and effortlessly as possible?

These questions will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections, but the following are some brief responses from the literature. Many nondisabled people who do not have disabled people in their families or immediate circles of acquaintance find dealing with disabled children or adults uncomfortable (Corbett, 1989). Most of the time, this is not out of malice or a wish to discriminate, but out of a wish to protect the disabled person from physical or emotional harm. In regards to physical harm, unless the disability has been acquired within the last year, a disabled child or adult has usually learned to work with their disability and will know his or her limitations (Corbett, 1989). When working with young children, remember they are generally as curious and anxious to play as nondisabled children (Corbett, 1989). In regards to emotional harm, which pertains to asking a disabled adult about his or her disability, most adults would rather discuss than leave room for conjecture (Funk and Fletcher, 1982). As when addressing any challenge a student may encounter in school, tact with regards to disability is required (Hammel, 2001).

Disabled Teachers and Classroom Management

The final two questions of this study are connected and concerned with accommodation.

- 1) How can disabled people, especially teachers, ensure smooth integration and accommodation into the educational environment? and
- 2) What can other school staff do to help disabled

teachers integrate with the school community as quickly and effortlessly as possible? The answers to these questions depend first on an open and courteous dialogue between teachers and administrators. Both parties need as much information about the other party's position (resources and limitations) as possible. Professional facilitators are available to help maintain open dialogue. The National Federation of the Blind provides counsel to disabled teachers, for example, but must be notified as soon as possible about any difficulties between the disabled teacher and the school. As an active participant in politics, the National Federation of the Blind has members who are knowledgeable with regards to reasonable accommodation and other aspects of the ADA.

This section consists of articles pertaining to the treatment of disabled persons in general, and how that general treatment affects and influences disabled teachers. This section will then, in turn, address how disabled teachers react in preparation for the classroom and, once they are in a classroom, how they often react to students, parents, administrators, and others with whom they come in contact.

According to Carol McDowell (2010), the challenges facing teachers of disabled students are grouped into six main areas: behavioral, curricular, environmental, motivational, organizational, and presentational. During their school-aged years (typically between the pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade year), students with mild disabilities are provided with special education services. Mild disabilities are classified into three groups: 1) learning disabilities, 2) emotionally disturbed and/or behavioral disorders, and 3) mild mental retardation. These three categories comprise more than half of the total special education population. The other half of the population is made up of physical disabilities, which include, but are not limited to deafness or hearing impairment, blindness or sight impairment, ambulatory difficulty, speech

impairments not related to any disabilities listed in the first population, and difficulty manipulating objects with arms, hands and/or fingers. Fortunately the similarities between students of differing abilities far outweigh the differences. When working with any and all students no matter the disability, for example, McDowell states that it is critical for teachers to be consistent. This may seem self-explanatory, but may be difficult to implement when teachers are faced with students whose disabilities they have never encountered before. As stated by McDowell, however, establishing and teaching classroom rules, determining how a student perceives rules, and making sure the consequence for an action (positive or negative) fits the action in question are all as critical for a disabled child as for a nondisabled child. Although this article gives many hands-on suggestions for working with students with disabilities, the students' needs are more alike than different and as a whole disabled students are more like fully-abled students than not.

Making accommodations for disabled students is both alike and different than making accommodations for disabled teachers. For children, many accommodations need to be made without the student's input. This is done for clarity and often under time constraints. Many disabled adults make their own accommodations, or know what they need, as is discussed in the following article.

In "Meeting the Needs of the Handicapped Student Teacher," (1982) Funk and Fletcher inform or remind their intended audience of school administrators and cooperating teachers of several things, the first of which is the Rehabilitation Act, much like the Americans with Disabilities Act which was passed a decade earlier: "Section 504 of this law reads as follows: 'No otherwise qualified handicapped individual... [ellipses in original text] shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be

subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Thus, according to *The Rehabilitation Act*, public schools and most charter schools are required to abide by this particular law. However, many religious schools and all other private educational institutions which do not receive federal financial assistance are not required to do so. This also allows public and charter schools the benefit of using federal funding to aid in meeting the needs of handicapped (disabled) student teachers and, by extension, disabled full-time teachers.

The most common argument against disabled teachers is that they should be able to do the exact same work as a fully able-bodied teacher without any accommodations provided by the school. It is true that most disabled teachers have their own coping strategies. Funk and Fletcher state, under the heading “What Adaptations are Needed?” the following statement: “Ask them [the disabled student teacher]! Write or phone them as early as possible to ask what kinds of assistance they will require.” This puts the burden of knowing what is needed in the hands of the disabled teacher, the one most qualified to make that determination. The authors add under the section “Should Extra help be given handicapped student teachers?” that “Misguided sympathy for handicapped people makes it easy to give them too much help. Often such help is both unneeded and unwanted. Most handicapped student teachers are quite independent, but they will readily request help when they need it.” For a blind or visually-impaired teacher or student teacher, for example, reading the class roster in its standard form may be a challenge. There are numerous modifications that can be made, including, but not limited to, large print and Braille. It is not only possible, but legally required, to make such accommodations for the disabled student teacher and in-service teacher.

The purpose of the article, “The Quality of Life in the ‘Independence’ Curriculum” (Corbett, 1989), is to examine the Training for Living program and similar programs which have been designed to assist persons with multiple disabilities in transitioning from day schools to college settings and on to the community. These programs, however, are designed to teach not only rudimentary computer skills, but self-confidence, decision making, personal grooming, daily living skills, and socialization. Although these ideas have been taught when the students were of school age (between three and eighteen), often the skills are ignored or allowed to lapse because students live with their parents, who often take care of their every need. These skills are difficult to reinforce even in the Training for Living program and its sister programs for several reasons: 1) the students in these programs will often continue to live with their parents after the program is complete 2) obtaining a job is rarely feasible 3) general passivity, created through a lack of lifelong decision making, is difficult to change, and 4) many persons with multiple disabilities would need to function at peak performance all the time simply to accomplish all the daily tasks involved in the simple act of living independently, even in a house with others. Corbett reminds her readers several times that these Training for Living programs, while attempting to provide disabled persons with the rudiments of life, are roughly akin to the institutions of the early 1900s in their current popularity and lack of interaction with the community at large. She also quotes several teachers, combining their comments into one quotation: “I was told by a teacher in a special school that I was doing them a disfavor by awakening their expectations and I’d be doing them far more service by letting them go straight into a day centre and be happy and passive. . . . Where are they going to go? What are they going to do” (Corbett, 1988).

This article has a special bearing on this thesis for the commonalities between persons with multiple disabilities who crave independence and persons who have either a few minor disabilities or only one disability with which to contend. Corbett notes that, for many disabled persons, even those with a single disability, the act of “behaving *normally* was not a facade to be acquired without life-long, sustained practice, resulting in subtle nuances which differentiated *normal* from *abnormal* behaviour” [author’s emphasis (Corbett, 1988)]. An example of requested “normal” behavior in the classroom setting would be a visually-impaired secondary choral teacher being asked by administration to leave his or her guide dog off-stage during performances so as not to distract the audience. Corbett reinforces the idea that, for persons with multiple disabilities, poverty, poor medical care, few community connections, and lack of societal support are common. These factors are all too common with regards to persons with a single disability as well, even those who are employed. Regarding disabled teachers specifically, seventy percent of the disabled teachers employed are employed only part-time (Kettle, 1986). And while this statistic is twenty-five years old, it is worth noting that it *is* the most recent statistic available, from the most recent study conducted regarding disabled teachers.

Corbett continues with a discussion of the most common disadvantages facing disabled employees. Access to impromptu meetings and social gatherings is the number one complaint. Many disabled employees are deprived of the opportunity to socialize with their coworkers because they cannot reach a meeting-place in a short amount of time. One professor on a college campus recounted a meeting that was called in the library in twenty minutes. Most of her colleagues simply drove to the other side of the campus. Lacking a vehicle, and knowing that crossing the campus would take forty minutes, the professor decided not to attend the meeting.

The next most frequent complaint was access to casual information. Official documents, such as company memos were often sent out in multiple formats (print, large print, email, and occasionally braille), but employee functions such as bowling leagues, potlucks, and other social gatherings posted on bulletin boards were not sent out in multiple formats. This second complaint is addressed in the most recent version of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which had not been drafted at the time of the Corbett article.

According to the article *Backlash: Don't Disable Teachers with Disabilities* (Reiser, 1990), "The special education 'mold' must be broken and sufficient resources must be forced from central government to allow full integration... Costs of employing a disabled teacher cannot really be met from a devolved budget", which most locally-managed schools possess. As of 1990 (in both the United Kingdom and the United States) less than one percent of teachers are disabled despite a quota (in the United States as well as Britain) that requires at least three percent of a school's certified teaching personnel be disabled. As of January 2011, less than one percent of teachers in the United States are disabled. Reiser states that "On entry to colleges of higher education or postgraduate courses in education, on applying to an LEA [local education authorities] United Kingdom-referred to in the United States as human resource personnel] to teach or on becoming disabled during one's career, DES Circular, 1/88 *Medical Fitness to Teach* went into effect. A unidimensional view of the job of the teacher is evoked. '...teaching makes considerable demands on teachers' mobility and attentiveness.'" Currently, the following disabilities are under-represented in the ranks of American schools' teachers: deaf or hearing impaired, blind or visually impaired, epilepsy and all disabilities which lead to the use of wheelchairs or other mobility aids. In fact, the only disability currently represented at greater than one percent are mentally challenged cafeteria workers and janitors. As Reiser states, "Over

and over again attitudes in staff rooms do not allow for difference. Treating all teachers as if they were the same is *not* equal opportunities.” As a partially federally-funded public organization, public schools are by law required to abide by the current non-discrimination laws which currently include disabled persons.

The current Americans with Disabilities Act (ratified in 1971 and revised in 1990) states that the following accommodations are reasonable in the classroom for all disabled teachers: reasonable accommodation, which may include, but is not limited to assistive technology (including computing software), mobility implements and a teaching aide in the classroom. While meeting the first two requirements falls first to the disabled teacher, having access to an aide in the classroom falls to the school district where the teacher is employed. As noted earlier, many districts do not have the resources to hire two people where they were expecting to hire only one, but because public education is partially federally-funded, it falls to the government to ensure that disabled teachers are not discriminated against.

The purpose of the study conducted for the government document, “The Employment of Disabled Teachers,” was to determine if there was any truth to the stories (nearly urban legends) which stated that disabled education majors had extreme difficulty obtaining employment. Also, if employment was obtained, the stories claimed that the majority of disabled persons were only part-time employees, and had difficulty in terms of promotion to higher pay grades. Teacher retention was also an area called into question. To determine if these tales were correct, this study interviewed disabled teachers from public and private elementary and secondary schools as well as colleges and universities. The population of disabled teachers included those with mild to severe physical disabilities, including, but not limited to mobility and/or dextral impairments, hearing impairments, and visual impairments. Seventy-nine percent of the disabled teachers were

employed in some capacity, even if this was only a few hours a week. Several worked as volunteers while they awaited interviews, but still considered themselves to be teachers. Twenty-one percent of the teachers interviewed were retired, either due to their age or, as some contended, due to complications involving either their disability or perceptions of the same.

When discussing employment, there was an even split between those disabled teachers who received few barriers to an initial interview, and those who applied to hundreds of schools in order to obtain a single face to face meeting. Interviews are often considered one of the most important, if not *the* most important, step in the application process. Many disabled teachers in this study wrote that they often neglected to mention their disability on their initial application so as to have an opportunity to explain the benefits as well as the drawbacks of their condition in person. The teachers who wrote that they received few barriers to employment stated that a positive and open attitude, both theirs and their potential employer's, aided in their obtaining a position so quickly. A positive attitude toward educating those who had not encountered disabled persons before was seen as invaluable by nearly every teacher who was interviewed. In support of this notion, Kettle quotes two respondents of his study. "My main concern would be to educate those who appoint teachers so that they are aware of the various facets of disability and do not simply over-react in a prejudiced way... Heads and advisers should be made aware of the fact that disability doesn't necessarily mean that one is incapable of following normal work. Governors and employing bodies should be aware that it is professional competence that counts, not being an 'Adonis'." It is worth noting that this notion of a positive attitude being extremely important is held chiefly by disabled persons who were disabled since birth or early childhood. Teachers who became disabled after they started teaching often found it difficult to continue in their chosen profession. Taking note of this, Kettle asked for suggestions from lifelong disabled

persons and was told that newly disabled teachers should be given the opportunity to talk with other disabled teachers to learn the easiest ways to integrate the disability into their lives.

Once employment was obtained, Kettle determined that full-time employment was by no means universal. Only fifty percent of the male disabled teachers and twenty-seven percent of female disabled teachers were employed full-time. One respondent noted that many schools were more than willing to take her on as a volunteer, but the moment hiring was suggested, she was passed over. On the other hand, part-time work is sometimes necessary. For some disabled persons, an accommodation for the disability is the need for rest during the day. A half day of teaching is an excellent way to accomplish this, although it must be noted that a person living alone can no longer support himself on a part-time income without other means to supplement that income.

The stories about being passed over for promotions were ambiguous and dissenting. Although some disabled teachers contended that, with patience and perseverance and a dedication to, as one respondent put it, “setting a higher standard so we are noticed for something *besides* our disability” [emphasis by Kettle], others argued that no matter how many times they were considered for promotion, they always lost out to a nondisabled peer. Kettle states, however, that there is little more than hearsay on this topic.

Retention is the most troubling aspect of the Kettle document. In 1986, the United States surpassed England in building, sidewalk, and bathroom access. According to Kettle, many teachers left their places of employment, were unable to attend staff meetings or staff social events, or were only allowed to teach in certain rooms because of lack of adequate access. By comparison, the United States had passed several wheelchair access laws by the early 1980s (Bagenstos, 2009). Both countries are mostly accessible now, yet neither country has

accomplished complete accessibility for all citizens. For example, in the United States the braille on a vending machine which identifies the food inside says only “chocolate” or “chips.”

Many of the teachers who retired stated that lack of accessibility in the classroom, to the buildings themselves, and to materials that would allow them to teach were the main reasons they chose to retire from teaching or to only volunteer. One respondent reported that as he lost his hearing, the students took more and more advantage, and his requests for assistive technology aids were ignored by both administration and the teacher advocates to whom he spoke. Another disabled teacher stated that she never saw her advocate, but was only ever contacted by phone or letter, that it was as if the advocate didn't actually want to see her condition. (This teacher was in a wheelchair.)

Kettle concludes that, based on this information, only a few suggestions may be drawn.

There is

“1) a lack of access to and within educational establishments, 2) poor utilization of government funding to facilitate the adaptation of premises and the provision of work aids, 3) no particular advantage attaches to becoming registered as a disabled person [Note: this registry option does not exist in the United States, although many states do require blind and visually-impaired individuals to prove their degree of vision loss at least once every three years in order to continue to receive special services such as paratransit or reduced bus fares.], 4) Local education authorities and their advisers show some inconsistency in how they deal with disability; some are ignorant about disability, others are apathetic, and only very few have a positive approach, 5) trades unions within the teaching field show little knowledge concerning disability and disabled teachers, 6) Individuals who become disabled during their teaching career could benefit from advice and counseling from other disabled teachers, 7) the educational sector of industry seems less well-informed about disability than other sectors.”

How are disabled teachers first perceived? Kettle concludes this depends on the person doing the judging. However, several of the teachers interviewed for his article (“The

Employment of Disabled Teachers”) state that only by accomplishing greater tasks than their nondisabled counterparts may they draw the wanted attention and help to distract from their disability long enough to show their true value.

How can disabled teachers ensure smooth integration and accommodation into the educational environment? The most effective methods (Corbett, 1989, Funk and Fletcher, 1982) are centered around self-efficacy, whereby the disabled teacher understands first how to navigate his or her world nearly flawlessly so that any job he or she undertakes may be incorporated into a normal day’s function. It is essential for the disabled teacher to be knowledgeable about the resources available beyond those provided by their administration (Kettle, 1989, Reiser, 1990). Diplomacy is also crucial when working with nondisabled people who have not had a lifetime (or even a few months) of exposure to the way a disability changes perceptions, movements, and such simple things like opening a door. All the authors in this section, as well as Hammel (2001), Hourigan (2007) and Vanweelden (2007), state that working with disabled people usually changes the perceptions of nondisabled people, but that these changes may take time, “and no change is ever complete” (Vanweelden, 2007).

What can other school staff (secretaries, principals, members of human resource departments, and superintendents) do to help disabled teachers integrate with the school community as quickly and effortlessly as possible? All of the authors listed above agree that accessibility is the most important accommodation that must be made. Because disabled teachers are to make some of their own accommodations, it falls to the disabled teacher to inform his or her supervisor of what is needed. However, to foster greater community, the supervisor may achieve greater cooperation and support from the disabled teacher by approaching with the simple question: “Is there anything the school can help provide in terms of accommodation?”

Just as the disabled teacher must know the Americans with Disabilities Act, all administration should know the Act as well, including extra federal funding or tax exemptions that are awarded to schools that employ disabled teachers (Wilson, 2006). From other teachers, from secretaries and janitors and other school staff, the best way to help a disabled teacher integrate into the community is to *make* that teacher part of the community (Corbett, 1989). Just as a first year teacher would be given a mentor teacher, extend this offer to a disabled teacher.

Based only on the literature review above, there are several ways to look at the main question for this thesis: is classroom management possible for a disabled teacher with or without accommodation?

In terms of general classroom management techniques, many of the methods used by nondisabled teachers, such as quick pacing and teacher intensity, do not change when applied by disabled teachers. Other techniques must, by necessity, be modified by either the disabled teacher or with accommodations made by the administration such as the addition of ramps, an aide in the classroom, or different technology in the classroom.

The first concern of disabled pre-service teachers and nondisabled teachers is classroom management. For nondisabled pre-service teachers, direct experiences in the classroom were determined to be much more helpful, and based on Corbett's (1989) article, it is reasonable to conclude that the same is true for disabled pre-service teachers. Disabled teachers will often need longer to become acclimated to teaching environments because of the addition of working with their disability in a classroom setting, but the more often they are exposed a classroom setting, the less extra time they will need (Funk and Fletcher, 1982).

Disabled people must be informed and assertive (rather than aggressive) about their rights and responsibilities as disabled employees. In the education system, there are perhaps not as

many opportunities for disabled teachers because not every nondisabled person has an open mind, but disabled teachers must be willing to maintain a professional demeanor. It is the responsibility of both the disabled and nondisabled parties involved in any school to know the Americans with Disabilities Act and how it may apply to their situation.

Is classroom management possible for a disabled teacher with or without accommodation? According to the literature review above, accommodations (by the teacher, administrator or, most likely, both) will be necessary. Many accommodations will be relatively painless and quick. However, as seen especially in the Reiser, Kettle, and Corbett articles, politics and human concerns and fears can play a disastrous part in preventing disabled teachers from receiving, retaining, or succeeding in a position. For some teachers, this truth has led them to early retirement or encouraged them into another field. For others, it is a challenge to be overcome. In the following section, blind and visually-impaired teachers will share their teaching experiences.

Method

A qualitative survey was used to answer the central question of this thesis: *is classroom management possible for disabled teachers with or without accommodation?* For ease of comparison, only visually-impaired or blind teachers were chosen for the interview process. The hope was that by choosing only one group of disabled persons to study in this qualitative survey, similarities between disabled persons could be drawn rather than time being wasted in fruitless sorting of accommodations for teachers with different disabilities. One pre-service, one in-service, and one retired teacher participated in this survey. Despite the low number of teachers, a wide variety of experiences has been gathered. The retired and in-service teachers were both located through contacts with the National Federation of the Blind, although neither teacher belongs to this organization herself. The third teacher is a fellow musician, although she did not study music while in college.

Data has been collected in two ways. First, each teacher received an email containing a letter asking for their participation in the qualitative study. After giving their permission, they received a .docx or Rich Text file (depending on their personal preference) attached to a second email. The survey was carefully formatted with Microsoft Word's Insert Table function to make sure it could be easily read and modified by any visually impaired user equipped with assistive technology. Assistive technology included, but was not limited to, LionOS (iMAC only), ZoomText (Windows XP, '98, 2003, Windows 7 and Windows 2010), and Jaws (iMac and Windows). Each teacher was given a week to answer the survey's questions. The survey (and questions inspired by their answers to it) was then discussed via a telephone call which usually

lasted ninety minutes. Answers were transcribed, verbatim, by the researcher, as each teacher spoke, with occasional requests from the researcher for the teacher to repeat a word or phrase. The value of designing the survey to be fluid and flexible, able to grow with the teachers' responses rather than remain static, is that the maximum amount of information about classroom management and teachers with a specific disability may be gathered. The hope is that, through this specific example, the central question of this thesis may be answered to a greater degree.

Each teacher has been asked a different set of questions in accordance with her level of experience. The first section consisted of demographics. These questions included educational background and level of visual impairment, with onset.

The next section was concerned with the essentials of classroom management. This included training and belief in classroom management as well as the use of nonverbal communication by the visually impaired.

The following section was directed only at the retired and in-service teacher. It was concerned with the belief in and creation of classroom rules.

The next section was also directed at only the retired and in-service teacher. This section was concerned with accommodations these teachers made in the classroom, or accommodations that were made at their request by administration.

The next section was given to all teachers. Its focus was the Americans with Disabilities Act and its corollary, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission.

The final section of the qualitative survey was concerned with changes in classroom management.

The results section of this thesis will discuss important similarities and differences in the answers the teachers provided. The questions in each section of the survey were collated by

similarity of topic. In addition, after the interviews were completed, the answers were compiled in the results section according to response, with similarities first, followed by contrasting responses. For a complete list of questions, see Appendix 1, found after the body of the thesis.

Results

As mentioned at the end of the previous section, a complete copy of the qualitative survey administered to all three teachers may be found in Appendix 1. In this portion, the six sections of the retired teacher's and in-service teacher's, and the four sections of the pre-service teacher's, qualitative survey will be laid out, highlighting pertinent similarities and differences in answers between the three teachers. In this section, for ease in reading and comprehension, the teachers are referred to as RT (retired teacher), IST (in-service teacher) and PST (pre-service teacher).

All three subjects were asked what college they attended and their concentration. The retired teacher attended a college in California; her majors were English and French while her minor was music. When asked why she pursued so many degrees, she responded, "I believe it's better to have [at least] one subject that will employ you." The in-service teacher's major was elementary education; she attended college in New York. The pre-service teacher also attended college in New York, pursuing a dual major in special education and education for the visually impaired, the second of which is typically a one-on-one position for itinerant teachers who travel from school to school.

Finally, all three subjects were asked to define their level of sight, and the onset of visual impairment or blindness. The retired teacher was born completely blind. The pre-service teacher was born with acute nearsightedness. She cannot drive, and her condition is inoperable. It also cannot be changed beyond a certain point even with glasses or other forms of corrective lenses. However, she can read large print (up close) and uses her white cane as a means for others to

identify her as visually-impaired rather than as a means of travelling safely. The in-service teacher was born with some slight vision, but became completely blind during her teaching career.

The retired and in-service teacher were asked how long they have been teaching, and what grades they have taught. The retired teacher has taught middle school chorus, music history (middle and high school), middle and high school English, and high school French. She taught from 1964 until 1999, mostly in low-income areas and inner city schools. The in-service teacher is currently teaching pre-kindergarten, but she has also taught kindergarten, first grade, and early childhood classes. She has been teaching for twenty years, and obtained her national certification in the last few months.

The pre-service teacher was asked what other field experiences she had besides student teaching. She read to kindergarten students three days a week for a semester shortly before student teaching. “I enjoyed that experience much more than student teaching. I loved the little ones.”

Section two begins with the question, “What do you consider the most important component of classroom management, and why?” RT: “Rapport: let the students know you respect them, [that] you’re willing to listen to them and give them time.” She adds that finding a reason to give genuine praise, of an individual or of the whole class, is critical to building rapport. When the in-service teacher was asked the same question, she answered that the most important part of classroom management was “thoroughly knowing my students’ personalities, likes, dislikes, and capabilities, because every student is unique, and if you know your students’ personalities you can treat them fairly.” In addition to this answer, she alone was asked, “Is there a danger in treating your students ‘fairly’ versus being consistent?” She responded, “No.

Consistency is not rigidity but applying the rules equally to all students. Hitting a student accidentally with an elbow is different than punching a student and should be treated differently.” PST’s response to the most important component of classroom management was “controlling disruptive behavior [i.e.] kids that were flinging rubber bands [and] kids that were spitting. Particularly in special education, the children are typically interested in other things than learning.” She was asked to explain her reason for this answer, and she stated: “Especially here, where special education is a dumping ground for the emotionally disturbed, the students are not interested in learning, especially when you are a young teacher.”

Also in section two, all three teachers were asked, “What training have you had in classroom management?” RT answered that she didn’t have any official classroom management training, that she learned by experience and observing other teachers. For example, before student teaching, she sought out advice from other teachers, sitting in on their classes and discussing their methods. Also, “students were meek kittens back then. And if the students are out of control, there’s nothing you can do about it. It’s their choice if they want to learn. If they miss something today, they won’t know it for tomorrow.” The in-service teacher (IST) stated, “I had positive discipline [training] and training from Wolf Trap performing artists to gain attention by using music, noisemakers, and other arts-related techniques.” The pre-service teacher (PST) answered, “I didn’t have any training outside of one chapter on behavior modification.”

The next two questions were about classroom management methods. All teachers were asked if they considered their methods effective, and if so, why. Both the retired and in-service teachers replied yes, while the pre-service teacher answered no. The retired teacher stated that her greatest strength was her ability to improvise, and that she must improvise because no two classes were ever the same. IST responded that she knew her classroom management methods

were working because her pre-K children enjoy school. “I know that because they tell me every day. There are times when they will be very honest and tell me they are bored and I know I have to improve on the lesson.” She speculated that one reason the low level of safety concerns in her classroom was due to her students’ contentment and feeling of safety in her room. “I communicate with the parents regularly and I have a lot of parental support. I make phone calls every day and/or send home a note with a line for their signature.”

The next two questions from section two are really one question. “Is nonverbal communication a part of your classroom management strategies? Nonverbal communication includes, but is not limited to, physical proximity, body language, facial expressions, and hand gestures. If you do not use nonverbal communication, why not? If so, what kind do you use and is it/how is it effective?” All three teachers responded that they have used, or are continuing to use, nonverbal communication in their teaching. RT, who has spent her entire life totally blind, noted that her parents taught her how to show emotion on her face when she was a child so she would be able to interact more easily with the other children around her. She carried this skill over to her classrooms, frowning or raising her eyebrows when students did something she didn’t like and smiling when her chorus sang well. IST uses the appearance of “looking” in her pre-K classroom. “I’ll ‘look’ toward their voices; the students will say ‘what?’ and I’ll say ‘why do you think?’ and they’ll say ‘too loud.’” During student teaching, the pre-service teacher used proximity most often, although she also used her facial expressions.

In section three, the importance and creation of rules are discussed as they relate to classroom management. This section applied only to the retired and in-service teachers because the pre-service teacher did not yet have her own classroom.

“Why are rules essential to classroom management?” The in-service teacher stated, “For safety reasons, for things to go smoothly in the classroom, for the children to know their boundaries and consequences if they don’t listen to the rules. I think knowing their boundaries lessens the confusion because if the rules aren’t consistent or if the teacher’s unfair, it causes them [the students] confusion or disequilibrium.” The retired teacher responded, “Without [rules] you have anarchy. You have to have some parameters or everyone’s going to be going off in a different direction.” Each teacher presented her rules differently at the beginning of each year. RT’s rules are given to the students, while IST’s rules are a discussion, although both teachers allow students to discuss the reasons behind the rules and offer multiple ways for the students to take notice of the rules. (Example, RT: “[I] purposely hung things [like posted rules] upside down or sideways to see how long it would takes students to notice- to cultivate students attention skills.”

Section four, likewise, was dedicated only to retired and in-service teachers. This section was concerned with accommodations in the classroom. “Please discuss some strategies that you used to effectively engage your students. Did any of these strategies require accommodations?” The in-service teacher responded that she used music, puppets, and many different activities. She encouraged students to look at her face to see a reflection of their behavior. In terms of accommodations to make her classroom run smoothly, this nationally certified teacher replied, “I have my cane in my hand when I’m walking around the room; I know the room very well. I’ve had the same room for ten or eleven years, [which may be a] kindness or accommodation from the principal because I was moved from kindergarten to pre-K). Everything [all books, including teacher’s editions and students’ books, as well as students’ name tags and labels for drawers] is in braille.” The in-service teacher has used her own money for the past twenty years to convert

these necessary teaching materials into a format she can use. At times this required little more than a single strip of braille applied on each page of a children's book, but at other times it meant converting an entire textbook, which equates to hundreds of hours of work, not to mention the expense of materials for the brailled text. The retired teacher responded that she, too, made all of her own accommodations, working with a reader she hired during the summer to prepare braille music or textbooks for the year ahead. Both teachers were asked why they did this and if it was a financial hardship. IST: "I'm the kind of person that I haven't asked my county for anything. I'm very happy to have a job when other people are out of work. They also wouldn't know how to do the braille work. When it comes right down to it, I really just try to be inconspicuous and not ask for modifications. I try to not make waves. It's my personality." The retired teacher explained that by taking an aide or reader hired by the school, a teacher would be taking on extra problems. The teacher and aide or reader might have personality or teaching style conflicts, the administration might pull the aide to fill another position partway through the year, or choose to dismiss the aide for other reasons beyond the teacher's control. Also, the teacher might not have the ability to dismiss the aide.

When asked how much these accommodations cost, the in-service teacher answered approximately 5% of her income annually, and the retired teacher answered 10% of her income annually. The in-service teacher added, "I was poor growing up and I want to make sure my kids have a really rich experience." She also mentioned that there are unknown resources for teachers, but that it is every teacher's responsibility to find these resources on their own, or through uniting with other teachers, either in person or over the Internet.

Regarding aides in the classroom, a possible reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, both the retired and in-service teacher responded that they did

not have an aide to assist with classroom management. Both also stated they did not wish to ever have one because the aide might interfere with how they interacted with their students. The IST has an aide in her classroom, but only because all pre-kindergarten teachers have aides. Her aide does not assist any more or less with classroom management than any aide who works with a sighted teacher in the school.

In this section, the following question was asked. “When enforcing the rules you listed in Section Two, how did you make accommodations for your level of eyesight?” RT answered, “Repeat the rules. What else you gonna do?” When asked if fights ever broke out in any of her rooms, she replied that yes, there were fights. She used the karate she learned in her classroom. She pushed them [the students who were fighting] out of the room.” IST enforces her rules in a different way. “I ask the students if they’re doing the correct thing. I sometimes feel their heads to know if they’re doing what I ask them to do. I move closer and listen to how they’re behaving.” Here it must be noted that this in-service teacher makes no secret of her practice of touching students’ heads. When she meets both these pre-K students and their parents at the beginning of the school year, she explains her actions to the parents. She also has an aide (required in all pre-K classrooms) in her room.

The next section was given to all three teachers, and was concerned with the Americans with Disabilities Act. “Have you ever needed to use the Americans with Disabilities Act or the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunities Commission) to see that you were given equal opportunity of interview and/or employment?” The second question is alike, but concerned with the ADA in the classroom: “Have you ever needed to use the Americans with Disabilities Act to see that your rights or needs in the classroom were met?” For all three teachers, the answer to the second question was no, but the pre-service teacher answered yes to the first question. “I worked

as a direct care aide in a group home for mentally and physically handicapped people. The job required a driver's license, and I was able to use the EEOC to point out that I was still able to do the job minus the driving part, which could always be handled by another staffer." When asked if she actually approached the EEOC for protection, she responded, "No. The threat of the EEOC's potential involvement was enough."

The final section of the survey was concerned with these teachers' opinions of changes in classroom management methods. The retired teacher saw that her classroom management style changed with each class out of necessity, but she did not notice any overall changes in classroom management strategies since she began teaching in 1969. The in-service teacher noticed much less time-out being used in kindergarten and pre-K, but has only noticed greater confidence in her own teaching rather than a change in classroom management methods. The pre-service teacher stated, "I now know that yelling does absolutely nothing to assist in classroom management." When asked why she thought this was true, she answered, "If you show you're out of control, the students get more out of control, and think they have control, and it's just chaos."

Although all three teachers attended roughly comparable teacher education programs, what they gained from these programs and what they brought to the teaching profession was clearly different. Neither RT nor PST was given the chance to study classroom management. However, they reacted differently to this lack of official training. RT sought teachers to observe (sighted teachers; she could not find any blind teachers in her location and lacked the ability to travel). When asked in the final section what advice she would give to other disabled teachers, RT responded, "Sometimes it's not even a blindness related issue. What you find out after a while is that sighted teachers have all the same problems."

Consistency was central to IST and PST's classroom management strategies, although for different reasons. IST sought to understand her students while PST sought to control her students' behavior in order to help educate them. RT believed rapport was the crux of classroom management because once students feel respected, they feel secure in their environment.

Nonverbal communication is an excellent way to keep a quick pace during a lesson. According to all three teachers, most nonverbal communication is possible for them despite their lack of sight. Even "eye contact" is possible, although it is only an illusion. IST used this illusion to the best effect when she turned toward her students who were talking. She used her sense of hearing and an attentive facial expression in place of actual eye contact. Just as eye contact has worked for sighted teachers in the past, the technique of simulated eye contact was just as effective.

The question of teacher-made versus administration-made accommodations will be discussed in the following section. Some accommodations (such as bringing one's white cane or wheelchair to school each day) can and must be made only by the disabled teacher. However, the question remains if all accommodations should be covered by the disabled teacher even if complete coverage is possible.

Summary, Discussion and Conclusion

The review of relevant literature and responses from practicing teachers lead to the response that classroom management is undoubtedly possible for teachers with disabilities, but only with accommodation. These accommodations may be made by the disabled teacher or by an outside force acting on behalf of the teacher, such as members of the school administration or members of the county when necessary, but accommodations must be made for a disabled teacher to have adequate conditions for all aspects of teaching, including classroom management.

As shown in the above results section, certain aspects of classroom management may be achieved through mild or extensive accommodation or through no accommodation at all. Accommodations may also be a natural outgrowth of the disabled teacher's daily life, tailored by the teacher specifically for the classroom, or instituted from the outside by administrators. A chart of these different types of accommodations, as defined by this researcher, and examples from the results of the qualitative study, are displayed below in Figure 1.

Type of Accommodation	Definition	Example from Results
No accommodation	A classroom management technique that may also be used by nondisabled teachers	Nonverbal communication: IST Ex: facing noisy students until she drew their attention and they quieted
Mild accommodation	An accommodation requiring little physical work on the part of the disabled teacher	Verbal recognition: RT Ex: requiring students, throughout the year, to identify themselves by name when they have a question
Extensive accommodation	An accommodation requiring several hours of physical work on the part of the disabled teacher	Personal Textbook Transcription: RT and IST Ex: both teachers converted books (textbooks, children's books, and music) into braille during each summer vacation.

Daily accommodation	An accommodation a disabled person would use in his or her everyday life	Mobility: RT and IST Ex: both teachers used their white canes in the classroom to ensure their safety, as well as ease and swiftness of mobility.
Classroom-specific accommodation	An accommodation created for the purposes of the classroom	Brailed necklaces: IST Ex: the teacher brailed her students' lunch numbers on cards and the children wore these as necklaces
Imposed accommodation	An accommodation made by an outside force, such as a principal or other administrator	Room consistency: IST Ex: Although recently changing what grade level she taught, this teacher was allowed to keep the room she has been in for over ten years.

Fig. 1. Types of Accommodations

The pre-service teacher did not make many accommodations during her three student teaching experiences. With only one subject, it is unwise to draw far-reaching conclusions, but other research possibly speaks to this phenomenon as well. In Kettle’s article (1986), several disabled teachers note that those teachers who are not used to making widespread accommodations for their disability in their daily lives may find it difficult to do so in their place of employment. However, should widespread accommodations be necessary in a teaching environment more so than in daily life? Possibly, says Corbett (1989). Disabled people tend to be comfortable in their own environments (home and immediate surrounding neighborhood). These environments have been adapted to or subconsciously *accommodated*.

Discussion

A classroom can be an ever-changing environment, far more so than many offices or other conventional places of employment. If a disabled person has worked within an environment that does not change, or changes at a slow pace, he or she may not have the skills necessary to work in a classroom. As another teacher in the Kettle article states, “Newly disabled teachers often have trouble in the classroom not because of the disability but because they don’t have the lifetime’s worth of coping strategies.” The same can often be said for those disabled persons who are “just disabled enough:” the hard-of-hearing, the near-sighted, or those walking with a limp. These people are often encouraged to act like “normal” people to the best of their ability and not develop the same skills as those who are “fully” disabled.

Referring back to Figure 1, it is worth noting the times when accommodations are not needed. Often, disabled teachers are set apart because of their disability. This separation may help in terms of allowing the teacher to gain access to resources he or she needs in order to teach (ensuring the school building is accessible, that all memos are available in a format the teacher can read, etc.). However, this separation may also include focus on the disability to the exclusion of the teacher’s other abilities.

For instance, as a follow-up question to Section Two (classroom management), the retired teacher was asked, “Did you ever have trouble with parents or administrators not believing you witnessed Child A misbehaving or being inappropriate with Child B because of your blindness?” RT: “Yes, but administrators and parents say the same to sighted teachers.” Researcher: “How did you address their disbelief?” RT: “I reminded the parents, ‘You’ve had these problems with other teachers.’” In this example, the retired teacher used a skill many

nondisabled teachers also use: the ability to draw on her other senses to observe her classroom. She also used the experiences of her fellow faculty members to bolster her own position.

A brief exploration of reasonable accommodations, and the difference this term takes in the general workplace versus the public school system is needed. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, all disabled people working in a company (public or private sector) with at least fifteen employees are entitled to reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodation is broken down into three areas: modification of the job application process for qualified disabled persons to apply for a job they want, modification of the manner in which the job is performed or the work environment to allow disabled persons to perform a job's essential functions, and modification of the workplace to allow disabled employees equal access to benefits and privileges extended to nondisabled employees. Only the second reasonable accommodation will be discussed here.

Modification of the manner in which the job is performed, or modification the work environment is different outside America's educational system. I conducted a phone interview with a supervisor at a well-known financial institution to learn the accommodations available for disabled employees. As with the qualitative survey, the supervisor's spoken answers were transcribed immediately, without use of a tape recorder.

Researcher: "Does your company employ disabled people?" Supervisor: "Yes."
Researcher: "What types of accommodations have you make for them?" Supervisor: "I can't talk about any current employees. Here are examples of employees who have moved on to other branches or retired. One deaf employee asked for no modifications, except that everything be written down. However, during meetings or briefings of any kind, it was our policy to hire an ASL interpreter from the outside... A woman had back surgery, and we provided an

ergonomically altered chair and monitor adjustments [for her work station] ... Our institution has elevators to every floor, as well as ramps [outside]. All walkways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs. Most bathrooms have at least two wheelchair-accessible stalls. Bathroom doors are automatic-capable for easy wheelchair access... We hire employees with mental and psychiatric disabilities. [One employee had] OCD [obsessive-compulsive disorder]. The employee performed repetitive tasks that would have caused her to be written up if her disorder had not been known. [The financial institution's policy states:] as long as this employee finishes work, which may require a small amount of overtime, she may continue to work here." The current study lacks an adequate example of similar reasonable accommodations granted by a public school. Here follow two examples from my own teaching experience.

While substitute teaching for a week in a first grade classroom, the school where I worked enlarged the teacher's emailed lesson plans each morning so I could read them. This was a case of reasonable (and imposed) accommodation.

While teaching middle school chorus (my first year of teaching), I asked for enlargement software on the school computer in my room. I could not read the menus to take attendance, and my mild accommodation (having a student take attendance for me as I called names) was declared unsafe due to the sensitive nature of other information on the computer (grades). This request was refused. An alternative modification (having a student take attendance on a list of students' names) was likewise denied. No alternate suggestions were offered by the administration.

My situation was not unique; according to the Kettle article, many disabled teachers choose to make their own accommodations rather than ask administration for one of three reasons: 1) the accommodation might take too long to be approved or executed, 2) the

administration might decide the accommodation was too expensive and deny the request, or 3) the accommodation might be made, but the disabled teacher would be seen as a “troublemaker” and a “liability” from then on, always “taking from the system” instead of helping the school (Kettle, 1986). And while, according to the current study, the financial cost of making one’s own accommodations is only between five and ten percent of a teacher’s total income, disabled teachers are as protected as other disabled people by the Americans with Disabilities Act, and just as entitled to reasonable accommodations.

The lack of imposed accommodations may have an impact on the number of disabled people who apply for and retain teaching positions in the United States today. This was certainly the case for many teachers interviewed for “The Employment of Disabled Teachers” (Kettle, 1986) and “Backlash: Don’t Disable Teachers with Disabilities” (Reiser, 1990). A barrier facing blind and visually-impaired teachers specifically may be the emphasis placed on sight over other senses, as evidenced by the lack of accommodations made in everyday situations [see “The Employment of Disabled Teachers”]. Both of these ideas bear further examination in another study.

Returning to the current study, all three teachers were asked what training they received in classroom management. Only the in-service teacher cited specific training. Although classroom management training has increased in many schools in recent years (Battersby, 2009; Bauer, 2001; Bergee, 2002; Bowers, 2006; Buck, 1992; Jones, 1987; Juchniewicz, 2010; Madsen, 2003; McDowl, 2010; Medland and Vitale, 1984; Rossman, 1989; Steele, 2010; Vanweelden, 2007; Wong and Wong, 1991), the above articles focus on classroom management for the nondisabled teacher.

Articles in education magazines for the general teaching populace should perhaps, by definition, focus only on nondisabled teachers. However, there are no classroom management textbooks, classes, or even pamphlets available for the disabled teacher. This not only denies the disabled teacher *equal access* to classroom management techniques suited to his or her abilities, but also denies alternative methods for the nondisabled teacher. That may be the greatest loss to education: the nondisabled teacher is denied the opportunity to learn classroom management, and other instructional and organizational, techniques from the disabled teacher.

This discussion above leads to one answer: classroom management is possible for the blind and/or visually impaired teacher, with accommodations. These accommodations, perhaps, should not be made only by the blind or visually impaired teacher, and it is this researcher's opinion that another study should be conducted to pursue the question of who bears the financial and/or legal responsibility for making necessary accommodations.

Conclusion

Classroom management includes all the disciplinary, instructional, and organizational activities a teacher accomplishes to facilitate the safest and most efficient learning environment possible. The purpose of this thesis was not to define effective classroom management, but only explain the fundamental practice in four areas. These areas are common practices of nondisabled in-service music teachers, common practices of nondisabled pre-service music teachers, the

similarities between working with disabled students and working with disabled professionals in the community, and the challenges faced by disabled teachers in all types of classrooms.

Exploration of these four areas, as well as a questionnaire centered on the classroom management practices of three visually-impaired teachers, was used to answer the central question. Is classroom management possible for disabled teachers with or without accommodation? Based on the literature review and answers to the qualitative study, classroom management is possible for disabled teachers only with accommodation, whether those accommodations are made exclusively by the teacher, exclusively by the administration, or through collaboration between teacher and administration.

The first of the four areas, general classroom management techniques, includes quick pacing, specific, immediate, and accurate feedback after students perform, music selected in response to the cultural diversity in the classroom, the three aspects of teacher reflection, and social intelligence. Each of these techniques is accessible to the disabled teacher, but some require more accommodation than others. Quick pacing, for example, when applied to a blind teacher, may require textbooks and other materials in braille, a different system for students to ask questions during a lecture portion, and modification of computers, LCD projectors, or other technology.

The greatest concern for pre-service teachers seems to be classroom management. According to Bergee (2002), practical experience (direct work with school-age children) is more effective than textbook knowledge. Funk and Fletcher (1982) state that disabled student teachers may need extra time to become familiar and/or comfortable enough with their surroundings to teach effectively. Given this statement, it follows that disabled pre-service teachers might need as many or more direct experiences than nondisabled pre-service teachers.

According to Hammel (2001), knowledge of the similarities between different disabilities is a key component when working with disabled students in the elementary music classroom. The articles by Funk and Fletcher (1982) and Kettle (1986) both convey this same message, Funk and Fletcher from the perspective of the pre-service teacher and Kettle from the point of view of the in-service teacher. While the authors of the second two articles both state that the disabled teacher (or student teacher) must express their needs, having knowledge of the similarities between disabilities will allow other professionals to work with disabled teachers more effectively.

Based on the answers to the classroom management survey, accommodations are an intrinsic component of the profession for disabled teachers. The three subjects interviewed (one pre-service, one in-service, and one retired teacher) each made all of their own accommodations in the classroom. The in-service and retired teacher spent five percent and ten percent of their salaries each year (respectively) to pay for these accommodations, which included readers to transcribe textbooks and choral music. The retired teacher taught for thirty years. She did not have the protection of the Americans with Disabilities Act which promises reasonable accommodation for twenty-two of those years. However, after the ADA was passed, the retired teacher stated she would not accept assistance from the administration because she might be given a reader she did not like working with. Similarly, the in-service teacher refused accommodations from her school district. She did not want to be considered a “drain on the county,” and she was concerned that any reader or braille transcriber chosen for her would not know how to complete their work accurately.

According to the *Gale Encyclopedia of Everyday Law* (2006), when an employee and employer cannot agree on the definition of *reasonable accommodation*, “[t]he employer must

demonstrate that the specific reasonable accommodation being considered would cause significant difficulty or expense. The determination of undue hardship is made on a case-by-case basis, and courts consider such factors as the type and cost of the accommodation, the financial resources of the employer, the number of employees, and the overall impact of the accommodation on the employer's operation. An employer cannot claim undue hardship resulting from fears or prejudices about an individual's disability or fears that an accommodation would result in a morale problem with co-workers. An employer may, however, demonstrate undue hardship if an accommodation would unduly disrupt the work of other employees." In many cases, employers are capable of reaching independent compromise with their disabled employees. However, in the case of public education, less than one percent of the public school teachers in the United States are disabled. According to Reiser (1990), at least three percent of a school's certified teachers must be disabled. Since 1990, this recommended quota has passed into federal law (applicable to all schools receiving federal funding in the United States).

The *Gale Encyclopedia of Everyday Law* (2010) further states:

"[w]hat is different about the discrimination of disabled people as compared to other types of discrimination is that there is often a rational basis for treating disabled people differently from able-bodied people. Whereas there is usually no rational basis for treating, for example, a woman from South Africa differently from a woman from the United States, there may be a rational basis for treating a woman who is blind differently from a woman with good vision. The visually impaired woman may require the use of Braille, for example... Another difference in disability discrimination is its intent. Many types of discrimination, such as racial discrimination, are rooted in hostility or hatred toward people who are different. But discrimination against disabled individuals more often is rooted in ignorance or apathy. Some people view disabilities with pity or discomfort, leading to behavior that may patronize people with disabilities. Other people simply fail to consider or understand the needs of disabled people, leading to benign neglect or misguided efforts to assist."

Apathy is a lack of interest or concern. This combined with discomfort toward persons with disabilities may have contributed to the results of this thesis. Due to the limited nature of this particular study, the determination of whether or not all disabled teachers are capable of classroom management with or without accommodations cannot be answered here. Further study is necessary. However, based on the results of this study, because of its limitation of population to the blind and visually-impaired community, it seems apparent that the majority of accommodations are made by the blind or visually-impaired teacher rather than by the hiring authority, heedless of the requirements of the ADA. This finding is in agreement with statements made by several teachers (with various types of disabilities) quoted in the Kettle article, "The Employment of Disabled Teachers" (1986). These teachers often chose to make their own accommodations rather than "hamper," "impede," or "ask for assistance" which might be resented by administration at a later date. Another study would be required to determine if disabled teachers are thus intimidated or cautious today. In the opinion of this researcher, the need for such accommodations should be neither a barrier to the hiring nor to the support of a teacher with disabilities. As stated in the *Gale Encyclopedia* quote above, "[w]hat is different about the discrimination of disabled people as compared to other types of discrimination is that there is often a rational basis for treating disabled people differently from able-bodied people." This difference, however, need not extend to the point where disabled persons are only accepted in teaching positions if their accommodations do not affect those around them.

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Appendix 1: Qualitative Survey

Section One: Demographics

How long did you teach?	
Where did you go to college?	
What was your concentration?	
What subject(s) and/or grade(s) have you taught?	
In a few words, please describe your level of vision loss. (This will be for a sighted readership.)	

Section Two: Essentials of Excellent Classroom Management

What training have you had in classroom management?	
What do you consider the most important component of classroom management?	
If you have not already done so in the box above, please state why this is true.	
Do you feel your classroom management methods are effective?	
Why?	
Is nonverbal communication a part of your classroom management strategies? Nonverbal communication includes, but is not limited to, physical proximity, body language, facial expressions, and hand gestures.	
If you do not use nonverbal communication, why not? If so, what kind do you use and is it/how is it effective?	
Do you feel your classroom management methods are effective?	
Why?	
Is nonverbal communication a part of your classroom management strategies? Nonverbal communication includes, but is not limited to, physical proximity, body language, facial expressions, and hand gestures.	
If you do not use nonverbal communication, why not? If so, what kind do you use and is it/how is it effective?	

Section Three: Rules (Belief In and Creation of)

Did you have rules in your classroom?	
How did you establish these rules with your students at the beginning of each year or did you create them yourself?	
Please list five of the rules you use in your classroom.	
Why are rules essential to excellent classroom management?	
Why are classroom rules essential to classroom management?	

Section Four: Accommodations

When enforcing the rules you listed in Section Two, how did you make accommodations for your level of eyesight? (proximity, etc.)	
Please discuss some strategies that you used to effectively engage your students.	
Did any of these strategies require accommodations?	
Did you have an aide?	
Would you have preferred to work with or without an aide?	
Would working with an aide have changed implementation of classroom management techniques?	
Please discuss some strategies that you use to effectively engage your students.	
Do any of these strategies require accommodations?	

Section Five: The Americans with Disabilities Act

Have you ever needed to use the Americans with Disabilities Act or the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunities Commission) to see that you were given equal opportunity of interview and/or employment?	
If so, how? (Please be as specific as you are comfortable.)	
Have you ever needed to use the Americans with Disabilities Act to see that your rights or needs in the classroom were met?	
If so, how? (Please be as specific as you are	

comfortable.)	
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Section Six: Changes in Classroom Management Practices

During your career, did standard methods of classroom management change?	
If so, how? (If not, please leave this line blank.)	
During your career, did <i>your</i> methods of classroom management change?	
If so, how? (If not, please leave this line blank.)	
If you had a chance to share words of wisdom with other blind and visually-impaired teachers, what would you say?	