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## Classroom Profiling Training: Increasing Preservice Teachers' Confidence and Knowledge of Classroom Management Skills

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## **Classroom Profiling Training: Increasing Preservice Teachers' Confidence and Knowledge of Classroom Management Skills**

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*Abstract: Classroom management is a serious concern for beginning teachers including preservice teachers. The Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE) has developed the Essential Skills for Classroom Management (ESCM), a system of positive and pro-active strategies for maintaining supportive learning environments. In addition, the DETE offers Classroom Profiling, a data driven, non-judgmental process to allow teachers to reflect on the classroom management strategies they employ. This qualitative study investigated whether Classroom Profiling training could increase preservice teachers' knowledge and confidence in using ESCM. Fifteen preservice teachers in their final year of a Bachelor of Education degree in Far North Queensland participated in the study. Methods included surveys and a focus group discussion. Findings suggested that Classroom Profiling training improved preservice teachers' perceptions of their knowledge and confidence in classroom management techniques including the ESCM*

### **Introduction**

Preservice teachers are required to demonstrate their ability to meet professional standards before they are eligible to graduate into the teaching profession. Both the recently established *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership, 2011) and the *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers* (Queensland College of Teachers (QCT), 2006) require teachers to *create and maintain safe and supportive learning environments*. The QCT (2006) further elaborated that at a minimum, teachers must be able to “establish, communicate and maintain clear expectations for student learning and behaviour”, “provide explicit feedback on appropriate behaviour” and “explicitly teach skills to assist students to assume responsibility for themselves and behave responsibly towards others” (p. 13). Thus, to successfully create and maintain supportive learning environments, teachers must be skilled in classroom management.

Classroom management has a broader meaning than behaviour management and includes not only monitoring and managing behaviour but also arranging the physical environment, establishing and maintaining classroom procedures, and creating an environment that supports learning (Sandford, Emmer & Clements, 1983; Emmer, 1987). Our choice of the term classroom management rather than the often used behaviour management is indicative of our belief that teachers' professional reflections should holistically focus on the classroom environment inclusive of teacher strategies and student behaviour rather than

solely focus on student (mis)behaviour. The use of the term classroom management in this paper therefore also refers to behaviour management and classroom behaviour management as cited within the literature.

Within a classroom management approach, teachers explicitly model and highlight desirable behaviours (Emmer & Stough, 2001), actively and carefully plan a positive classroom environment (Beaman & Wheldall, 2000; Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008) and preferentially use preventive rather than corrective strategies to manage classroom situations. Preventative strategies can also be termed proactive strategies. These strategies can prevent inappropriate behaviour from occurring and situations escalating (Clunies-Ross, Little & Kienhuis, 2008). When dealing with student misbehaviour, preventative measures are more effective than corrective approaches (De Jong, 2005; Simonsen et al., 2008; Sugai & Horner, 1999). Preventative management strategies and techniques, however, need to be developed and emphasised in teacher education courses as they do not come naturally to preservice teachers (Reupert & Woodcock, 2010).

Training in preventative management strategies will assist preservice teachers to understand how to deal with the behaviour they are most likely to encounter. The most common reported classroom behaviour problems are not major infringements or violent behaviours; rather, they are minor infractions and disruptions including inattention, calling out, talking out of turn and disturbing others (Arbuckle & Little, 2004; Clunies-Ross, Little & Kienhuis, 2008; Wheldell & Merrett, 1988). Constantly dealing with these behaviours leads to teacher anxiety and perceptions of loss of control (Geving, 2007).

## Literature Review

Beginning teachers and preservice teachers consistently perceive classroom management as a serious challenge (AEU, 2009; Evertson & Weinstein, 2006; Kafman & Moss, 2010; Peters, 2012; Ritter & Hancock, 2007; Veenman, 1984). Dealing with behaviour problems are a major cause of teacher stress and burnout as well as job dissatisfaction (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006; Geving, 2007). Frustration with classroom management issues are cited as a primary reason by teachers who leave the profession (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Lewis, Romi, Qui & Katz, 2003; Liu & Meyer, 2005). There is no evidence to suggest that new teachers will 'pick up' classroom management skills with time and experience (Oliver & Reschly, 2007). These authors suggest that while surveys show experienced teachers have fewer concerns regarding classroom management, teachers who did not learn to manage their classrooms may have left the profession.

Classroom management is perceived by both teachers and principals as important indicator of competence. The ability to manage students' behaviour is an integral component of teacher's professional identity (McCormick & Shi, 1999). For beginning teachers, feelings of success and failure in the control of classroom behaviour determined how these teachers conceived their professional competence (Huntly, 2008). Similarly, school principals perceive classroom management as one of the most important items of teacher competence (Cheng & Cheung, 2004; Jones, 2006). In Australia, two thirds of principals rated student discipline and behaviour of high importance when appraising teachers in their school (McKenzie, Rowley, Weldon & Murphy, 2011).

Many beginning teachers feel their training in classroom management is lacking (Giallo & Little 2003; Jones, 2006; Maskan 2007; Putnam, 2009; Romano, 2008). In a report prepared for the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace relations, less than half of the early career teachers surveyed (n =3324) considered their preservice teacher education course helpful or very helpful in preparing them for handling a range of classroom

management situations (McKenzie et al., 2011). This finding echoes earlier reports of teachers' limited preparation for classroom management where 1123 Victorian beginning teachers rated their preservice preparation in aspects of classroom management as preparing them to a moderate extent for professional practice (Ingvarson, Beavis & Kleinhenz, 2004).

School principals similarly perceive teacher preparation courses to be lacking in the area of behaviour and classroom management. In the *Staff in Australia's Schools* report, principals were asked to assess how well recent teacher graduates were prepared in a range of aspects of teaching and other work in schools. Only 30.4% of primary principals and 26.1% of secondary principals thought recent graduates were well prepared in managing classroom activities effectively (McKenzie et al., 2011). A study of 251 secondary principals in the United States revealed that classroom management was the most likely cause of teacher ineffectiveness (Torff & Sessions, 2009). These researchers urged teacher education course providers to include more classroom management rather than focusing solely on content knowledge.

Further evidence that teachers feel unprepared and lack confidence in classroom management comes from teachers' preference for professional development in classroom management. The OECD's (2009) *Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environment* report ranked student discipline and behaviour third (out of 11) on a list of work aspects teachers wished further professional development training. Similarly, in the United States teachers reported a preference for receiving professional development activities related to instructional skills and classroom management. First year teachers reported a preference for classroom management professional development (Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education, 2006). In Australia, 80% of 79 Victorian new graduate and student teachers indicated that they would like additional training in behaviour management strategies (Giallo & Little, 2003).

Teacher education courses on classroom management are often criticised as being too theoretical (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Maskan, 2007). In Australia, classroom management courses are considered disconnected or delivered too far in advance of professional experience placements (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2011). According to McNally and colleagues (2005) preservice teachers need some classroom experience before theories and tips have meaning. Students want practical tools they can use in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2010; McNally, I'anson, Whewell & Wilson, 2005). The challenge for universities is to provide the right combination of strategies and recipe-like approach to classroom management that students want (Bromfield, 2006; Reupert & Dalgarno, 2011) and theories of motivation, behaviour and learning affording students an ecological framework of classroom management (Reupert & Dalgarno, 2011; Peters, 2012).

Brophy (1988) argued that teacher education courses concentrate on systematic coverage of a single integrated approach to classroom management rather than offer brief coverage of several different approaches. Brophy contended that sustained coverage of a single approach enables preservice teachers to master and use the approach in their classrooms. For preservice teachers to successfully develop coherent classroom management strategies they need:

concepts and labels to use for identifying and distinguishing among commonly occurring classroom management situations, goals, and strategies; opportunities to practice particular skills and procedures until they become reliable routines... and opportunities for feedback and guided reflection designed to ensure that management routines and heuristics mastered to the point of automaticity are adopted (p. 16).

A web based investigation of classroom management preparation of undergraduate primary teacher education courses in Australia by O'Neill and Stephenson (2011) identified the most common method used to teach classroom management content was to embed the content within teaching method and inclusion units. Of the 35 teacher education programs investigated, 30 programs (85.7%) contained mandatory coursework in classroom management and of these only 20 programs (60%) offered stand-alone classroom management units. The average hours of classroom management instruction in the stand-alone units was 31.5 hours compared to only 2.3 hours for embedded units. Blum argued that there is "...not much time spent on an issue that may be addressed by teachers, in some way, every single day of their teaching lives" (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2011, p. 44). In Queensland only one of the seven teacher education programs offers a stand-alone classroom behaviour management subject.

More recently, these authors investigated whether undertaking classroom management units increased preservice teachers' preparedness for managing behaviour (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012). They found the completion of separate classroom management units significantly increased perceived preparedness, familiarity and confidence in using strategies and models. However, preservice teachers were confident in using only half of the strategies and less than half of the models they were familiar with. The authors contend that these findings support Brophy's (1988) belief that too many models, delivered too briefly, may not support confidence in implementation. They conclude that standalone coursework should be mandatory in teacher education courses as argued by Landau (2001), affording preservice teachers' greater knowledge that leads to increased perceptions of preparedness and confidence in classroom management.

### **Classroom Management in Queensland Schools**

According to both Education Queensland (2012) and the Queensland College of Teachers (n.d.), the registration body for teachers in Queensland, the Essential Skills for Classroom Management package "outlines the minimum required expectations of a teacher in a Queensland state school for effective classroom management" (Department of Education, Training and Employment, 2012, paragraph 1). The 10 ESCM are briefly described in Table 1.

Essential Skill	Description
1. Establishing expectations	Making rules
2. Giving instructions	Telling students what to do
3. Waiting and scanning	Stopping to assess what is happening
4. Cueing with parallel acknowledgment	Praising a particular student to prompt others
5. Body language encouraging	Smiling, nodding, gesturing and moving near
6. Descriptive encouraging	Praise describing behaviour
7. Selective attending	Not obviously reacting to some bad behaviour
8. Redirecting to the learning	Prompting on-task behaviour
9. Giving a choice	Describing the student's options and likely consequences of their behaviour
10. Following through	Doing what you said you would

**Table 1: The Essential Skills for Classroom Management (QCT, n.d.)**

In the James Cook University's Bachelor of Education course the ESCM are examined within the topic of classroom management. Classroom management is embedded into each of the three professional practice (methods) subjects. The average number of hours devoted to classroom management is four hours per subject or approximately 12 hours over the course of the four year degree. There is no stand alone classroom management unit offered. The rationale of this pilot study was that preservice teachers require a stand-alone classroom management unit to become more familiar and confident in implementing one model and the related strategies to manage their classrooms effectively.

Rather than develop a classroom management unit for this study it was decided that the first author, in consultation with the third author, would offer preservice teachers and the second author the opportunity to complete classroom profiling training. Classroom profiling training was developed by the third author in his role as a Senior Project Officer with the Indigenous School Support Unit of Education Queensland. The first author completed classroom profiling training in 2006 and subsequently upgraded to regional classroom profiler trainer in 2012 (Education Queensland, 2012).

A classroom profiler is a teacher who has completed regional classroom profiling training with an accredited trainer (Education Queensland, 2012). A key role of the classroom profiler is to support other teachers in their school with knowledge, understanding and application of the ESCM. One method of ESCM support classroom profilers offer is via observations of a teacher's classroom practice. The classroom profiler observes the teacher's strategies and student behaviours in a 30 to 40 minutes segment of a lesson. During the observation process the classroom profiler constructs a profile of the lesson. The profile contains a numerical summary of the profiler's content analysis of the observed teaching strategies and student behaviours. At the end of the lesson, the classroom profiler leads the teacher in a non-judgemental reflection session based on those observations and the ESCM. In normal circumstances teachers wishing to become classroom profilers must have at least three years teaching experience. Teachers have trained as classroom profilers in Queensland

since 2000. Most classroom profilers are Queensland teachers though a group of Macau teachers have completed classroom profiling training in 2012 (Education Queensland, 2012).

The aim of the training was not for preservice teachers to profile other teachers but rather the training would increase their confidence and knowledge of ESCM. In this study we were looking at the more general construct of confidence rather than self-efficacy. Self-efficacy however, includes “both the affirmation of capability and the strength of that belief” (Bandura, 1997, p. 382). The affirmation of capability comes from past performances, observations of and comparisons with others and feedback received. Consistent with O’Neill and Stephenson (2011) we have defined confidence as the strength of one’s beliefs in one’s capabilities (p. 1132).

## Methodology

The study used a qualitative approach to investigate whether Classroom Profiling training could improve preservice teachers’ perceptions of their knowledge and confidence in classroom management techniques including the ESCM. The methods included open ended questions surveys and a focus group. Twelve primary and three secondary preservice teachers in their final year of a Bachelor of Education degree participated in the training. Only one student was male. The study used both purposeful and snowball sampling (Denscombe, 2007). Preservice teachers enrolled in a fourth year maths subject were invited to participate in the training and to ask any other final year preservice teachers to join. All but three of the preservice teachers had completed their final school professional experience. The three preservice yet to complete their final professional experience were primary education students who commenced their studies midyear. The training was limited to 15 participants. The training was run during term in the second semester of 2012. Other students expressed a desire to complete the training but university subject commitments prevented their participation.

The classroom profiling training was conducted in accordance with the program developed by Education Queensland (Education Queensland, 2012). The preservice teachers participated in 25 hours of activities based on the ESCM and Classroom Profiling. These activities included detailed explanations of the ESCM strategies and the profiling records sheets, video clips of the ESCM in practice, and practice profiling sessions with video recorded lessons.

Ethics was approved by the university. The three and a half day training was conducted at the university. The first author organised and conducted the training, the second author participated in the training and the third author made a guest appearance. At the commencement of the training the preservice teachers were invited to be part of the research. All of the preservice teachers consented to join the study. The preservice teachers were asked to fill in a survey at the beginning and end of the training that included the following open ended questions. What does a well organised classroom look like, sound like and feel like? What specific steps do you intend to take in order to manage your classroom well and who will you seek to gain continuing guidance and support from? Why did you attend the training? Did any of your beliefs about classroom management change during the training? Do you feel more confident in classroom management after this training? What were three things you learnt from the training that you will use in your teaching? Lastly, would you recommend the training to other preservice teachers?

All preservice teachers were invited to be part of a focus group held after a shared lunch on the final day of the training. Seven students participated in the focus group; two were secondary education and five were primary education. The discussion lasted 45 minutes

and the following topics were addressed. When was the first time that you heard about classroom profiling? What was your motivation for doing the training? Did the training meet your needs? Whereabouts would you recommend it within the Bachelor of Education degree and what format would it have? Would you be interested in doing further profiling training? Lastly, do you have any final comments?

Preservice teachers' responses to the open ended items and the focus group were analysed. Pseudonyms were used to ensure anonymity. Data analysis began by creating initial codes while inputting data into Nvivo 10 software (QSR International, 2012). The first and second authors coded all the data; first independently to check for inter-rater reliability and then together to deepen our understanding of the data. Data analysis combined elements of content and thematic analysis. In content analysis, information is organised into categories related to the central questions of the research. In thematic analysis, key themes emerge from the data and serve as analytical categories (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

## Results

The results section is divided into the four main findings. The first section describes preservice teachers' concerns and preparedness to manage a class prior to the training. The second section relates how the Classroom Profiling training increased preservice teachers' knowledge and confidence in classroom management including ESCM. The next section describes how the information and skills taught in Classroom Profiling training assisted preservice teachers to self-reflect on their classroom management approach. The final section details the students' satisfaction with the classroom management skills provided by the training.

### **Preservice Teachers' Concerns/ Preparedness to Manage a Class Prior to the Training**

Preservice teachers' responses in both the surveys and focus group revealed their concern for classroom management and lack of preparedness to manage a classroom. This was evident through their responses about why they participated in the training, the outcomes they desired from attending the training and comments about the current treatment of classroom management in their Bachelor of Education degree.

In both the survey and focus group, preservice teachers were asked why they decided to attend the training. The most common response given by preservice teachers was to learn or improve their classroom management skills. Twelve out of the 15 preservice teachers wrote about gaining skills or strategies. Anne wrote, "I thought it would be very beneficial to have a better understanding of skills to apply in my own class" while Mary said, "I wanted to make sure that as a teacher I had the skills that I needed to make sure I could manage my class so that my students were learning to the best of their ability in the best possible classroom setting."

The preservice teachers' responses indicated a lack of preparedness or confidence in their ability to manage a class well. Comments such as, "to gain and develop teaching/classroom management strategies" (Claire), "to be skilled in recognising positive and negative behaviour strategies within the classroom/outside school environment" (Carolyn), and "to gain a better understanding of which teaching strategies are proven to work and which ones are best avoided" (Cathy) revealed that classroom management within their four year degree has not sufficiently prepared them to manage a classroom confidently. Only Ellie thought she was competent in classroom management before the training.



However she thought the training had increased her confidence, “I thought I was doing really well with my behaviour management however after watching these DVDs I feel a lot more confident as I am able to recognise ESCMs ...so I can implement them more.”

Further evidence that preservice teachers did not feel prepared to manage their classrooms came from responses detailing what they wanted from the training. The following quotes demonstrate this sentiment, “I wanted to learn so much more about them and I didn’t think I knew enough about them”, “I believed it would benefit my teaching if I gained a more thorough understanding of the ESCMs” and “you hear about them [ESCM] but you never hear exactly how to use them or what positive or negative effects they can have on your students.”

In three cases preservice teachers voiced their concern about their ability to manage students’ behaviour when they start teaching. Carolyn said in the discussion group:

Controlling students’ behaviour, that’s one thing that I am stressing about when I finish. Am I going to be able to handle the students and handle their behaviours? I know I am not the only person that feels like that. I feel confident in other areas but that is one area that I feel underequipped.

While Nicole commented:

I was really freaked out if I went to a school, I have had really good [professional experiences] so far and with really nice kids I haven’t had too many behaviour issues, I would have no idea what to do if I had a kid that was a bit out there with their behaviour

In the focus group, preservice teachers voiced their dissatisfaction with how classroom management was covered within their degree, despite it not being brought up by the researcher. Some students mentioned it in passing when relating why they wanted to do the training. For example, Carolyn said, “I would like to be better at behaviour management as I don’t think there is such a great emphasis on it at uni.” Other students were more openly critical of classroom management coverage in their university course. Mary wanted more from the degree:

something that will equip us with the skills that we need to be able to walk out of the degree after four years and go “Right I’ve got this. I know how to manage my classroom” would be so much more useful than what we have got now.

Similarly, other preservice teachers commented on the shallow coverage of classroom management that was embedded in the professional studies subjects:

... in second year it was like write down the skills... but I never understood, I knew what they were but I didn’t know how to use them. (Sarah)

... in the other subjects it is kind of airy fairy built throughout... in the third year teaching and learning subject it was just sort of brushed over.(Carolyn)

### **Perceived Increase in Preservice Teachers’ Knowledge and Confidence in Classroom Management Including ESCM**

Preservice teachers indicated that prior to the training they did not feel confident or prepared to manage a class. However, at the completion of the Classroom Profiling training preservice teachers commented on how they now felt better prepared to manage a classroom. All of the preservice teachers felt more confident in classroom management. Anne wrote,

“[the training] makes you feel better prepared and confident for entering into your own classroom” and Carolyn commented, “it has given me more confidence to go out into school and think that I can no matter where I am placed use those skills to help manage the behaviour.”

Mary compared the training with her degree in terms of confidence to manage a class, “I feel more confident now after three and a bit days of training looking at behaviour management stuff than I feel after four years of a uni degree having looked at little bits and pieces every year.”

As mentioned previously preservice teachers reported that they did not feel confident or prepared to manage a classroom at the end of their degree. Preservice teachers were looking for knowledge and understanding of the ESCM and they believed the training delivered this. According to the preservice teachers the training:

makes explicit the types of strategies we should aim to use most and those that should be present only here and there.(Louise)

[teaches] what the skills really mean rather than just the name. (Sarah)  
reinforced in my mind what each of them looked like and how they could be used and in turn the student behaviours that came from them.  
(Mary)

Students appreciated the opportunity to view DVD recordings of ESCM skills modelled by practising teachers. Unlike the approach to classroom management used in the professional practice subjects, the training afforded preservice teachers, “in depth looking at how it[ESCM] is in a classroom what it looks like and what it looks like being effectively used and what it looks like when it is not being used”(Carolyn). The preservice teachers reported that examples of all strategies were beneficial to see. Louise wrote, “it makes explicit the types of strategies we should aim to use most and those that should be present only here and there.”

While the pre and post training surveys used slightly different wording to explore steps preservice teachers would take to manage their classroom, the questions elicited qualitatively different responses from preservice teachers. In the pre survey preservice teachers gave fairly vague responses compared to concrete examples they gave in the post survey. In the pre survey preservice teachers wrote very generally about setting up the classroom and rules. The examples given below were typical of the responses given when asked what specific steps you intend to take to manage your classroom well:

Get to know my students well

Have effective strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviours

Be well organised and prepared (Sam)

Set classroom expectations and display in the classroom

Safe and supportive environment

Positive feedback always (Leanne)

Set classroom and behaviour expectations with students, display these clearly in classroom

Develop a good rapport with students

Follow through with consequences for poor behaviour (Mary)

These responses revealed preservice teachers to have a basic grasp of classroom management with some understanding of the need for preventative measures and positive classroom environments. The responses reflected the preservice teachers’ perception of the coverage of classroom management in the degree. In contrast when asked what were the three things you learnt from the training that you will use in your teaching in the post survey preservice teachers were much more explicit and referred to specific strategies. The following quotes exemplify their responses:

Use non-verbals  
Presence of classroom expectations and consequences = better student behaviour  
Use peripheral vision when working with students (Mary)  
Focus on positive behaviour rather than the negative  
Explain to students why they need to do certain activities  
Have behaviour expectations clearly displayed and clarify these with your students regularly (Anne)  
The importance of behavioural expectations (rules/consequences).  
Lots of positive feedback to students.  
Give short, explicit instructions – always get all students' attention (Cathy)

These post training survey responses given by preservice teachers also contain preventative skills and strategies. As such it could be argued that the training imparts preventative or proactive classroom management. From the 15 responses, nine mentioned having expectations and rules and referring to them, four wrote of the importance of positive reinforcement, three commented on explaining what, how and why for behaviour and curriculum expectations. Another three wrote about giving choices and following through and two mentioned cueing with parallel acknowledgement. Two preservice teachers mentioned giving short instructions. These strategies should limit inappropriate behaviour and promote positive behaviour and a positive classroom environment. The strategies are all included in the ESCM.

### **Classroom Profiling Training as a Vehicle for Self-Reflection and Professional Growth**

An important finding was that the Classroom Profiling training provided preservice teachers with the information and skills to reflect on their use of classroom management techniques. During the training preservice teachers were introduced to the techniques used to lead a profiling reflection session. These techniques were used to assist preservice teachers to recognise potential patterns in a profile and consider how they would lead a reflection session. This section of the training included role-plays. There was no mention of reflection in any of the pre and post survey or the focus group questions; however preservice teachers repeatedly wrote or spoke about reflection on their own practice. Carolyn said, "I feel more confident to reflect on my own practices...it helps you understand your own practice and recognise other's practice [supervising teacher]." Similarly, Nicole wrote, "I feel like I am able to reflect on my own practices now to improve my teaching."

Mary reflected on her past professional experience:

it has been good to reflect back on my pracs to know that some of the behaviours from the kids were directly related to how I was trying to manage the classroom and had I given a little bit of positive feedback they probably would not have done this

Sam spoke about how profiling would help them reflect in the future:

Continual reflection through profiling ensures continuing professional development. I would love to be continually profiled so that I do not fall into routines of bad habits.

Sarah reflected on both her last and future professional experience:

I look back on my last prac and notice that some of the things that went wrong because my teacher didn't establish rules really well. She said "I haven't established rules yet in my classroom because the kids can't

just sit there and be really quiet.” I tried to put rules in the classroom but there was no real leeway for me to do that. It was kind of hard but I suppose if I had been more adamant which I will be going out for fourth year prac. I’ll say “I know that you don’t have rules but I really need them” and actually physically put them up in the classroom and be more persistent about it because I know, I have more of an understanding now to establish rules really solidly before I do anything else.

Carolyn reflected on how practicing teachers are continually learning about classroom management and trying new things, “As students we think we have to be perfect and watching the videos has sort of enforced that no one is perfect and that you have to keep learning and keep trying different strategies.” Finally, a couple of preservice students’ intimated they would change their behaviour after reflecting on the training content. Mary said that she will “use non-verbals and descriptive encouraging before resorting to more intrusive strategies.” Nicole realised she could children’s behaviour by changing her own behaviour, “One thing that has really, really been put into light with this training you can’t change the kids, but you can change your behaviours.” Sam was inspired to take action by creating his classroom expectations and having them ready for when he starts teaching, “I am going to go home now and I am going to write up my classroom rules and get them all laminated and whack them in my bag and that is where they are staying until I go to my first contract.

#### **Benefits of Classroom Profiling Training For Preservice Teachers’ Future Practice**

Classroom Profiling training provided preservice teachers with highly valued classroom management skills. As the preservice teachers perceived themselves as being more confident and prepared to manage a class and that Classroom Profiling was a means to reflect and improve their practice, it was not surprising that they gave excellent feedback about the training. Preservice teachers were extremely satisfied with the Classroom Profiling training and were able to list benefits to their future teaching practice from their participation in this training. Evidence of their satisfaction came from their comments related to recommendations, future practice and whether the training had fulfilled their needs. All fifteen preservice students said they would recommend the training to other preservice teachers. Sarah said in the discussion group, “I will be telling everyone in third year ‘if Cliff gives you the option do it cause it will help so much’” while Hannah wrote, “I would definitely recommend and encourage other pre service teachers to complete this training, as it is an excellent way to improve your practice and ... provides a complete repertoire of behaviour management skills to draw upon.” Some went so far as to suggest that practising teachers and administration staff also complete the training Sarah wrote, “All teachers and preservice teachers should do this!!!” while Sam wrote, “Everyone should do this training including school admin staff so that they can get an understanding of why teachers rely on admin support.”

A number of benefits from attending the training could be extrapolated from their responses to whether they would recommend the training. Half of preservice teachers mentioned gaining skills and strategies and five discussed self-reflection. Three preservice teachers wrote about increasing their confidence in classroom management:

I feel I have been given a guide to assist me set up my future classrooms to ensure good classroom management (Claire)

[the training] makes you feel better prepared and confident for entering into your own classroom. It makes you think twice about strategies to implement and how to best approach behaviour management (Anne)  
I do feel more confident in having the necessary skills to effectively manage my own classroom. I also feel that I have an avenue of support to help me improve my practice (Hannah)

Similar to whether or not preservice teachers would recommend the training to others, all preservice teachers in the discussion group felt the training had met their needs in terms of why they had attended the training. They felt the training had provided with the skills and strategies they were looking for to manage a class successfully. Likewise, all the preservice students who took part in the focus group indicated that they would like to do Advanced Profiling training in the future.

Perhaps comments from Nicole and Cathy best sum up the successfulness of the training. Nicole's wrote about her concerns and how the training helped overcome this when she wrote, "I was scared about getting a difficult class but this has given me more confidence to have strategies to manage this" while Cathy thought it was the most helpful thing she had learnt at university, "It is probably the most useful course I have done so far."

## Discussion

The four main findings from the study were preservice concerns and preparedness for classroom management prior to the training, perceived increases in preservice teachers' knowledge and confidence in classroom management including ESCM, increased awareness and ability to reflect on their classroom management, and preservice teacher satisfaction with the skills learned during the Classroom Profiling training. Together these findings suggest that Classroom Profiling training can increase preservice teachers' knowledge and confidence in classroom management and enhance their perceptions of preparedness to manage a class.

As previously reported in the literature (AEU, 2009; Evertson & Wienstein, 2006; Kafman & Moss, 2010; Peters, 2012; Ritter & Hancock, 2007; Veenman, 1984) classroom management was a serious concern for preservice teachers in this study. In particular preservice teachers worried that they would not be able to control students' behaviour and that they did not have the skills and strategies to effectively manage a class enabling effective teaching and learning. While we did not directly ask preservice teachers about their concerns about classroom management they mentioned them nonetheless in their responses indicating that it was source of anxiety for them.

Preservice teachers felt that the coverage of classroom management was lacking in their Bachelor of Education degree. They felt that embedding classroom management in the professional practices subjects did not give them adequate knowledge and understanding of skills and strategies necessary to manage their future classes. They felt the coverage was superficial and used words like 'airy fairy' to describe the treatment of classroom management. Similar to the concerns preservice teachers had about classroom management, perceptions of university course coverage of classroom management were not a focus of the study. However, during the focus group and in their written responses preservice teachers voiced their dissatisfaction with the treatment of classroom management in their course. This finding is consistent with other research that reported beginning teachers feel their training in behaviour management is lacking (Giallo & Little 2003; Jones, 2006; Maskan 2007; Putnam, 2009; Romano, 2008).

Preservice teachers wanted strategies and skills that are shown to work. In particular they wanted to know which strategies were best to 'use and avoid'. Again these results align

with previous study findings that students want practical tools they can use in the classroom that allow them to teach (Bromfield, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2010; McNally et al., 2005; Reupert & Dalgarno, 2011). While preservice teachers knew the names of the ESCM from professional practice subjects they did not know how or when to implement the strategies.

Preservice teachers thought they were more confident and better prepared to manage their future classrooms after completing the Classroom Profiling training. Each of the 15 preservice teachers thought that their confidence in classroom management had increased. Perhaps the best indication of their improved confidence and preparedness came from two preservice teachers who said, “I was scared about getting a difficult class but this has given me more confidence to have strategies to manage this” and “it has given me more confidence to go out into school and think that I can no matter where I am placed use those skills to help manage the behaviour.” The findings from this study support O’Neill and Stephenson’s (2012) claim that stand-alone classroom management subjects increase preservice teachers’ confidence and preparedness to manage their own classroom.

Other evidence that the preservice teachers had increased their knowledge and understanding of ESCMs was demonstrated through their responses in the pre and post survey. Their responses to what specific steps do you intend to take in order to manage your classroom well in the pre training survey showed basic understanding of classroom management. This is not surprising given the limited coverage of classroom management that is embedded into professional practice subjects. Four or so hours within a subject was not perceived by the preservice teachers as sufficient time to master an approach as proposed by Brophy (1988). The profiling training was, however, sufficient for preservice teachers to develop coherent classroom management as the training provided concepts and labels to identify and recognise situations and strategies as well as opportunities for feedback and reflection on these same situations and strategies.

In contrast, preservice teachers’ survey responses after the training revealed greater understanding of classroom management. They could name specific strategies they would use in their classrooms and were able to recognise strategies other teachers used demonstrating mastery of ESCM that is consistent with Brophy’s (1988) idea of mastery of a management approach. An illustration of this new found knowledge was their understanding of the importance establishing expectations. Preservice teachers spoke of how they would “establish rules really solidly before I do anything else” and “write up my classroom rules and get them all laminated.” The preservice teachers realised expectations needed to be visible, taught, modelled and continually referred to. Perhaps more importantly, the preservice teachers’ responses after the training showed a greater understanding of preventative or proactive classroom management. Preventative strategies can limit inappropriate behaviour and situations from escalating (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008) and are more effective than reactive strategies in dealing with student misbehaviour (De Jong, 2005; Simonsen et al., 2008; Sugai & Horner, 1999). As these strategies and techniques do not come naturally to preservice teachers (Reupert & Woodcock, 2010) the training afforded preservice teachers time to develop these skills.

Based on our findings that the Classroom Profile training increased preservice teachers’ knowledge and confidence in using ESCMs and classroom management generally, we add our support to Landau (2001) and O’Neill and Stephenson (2012) proposal that stand-alone classroom management units are mandatory in teacher education programs. If preservice teachers are to feel confident and prepared to manage a classroom they need sustained instruction and practice in theory and skills, as well as time to reflect on their learning and previous teaching experiences. As contended previously embedding classroom management into professional practices subjects does not provide adequate coverage. One of the arguments for teaching classroom management in professional practices subjects is that

preservice teachers observe classroom management in a real classroom during the professional experience that is incorporated into the professional practice subject. There is an assumption that supervising teachers are modelling good classroom management practices. This may not necessarily be happening. For example only one preservice teacher mentioned an experience with a supervising teacher who was a clear practitioner of the ESCM while Sarah recounted how her supervising teacher did not establish class rules because “because the kids can’t just sit there and be really quiet.” Clearly competent classroom management practices were not being observed in Sarah’s case. Stand-alone classroom management subjects or training are necessary to ensure that all preservice teachers gain the requisite skills and strategies regardless of what they observe during their professional experience.

An important finding from the study was that a key benefit of the Classroom Profiling approach for preservice teachers was the explicit promotion of self-reflection and professional growth. To improve their practice and to grow professionally, teachers including preservice teachers need to reflect on both their teaching and classroom management (QCT, 2006). A requirement of teachers in Queensland is to *commit to reflective practice and ongoing professional renewal* (QCT, 2006). Reflection involves three processes of “direct experience, reflection of beliefs, values or knowledge about that experience, and consideration of the options which should lead to action as a result of the analysis’ (Whitton, Sinclair, Barker, Nanlohy & Nosworthy, 2004, p. 220). As a result of the training some preservice teachers reflected on previous professional experiences and realised they could have brought about different outcomes in children’s behaviour if they had used different strategies. Other preservice teachers reflected on their new knowledge and what they would do in the future.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

A clear limitation of this study is that the preservice students’ perceptions were gathered during the training rather than while they were immersed in a teaching experience. The preservice teachers’ self reports are thus separated from their classroom experience. In the next stage of this study we plan to invite the preservice teachers to participate in follow-up classroom profiling observations and associated interviews. We are confident that several of the preservice teachers will participate in a follow up study as all preservice teachers involved in the study expressed a desire for further classroom profiling experiences and have invited us to profile them in either their new teaching positions or while they are on professional experience. This will allow us make observations of their use of ESCMs and invite them to comment further on their perceptions of ESCM and classroom profiling. This data will then be triangulated against the preservice teachers’ current perceptions and their performance in the practice profiling sessions. We are currently writing an article to explore other outcomes of Classroom Profiling Training and detail our investigation of the preservice teachers’ ability to accurately recognise ESCM strategies in the practice profiling sessions.

This study should be replicated with different cohorts of students to further validate Classroom Profiling training as a means to increase preservice teachers’ knowledge and confidence in using ESCM and enhance their perceptions of their preparedness to teach. Future research could investigate actual changes in usage of ESCM through pre and post training profiling of preservice teachers.

In this study Classroom Profiling training was shown to alleviate preservice teachers’ concerns about classroom management and give them the management strategies they felt they needed to confidently manage a class. The training afforded preservice teachers time to learn and recognise the ESCM. The training also inspired them to reflect on their practice and

grow professionally. Classroom Profiling training may be considered an appropriate model for a standalone classroom management subject that enhances preservice teachers' preparedness and confidence to manage a classroom.

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