

# Teaching: The Job That Anyone Can Do?

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## Introduction

America's public schools have suffered teacher shortages for decades (Simmons & Mebane, 2005). One of the ways states have sought to fill vacant positions is by creating multiple methods of becoming a licensed teacher. In North Carolina, one such method is lateral entry. Lateral entry refers both to an alternate route to becoming a teacher in North Carolina and to individuals hired to teach without formal teacher training. Lateral entry teachers have completed a bachelor's degree in a non-teaching field; they are often looking for a mid-career change (Douglas, 2011). Originally, lateral entry was designed to fill high-need positions in math, science, and technical courses for grades 9-12 (Dr. Jennifer Broome, Teacher Education Program, Methodist University in Fayetteville, North Carolina, personal communication December 10, 2016). However, the ongoing shortage of special education teachers in North Carolina means the state has turned to lateral entry teachers to fill this role. Special education teachers are those who teach children with special needs, also known as children with disabilities or exceptional children. While other states may use alternative licensure, they typically exclude elementary and special education positions due to the nature of this student population and its needs (J. Broome, personal communication December 10, 2016). North Carolina, on the other hand, has made lateral entry available across all ages and needs.

North Carolina's policy has engendered backlash from traditionally licensed teachers who feel the lateral entry option has negatively impacted students, especially students with disabilities (Douglas, 2011). Research indicates that students taught by a traditionally licensed special education teacher achieve more compared to students taught by a lateral entry teacher (Douglas, 2011; Montrosse, 2009; Wesson, 2008). This difference is partially attributable to differences in teacher training, especially training in special education. Strong evidence indicates that a lack of appropriate training in pedagogy and classroom management is a contributing factor to lateral entry teachers' reduced ability to competently teach special education students (Henry et al., 2014).

## Literature Review

Teacher shortages have been a silent crisis across the United States for several decades. Researchers predict that as many as 2.4 million additional teachers will be needed during the next decade (Simmons & Mebane, 2005). Teacher shortages are attributed to factors such as rising student enrollments, increasing retirement of experienced teachers, state and federal initiatives to lower class sizes, and a high rate of teachers' resigning after their first year of teaching (Simmons & Mebane, 2005). The number of potential teachers is also decreasing. Undergraduate education programs are not attracting undergraduate students. Gregory Anderson, dean of the College of Education at Temple University in Philadelphia, states, "If I'm an undergraduate student... teaching as a profession is not necessarily one with shining possibilities" (as quoted in Boccella, 2016). North Carolina is experiencing this problem even more seriously due to rapid population growth (Simmons & Mebane, 2005). In 2006, North Carolina colleges and universities were only graduating 35% of the 7000 new teachers needed (Douglas, 2011). The severity of the shortage in North Carolina means that school system administrators hire outside the state and "approximately two-thirds of newly hired teachers each year come from outside North Carolina" (Simmons & Mebane, 2005, p. 46).



Children in a classroom, 1985, by Michael Anderson. Released by National Cancer Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health, ID 2200 (image). Public domain. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=children+in+classroom &title=pecial:Search&go=Go&searchToken=3jic2x1r78jcnuyepbz8sqh0p#/media/File:Children\\_in\\_a\\_classroom.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=children+in+classroom&title=pecial:Search&go=Go&searchToken=3jic2x1r78jcnuyepbz8sqh0p#/media/File:Children_in_a_classroom.jpg)

North Carolina put alternative routes to becoming a teacher in place during the 1960s when the teaching shortage was not as dire as it is today (Simmons & Mebane, 2005). In 1985, North Carolina enacted lateral entry to provide an alternate route for candidates to enter the teaching profession (Simmons & Mebane, 2005). The purpose of having alternate routes is to give qualified individuals with college degrees outside of education an opportunity to enter the teaching profession to help fill open teaching positions (Simmons & Mebane, 2005). Lateral entry was primarily used in secondary schools for specific content areas such as biology, algebra, or economics. As the teacher shortage became a major problem during the last two decades, North Carolina utilized lateral entry teachers in elementary and special education classrooms. Lateral entry has become increasingly evident over the last two decades; more than half of classroom teachers enter the profession through different routes than traditional teacher education programs (Simmons & Mebane, 2005).

Demand is not uniform across teaching specialties. In particular, secondary mathematics, science, and special education face the most severe shortages. Ninety-eight percent of the nation's school districts report being unable to hire enough licensed special education teachers (Montrosse, 2009). North Carolina specifically has struggled with maintaining special education teachers. According to the U.S. Department of Education "Teacher Shortage Areas Nationwide Listing," North Carolina had a shortage of special education teachers from 1993 to 2016 (Cross, 2016).

In the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a child with disability is defined as one who has

autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, an emotional disturbance, a hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, an orthopedic impairment, an other [sic] health impairment, a specific learning disability, a speech or language impairment, a traumatic brain injury, or a visual impairment, and who by reason of his or her disability, needs special education and related services. (IDEA of 2004)

Not surprisingly, teaching such children presents numerous and varied challenges, and teachers who lack specialized training may not meet such challenges successfully.

### **Legislation**

To attempt to attract qualified teachers who went through a traditional four-year program, the North Carolina General Assembly adopted the Excellent Schools Act in 1997 (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2016). The government's goal in passing this legislation was to increase student achievement, reduce teacher attrition, and reward teachers for knowledge and skills (NC State Board of Education, 2016). To decrease teacher attrition, the 1997 act aimed to raise teachers' wages and provide enhanced training. The act also raised state standards for teachers entering and staying in the profession. In response to this act, the State Board of Education developed enhanced requirements for continuing certification for teachers in the public school setting (NC State Board of Education, 2016). These requirements for teachers, known as performance-based licensure, require that all second-year teachers fulfill certain requirements prior to being issued a continuing license. The requirements include

submitting the following: lesson plans, a 15-minute video of their work in the classroom, portfolio entries in three different areas of content, and reflective writing on their experiences. To reward teachers for meeting the higher standards and for going through performance-based licensure, the 1997 Excellent Schools Act provided teachers with salary increases after teaching for three years (NC State Board of Education, 2016). However, these efforts were not successful to relieve the teacher shortage.

Lateral entry candidates must meet several requirements in order to qualify for a provisional teaching license. These standards include having a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university ("Lateral Entry Teachers," 2016). Then, candidates must meet at least one of the following requirements: relevant subject area degree, 24 semester-hours of coursework in the subject area with a letter grade of C or higher, or a passing score on the North Carolina State Board of Education approved licensure exams for the content teaching area. Additionally, candidates must meet at least one of the following qualifications: 2.5 cumulative GPA, five years of experience considered relevant by the employing local education agency, or passing scores on Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators ("Lateral Entry Teachers," 2016). Lateral entry teachers need not have formal training in classroom management skills or in pedagogy (Douglas, 2011, p. 14).

Undergraduates who are enrolled in a traditional education program spend typically four to five years learning about pedagogy, classroom management, lesson planning, and implementation strategies (J. Broome, personal communication December 10, 2016). Additionally, undergraduates who are enrolled in an education program have to complete sixteen weeks of closely supervised student teaching in order to receive North Carolina licensure. Carol Davis Douglas's research indicates that lateral entry teachers in North Carolina only have to complete a two-week training prior to entering the classroom setting. The two-week mandatory training was very basic and was often completed as a self-study experience from computer programs; candidates were not placed in the classroom setting; and at no point during the training did candidates work with students (Douglas, 2011). The training of lateral entry teachers does not fully prepare them with classroom management and pedagogy skills, ultimately setting up the students of lateral-entry special education teachers to achieve less compared to students taught by a traditionally licensed special education teacher.

The value of teachers, and of their being highly qualified, was temporarily increased when the federal government enacted the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Having highly qualified teachers in the classroom became a point of emphasis on a national level with the NCLB Act of 2001 signed by President George W. Bush (Simpson, LaCava, & Patricia, 2004). The act established goals for both general education students and special needs students to meet state-identified standards (Simpson, LaCava, & Patricia, 2004). These goals made a huge impact on education as a whole by putting pressure on teachers to be held accountable for student success. The act's goal was for all children to receive a quality education (Franklin, 2010). Therefore, the federal government focused attention on how teachers taught and whether their instruction was effective for the students.

To meet the goal of giving all children a quality education, the government focused on teachers being highly qualified due to researchers' having identified a link between student achievement and highly qualified teachers (Simpson, LaCava, & Patricia,

2004; Wong, 2009). As a result of this research and the NCLB Act, the government became responsible to provide a free and appropriate education to all students. To ensure that students and teachers were meeting state standards, the government established “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) standards (Simpson, LaCava, & Patricia, 2004). Endorsing these standards benefited parents, community leaders, and school district personnel. It allowed these individuals the opportunity to identify student’s strengths and weaknesses through data in specific content areas. However, AYP standards were only measured by state standardized testing, not through student work samples or teacher-administered tests. NCLB ultimately put stress on the state of North Carolina to have qualified teachers in the classroom. The government was monitoring student success. However, the teacher shortage trumped the importance of having highly qualified teachers. North Carolina allowed lenience on certification qualifications to attract teacher candidates immediately.

Special education lateral entry teachers are not fully certified for at least the first three years of teaching (“Lateral Entry Teachers,” 2016). If candidates qualify for a lateral entry position, they will receive a lateral entry professional educator’s license. This is a temporary license that lasts for three years. During the first year of teaching, lateral entry teachers must attempt to pass the PRAXIS II and Pearson Tests. These tests are designed to see if candidates understand curriculum and content area. Also, these tests are required for traditional certified teachers as well. Typically, traditional teachers have completed and passed these tests prior to entering the classroom setting. The lateral entry candidates must pass PRAXIS II and the Pearson Tests before the second year of teaching (“Lateral Entry Teachers,” 2016). During the three-year period, lateral entry teachers have the option to seek a professional teacher’s license through regional alternative licensing centers (RALCs), which are located in different regions of North Carolina, or through coursework through a college or university. After the three-year period is over, if a candidate has not completed the coursework, then his/her license will expire. If a candidate does complete all coursework and pass the required tests, he/she will be recommended for a professional educator’s licensure by the college, university or RALC (“Lateral Entry Teachers,” 2016). The recommendations are then sent to the NC Department of Public Instruction, where they are evaluated (“Lateral Entry Teachers, 2016”). Typically, if candidates meet all requirements, they are issued a Professional Educator’s Continuing License (“Lateral Entry Teachers,” 2016).

### **Mindset of Some Lateral Entry Teachers**

Research has defined highly qualified teachers as individuals who are fully certified and proficient in their specified content areas (Montrosse, 2009), but lateral entry teachers often begin teaching with little idea of what it takes to attain such proficiency. Carol Davis Douglas (2011) interviewed twelve lateral entry teachers over a five-year span, in order to track their feelings and perceptions as they began teaching and then gained experience in the classroom. Douglas interviewed all twelve lateral entry teachers before they entered their classrooms, at which time the non-traditional teachers expressed their universal opinion that teaching would be easy. Over the five-year span of Douglas’s study, these lateral entry teachers’ perceptions changed drastically.

Lateral entry teacher Dennis Hong expected teaching to be laid back. Prior to becoming a teacher, he was a molecular biologist. His workdays consisted of culturing viruses. When he changed his career to being a high school science teacher, he struggled with classroom management. Hong told Carol Davis Douglas, “[S]ometimes, my students get disruptive, and I swear to myself in frustration” (Douglas, 2011, p. 9). Hong was frustrated not only by his students’ conduct in the class, but also by his acquaintances when they asked how work was going. He would explain the difficult time he was having with students’ behavior. The responses he got were frustrating; people asked questions, such as “Have you tried making it fun for the kids?” Then, after the questioning, people typically explained to Hong how to do his job properly. At that moment, Hong realized how little respect teachers get. He admitted to having the same opinions prior to becoming a teacher. Hong’s ideas and thoughts about teaching have changed dramatically, as he stated,

Teaching isn’t just “making it fun” for the kids. Teaching isn’t just academic content. Teaching understands how the human brain processes information and preparing [*sic*] lessons with this understanding in mind. Teaching is simultaneously instilling in a child the belief that she can accomplish anything she wants while admonishing her for producing shoddy work. Teaching understands both the psychology and the physiology behind the changes the adolescent mind goes through... Teaching is not easy. Teaching is not intuitive. Teaching is not something that anyone can figure out on their own. (Douglas, 2011 p. 10)

Hong gained his new perspective the hard way.

Hong went on to reflect on how many people believe that anyone can do what the typical teacher does. Hong has observed numerous teacher candidates who have strong beliefs that they can teach better than a certified teacher. Hong stated a very important question: “What qualifies non-teachers as experts on how to teach when their only frame of reference is their experience as a student?” (Douglas, 2011, p. 11). Non-teachers do not spend four years learning methods, lesson plans, pedagogy, and classroom management as traditional teachers do. Hong’s beliefs before he began teaching and the outsider comments he reported show the general lack of understanding and respect for the teaching profession. Even though lateral entry teachers think they can teach better than traditional teachers, they struggle with their lack of the two main skill sets: pedagogy and classroom management.

## **Pedagogy**

Dr. Juanita Heyward, an associate professor of the Education Department at Methodist University, defines pedagogy as “the art of the teaching, the way in which one teaches” (Dr. J. Heyward, personal communication November 18, 2016). Pedagogy is the skill of combining one’s knowledge with techniques for breaking down the information effectively for students. Teaching pedagogy is the essential mission of Methodist University’s Education Department. At Methodist University, traditional teacher candidates are taught, observed, and given the opportunity to reflect on the characteristics of a facilitative teacher (J. Heyward, personal communication November 18, 2016). The qualities of being understanding, knowledgeable, communicative, and

attentive are consistently reinforced through the professors' teaching of lesson planning, unit planning, classroom management skills, etc. Also, traditional teacher candidates are evaluated in the classroom setting, using a Likert scale, for their development of these qualities. In contrast, lateral entry teachers are not observed or critiqued on how they teach prior to entering the profession. Heyward articulates that, when a teacher candidate completes a traditional education program, they are prepared with techniques for assessing and analyzing students' knowledge (J. Heyward, personal communication November 18, 2016). Traditional teachers are taught how to build on students' skill sets and to individualize instruction (J. Heyward, personal communication November 18, 2016).

Students in exceptional children's programs—that is, programs for children with disabilities, children with special needs—have diverse and complex needs (Mintz & Wyse, 2015). In particular, students who have diagnostic labels, such as autism, dyslexia, or attention deficit disorder (ADD), and even exceptional children without a label typically do not respond to learning in a straightforward way (Mintz & Wyse, 2015). Due to their diverse needs, knowledge about how to teach different lessons is important. Traditionally educated teachers know how to do this through their comprehension of pedagogy, the art of teaching. Properly trained teachers use a variety of instructional techniques and engage students in ways specific to their individual needs. Research by Mintz and Wyse (2015) about inclusion of pedagogy found that teachers need to have an understanding of their students in order to teach proficiently. When teachers of exceptional children master pedagogy, they can design lessons specifically for student's individual needs and interests. Andrew Cardow and Robert Smith (2015) noted in "Using Innovative Pedagogies in the Classroom" that it is difficult to gain student interest in academic topics to which they have no personal connection. Cardow and Smith (2015) observed that teachers who implement pedagogy strategies in their lessons trigger a higher level of student interest, which correlates with student success. Therefore, if teachers are not trained in pedagogy, they can negatively affect a student's academic career.

The use of pedagogy was apparent in the study "Shifting Paradigms to Better Serve Twice-Exceptional African-American Learners" by Owens, Ford, Lisbon, and Owens (2016). The researchers studied a student known as Franklyn. The elementary school Franklyn attended established that he frequently demonstrated behavioral problems, including violent behavior. Franklyn's general education teacher referred him to be evaluated for special education services. The school decided that Franklyn met the qualifications for behavioral deficits, and he repeated the first grade. Throughout Franklyn's early educational career, he continued to have problems learning information and maintaining friendships. When Franklyn entered the fourth grade, he started working with Ms. Haile, a traditionally licensed special education teacher. Ms. Haile applied theories she had learned about giftedness to Franklyn (Owens et al., 2016).

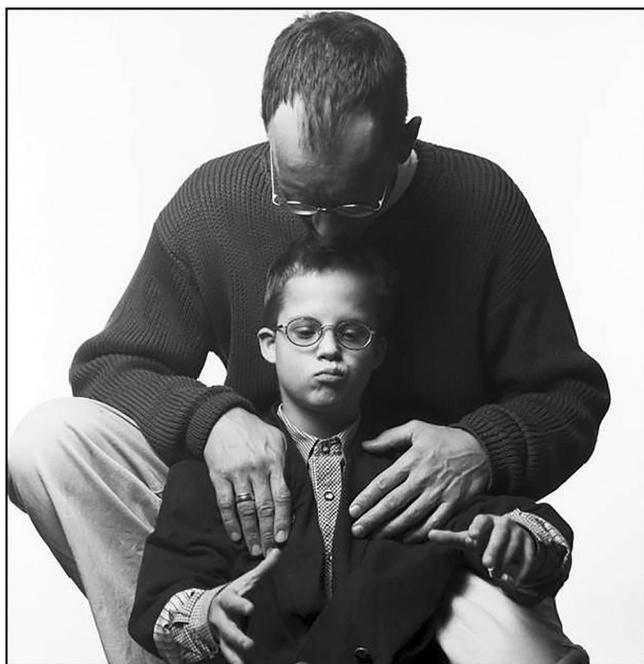
Ms. Haile noted that Franklyn loved processing and exploring. Additionally, he enjoyed sharing his discoveries with his peers and adults. Franklyn enjoyed challenging others to see concepts a different way. Franklyn's thinking was typically "out of the box" and clever. Ms. Haile noted all these characteristics and analyzed them, instead of focusing on Franklyn's emotional and behavior problems. Ms. Haile correlated Franklyn's actions to being gifted in creative and cognitive domains. She extended his learning through individual research projects and displayed his discoveries throughout the

school. She additionally utilized the individualized behavior plan created by the school in the general education classroom. These tactics made him approachable to his peers, which helped decrease emotional and behavioral problems in the school setting. Over a period of numerous weeks, Franklyn increased his academic performance in both the general and special education setting. Furthermore, the severity of his negative behavior decreased. By using pedagogy in her teaching, Ms. Haile was able to successfully identify Franklyn as gifted. This ultimately guided Franklyn to become successful in school. Without Ms. Haile, it is unclear what Franklyn's academic future would have been (Owens et al., 2016).

Typically lateral entry teachers lack knowledge of pedagogy. Research by Wesson (2008), reported in "The Dispositions in Action of Lateral Entry and Traditionally Certified Elementary Teachers in North Carolina," analyzed the classroom skills of three lateral entry and three traditionally certified teachers. Wesson (2008) specifically analyzed the domains of classroom management, instruction, and assessment. His research found many examples of lateral entry teachers' lack of competence in pedagogy. While analyzing lateral entry teachers, Wesson (2008) noted that they typically utilized direct instruction worksheets and textbooks (p. 81). These methods are not appropriate when teaching students who may have visual and hearing impairments, traumatic brain injury, dyslexia, dysgraphia, and other disabilities. In utilizing work sheets and lectures, lateral entry teachers are not considering who the students are and how they need to be taught, which

correlates to pedagogy. Lateral entry teachers do not know about pedagogy because they never receive formal pedagogical training, unlike traditionally trained teachers (Douglas, 2011, p. 30). Their teaching techniques reveal a rigid style of teaching that fails to meet their students' diverse needs.

Additionally, Wesson (2008) noticed that traditionally licensed teachers demonstrated varied and personalized instructional strategies. The traditionally licensed teachers exhibited different types of dialogues and interactions throughout teaching their lessons (p.109), while in comparison lateral entry teachers used technical language that was not personalized. In their book, "The First Day of School:



Father with Son Who Has Down's Syndrome, 2017, by Andreas Bohnenstengel. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Germany license. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vater\\_und\\_Sohn\\_mit\\_Down-Syndrom.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vater_und_Sohn_mit_Down-Syndrom.jpg)

How to be an Effective Teacher,” Wong and Wong (2009) state that, in order to teach mastery, an effective teacher must know how to design lessons in which a student will be able to learn a concept or skill. Lateral entry teachers lack knowledge of how to design effective lessons. This ultimately impacts the quality of a student’s education. Teacher quality is directly correlated with student achievement (Wesson, 2008). Lateral entry teachers’ lack of knowledge of pedagogy will compromise student success (Wesson, 2008).

Besides knowing how to write and implement effective lessons, special education teachers also must have knowledge about all the laws and procedures that are in place for exceptional children. Lateral entry teachers entering the field of special education often do not possess all this knowledge. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), passed in 1975, covers children from birth to young adulthood and entitles them to receive a free appropriate education (Lipkin & Okamoto, 2015). IDEA has several key requirements to help bolster development and learning for students with disabilities (Lipkin & Okamoto, 2015). One crucial part of IDEA is an individualized learning plan (IEP); special education teachers typically write these documents.

Traditional special education teachers receive training in writing IEPs during a four-year college education program. The IEP states a student’s specific educational and service needs. Additionally, while constructing this document, parents or legal guardians—and when appropriate the student—are allowed to provide input on what specific services are necessary for the student (Montrosse, 2009). Another key part of IDEA is the “least restrictive environment” (LRE); the principle of LRE is that students with disabilities receive their education in the most appropriate setting. Different classroom settings can include self-contained classrooms and the mainstream setting. A self-contained classroom is only for students who have exceptional needs. In contrast, mainstreaming means placing a student with special needs in a general education classroom for part or most of the school day. The special education teacher and parent determine the placement of the student (Lipkin & Okamoto, 2015).

If the special education teacher lacks knowledge about what LRE is, that ignorance can negatively affect a student’s education. Pedagogy is not just having knowledge: teachers demonstrate pedagogy by knowing how to implement procedures and strategies. Pedagogy is what lateral entry teachers lack. According to the twenty-fifth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the IDEA, North Carolina had a higher incidence of exceptional children compared to national averages (Montrosse, 2009). The higher proportion of such students emphasizes North Carolina’s need to secure highly trained teachers of exceptional children.

### **Classroom Management**

Knowledge of pedagogy must be matched by classroom management skills. In Carol Davis Douglas’s interviews and research, she found that many lateral entry teachers did not think about or complete a classroom management plan for their first year of teaching (Douglas, 2011). In Douglas’s interviews of twelve lateral entry teachers over a five-year span, almost all these teachers agreed that managing students was difficult. Nine out of twelve lateral entry teachers stated that handling students’ behavior and deciding discipline were among the hardest tasks (Douglas, 2011). One interviewee in

particular, Dennis, stated prior to entering his first year of teaching that “I think my biggest obstacle will be classroom management” (Douglas, 2011, p. 69). Dennis taught in the middle school setting with students on all different levels. It is unclear if Dennis had exceptional children in his classes or not. Dennis expressed his confidence in being able to teach the content due to his prior knowledge of the North Carolina curriculum. To survey Dennis’s feelings towards his new career choice, Douglas asked him to rank his enthusiasm. Dennis responded with the rating of nine. Additionally, she asked what his anxiety level was and he responded with a six. At the end of Dennis’s first year of teaching, Douglas asked him again to rate his enthusiasm about teaching on a scale of one to ten, and his response was three (Douglas, 2011). Furthermore, she asked about his frustration level and he responded “a 9 to a 10” (Douglas, 2011). If Dennis had thought about a classroom management plan, his frustration with his class could potentially have been eliminated. Traditional teachers who are enrolled in a four-year program learn about classroom management plans and different discipline strategies. The literature available on how to manage classes effectively is typically not given or recommended to lateral entry teachers by administrators (Douglas, 2011). This is due to public school officials’ failure to comprehend that these lateral entry teachers lack classroom management knowledge. In traditional education programs, teacher candidates learn how to implement classroom management strategies.

Methodist University’s Education Department requires traditional teacher candidates to take a course known as “Seminar in Positive Behavior Development.” In the course students use the textbook *The First Day of School: How To Be an Effective Teacher* by Harry K. Wong and Rosemary T. Wong (2009). This textbook covers the Wongs’ research on how to be an effective teacher. One concept the Wongs discuss is knowledge and implementation of classroom management. Dr. Harry Wong defines classroom management as “the practices and procedures that allows [*sic*] teachers to teach and students to learn” (Starr, 2005). In their research, the Wongs have discovered that classroom management has a huge impact on student achievement.

Having classroom procedures in place facilitates proficient activities and lessons. Classroom procedures can include bell work, how to enter and exit the classroom, taking out and retrieving supplies, what to do with unfinished work, and when and how to take care of bodily functions (Wong & Wong, 2009). These behaviors often appear to be common knowledge, and it would seem the students should know how to conduct themselves in a classroom. But the Wongs’ research has shown that students do not have awareness of what teacher expectations are until they are directly taught (Wong & Wong, 2009). Teachers must explain their personal expectations and the procedures of a classroom on the first day of school, and be consistent when implementing these practices. This is especially important in a special education setting due to exceptional children needing more structure and routine compared to students in a general education setting. Lateral entry teachers’ ignorance of these ideas negatively affects their classroom management and their students. Douglas’s study with the lateral entry teacher Dennis demonstrates the cost of a lack of classroom management skills. Furthermore, a common misconception is that classroom management is discipline. As stated in the Wongs’ (2009) textbook, *The First Day of School: How To Be an Effective Teacher*, “discipline concerns how students behave. Procedures concern how things are done” (p. 19). If the interviewee Dennis from Douglas’s study had had knowledge about classroom

management, it is possible his perspectives and attitudes about the career of teaching would have been different.

## Conclusion

The teaching profession is often thought of as the occupation that anyone can do. For an emerging teacher, that view can be particularly troubling. The State of North Carolina instituted lateral entry hiring to put teachers in the classroom but, without the requisite qualifications, lateral entry teachers place their students—especially the diverse learners or exceptional children—at a disadvantage with long-term consequences.

Lateral entry teachers typically utilize basic instructional techniques rather than proven effective methodologies, and this cannot be easy for them. Ultimately, lateral entry teachers' two-week training period does not incorporate the necessary preparation, experience, and skills to ensure the success of future teachers of exceptional students. This glaring disservice harms both the teachers and the students, but it is the children—who cannot compensate for the resulting educational shortcomings—who are most negatively impacted. North Carolina's policy of hiring lateral entry teachers for exceptional children is fundamentally flawed.

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