

# Study Guide

## *You Can't Teach a Class You Can't Manage*

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*You Can't Teach a Class You Can't Manage* was written to address multiple factors that contribute to classroom management, along with offering solutions on how to approach discipline problems. This guide will aid individuals and groups in thinking about management of classrooms, as well as plan for sustained change that will help create classrooms where the focus *is* on learning, *not* on management.

The book is divided into 10 chapters. For each chapter, there will be a number of questions provided. These questions are intended to address ideas within the chapter that may merit further thought and/or discussion. Thinking about the answers and/or discussing the questions will enhance your understanding of the book, along with your ability to put your thoughts into practice. The questions for each chapter can be looked at in their entirety or you may choose to address only certain ones in each section.

While the guide can be used by an individual, it was created to offer groups of teachers, support staff and administrators a means to examine and discuss management issues. I hope that the study guide will provide you with a map to support discussions with colleagues. When used in a study group, it will act as a catalyst to share thinking, examples of issues and, most importantly, solutions that can make a difference in school settings.

## **Chapter 1 ~ Is this education or crowd control?**

How important do you believe that management is to the overall success of a classroom? Describe your philosophy of management in one or two sentences.

List 4 examples of the toughest management issues you encounter.

Tell what you believe will happen to children that don't learn to follow the rules, don't get along with others or don't learn to control their actions.

Think of a time that you felt that others didn't understand what you were going through or what you were feeling. Explain how that made you feel and what you wished they had done differently in responding to you.

Think of an example of a situation where a child that you work with is preventing the classroom from running smoothly. Practice stating the behavior in a way that shows empathy to the child while also letting them know that the behavior is not acceptable.

## **Chapter 2 ~ Accepting what we can't change**

In chapter 2's section "What's Past is Past", there is a statement that "choices don't have to define us". Do you believe that every person (child) can choose to make a different choice when it comes to behavior? What drives the choices that we make? Most importantly, how can we help children make different choices?

Share a time that a child's behavior seemed totally out of character to you. Ask yourself if that change might have been dependent upon the surrounding or who was in the child's presence. How will this affect our response?

What is the difference between a bribe and a reward? State an example of each.

List a set of behaviors that may occur when a child is feeling a certain emotion (e.g. - frustrated). Describe what you believe would be the most productive reaction to the behavior. Is it best to address it at the height of the emotion or when the emotional state has deescalated? Why?

Compare and Contrast a time when change was easy and when it was difficult. What factors contributed to this?

### **Chapter 3 ~ What do we want and how do we get it?**

Have you given management "curriculum" the same amount of consideration that you would give any topic that a child needs to be taught? Explain.

List a set of lessons that could be used to teach an everyday classroom rule (e.g. - be kind).

Think about the meaning of discipline in a classroom. Outline 5 things that contribute to meaningful discipline. How would you be proactive in addressing them?

Discuss what you have done to create a positive atmosphere with strong role models for children.

When you hear that someone has a "problem-solving philosophy", what does that mean to you?

#### **Chapter 4 ~ What have we tried?**

How do the students respond to the management strategies that you presently utilize? Do you feel that they are working? Tell why or why not.

Do you believe that the management strategies you use create long term change in behavior? Explain.

When people are confronted, it is said that we are all capable of regressing to a "fight or flight" mechanism in our brains. Describe how children react in these situations and tell how you believe the regression can be avoided.

Discuss a time that you were bribed or threaten to do something. What was your reaction and how did the bribe or threat affect your motivation to do it. What about in the future?

List several good and bad choices that *you* have made in the past couple of days. Were they a result of bribe or a threat? Discuss how bribes and threats have affected children that you have taught.

#### **Chapter 5 ~ Time to get started?**

Ask yourself if the management strategies that you presently use:

Are based upon a thought out curriculum? Or would you consider them to be "what you know" and/or "reactive to the situation"?

Are they working? Is the change in behavior short-term or leading to long term change?

Do they leave the child's and your own dignity intact?

Summarize a goal that you have for classroom discipline. Tell why the goal is important to you and the children in the class. Explore why the goal will need to be valued but not only by you but by the students that you teach.

To reach this goal, would you be willing to develop a curriculum of management? If yes, is there a group of individuals that you work with that you would envision would make a great team to develop the lessons? Who are they and what role would they play?

In looking forward at the Four Cornerstones of Discipline outlined in the next 4 chapters, explain which one you think is most important. Why?

Outline the next 4 chapters by folding a piece of paper in quarters. Write one cornerstone heading on each quadrant. As you read write single words that grab your attention under the specific heading. Be prepared to share the words and why they are important to you.

## **Chapter 6 ~ Cornerstone #1 Self-Control**

Explain your definition of self-control and why you feel it is or is not important to a discipline plan.

Think of a person that you feel epitomizes an individual with self-control. What traits stand out about that person? How would these traits be translated to children? How do we teach them?

What role do you feel that "wants and needs" play in behaviors of children? List 5 things that you believe children want in a classroom. List 5 things that you believe that they need in a classroom. Compare and contrast the two lists.

What aids you in being able to follow through on directions? Compare the strategies that help you to the strategies that must be taught to young children in order to follow directions.

In the section *Building and Understanding Self-Control* (starting on page 43), choose one of the subheadings and share what you believe children know about it and what you think they may need to be taught.

## **Chapter 7 ~ Cornerstone #2 Choice**

How would you describe the idea of "choices" to young children? Create 3 lessons that teach "good choice vs. bad choice". Explain why you believe the book lists *choice* as a cornerstone of discipline?

List 5 good or bad choices that you have made today. What were the direct rewards or consequences to those choices? Evaluate how the reward or consequence may determine your future actions. How can this be applied to working with children?

Children often need support in "mapping choices". Develop a lesson and the language that you could use to convey options to a child for a variety of situations.

Think of times that children have acted inappropriately in the class. Share how you could turn the inappropriate behavior into a win~win "choice" for you and the child.

Analyze your management plan and determine what percentage of the time you are in "reactive mode". Now, make a plan to switch from reactive to the behavior to proactive. What steps will you take? What changes do you think might occur?

Does fair mean equal? Explain. Think of situations where treating everyone equal becomes unfair in a classroom. How could you convert this knowledge into discipline strategies?

### **Chapter 8 ~ Cornerstone #3 Communication**

Discuss the language ability of the children that you teach. How do you believe that communication can be enhanced and valued in your classroom?

Create 4 lessons that will teach children what they can say or do when someone bothers them. Create 4 lessons that will teach children what they can say or do when they do not get something that they want.

Describe the difference between "talking at" and "talking with" someone from both your perspective and the perspective of the other person.

Think of things that you need or want from children in the class and then practice making statements to children in positive language that will result in that behavior.

What is the best way to diffuse a temper or to get out of an argument with a child?

"Time Out" has become a punishment used in many households and schools. Do you consider it a punishment? Explain why time out is useful and why it is so important when working with small children.

Discuss how a time-out spot could be developed and supervised within the class, within the school.

### **Chapter 9 ~ Cornerstone #4 Community**

Why is community important to individuals? How do you achieve the goal of creating a community of learners? List 5 specific actions that you take at the beginning of the year. How do you "follow through" on those actions throughout the year?

Create 4 lessons that build community in a classroom.

How is your classroom's environment inviting, nurturing and motivating to children?

What activities do you do or could be done to facilitate an emotionally safe environment for children?

The 3 R's in Chapter 9 (page 115) are listed as *Routines, Rituals and Responsibilities*. Make a list of each of these that will aid in management within your class.

Create a list of rewards for children that are not tangible. Describe how you can utilize rewards in the class to enhance your management strategies.



## **Chapter 10 - The Toolbox of Management Techniques**

What do you believe is the difference between consequence and punishment?

Management involves both strategies for organization and strategies for behaviors. Examine how strategies for organization can aid a classroom in reducing behavior issues.

In reviewing the management techniques outlined in this chapter, think of an individual child and make a list of "have used" or "could try". Do you have options available to you?

When do you think that it is time to give up on a child? Why?