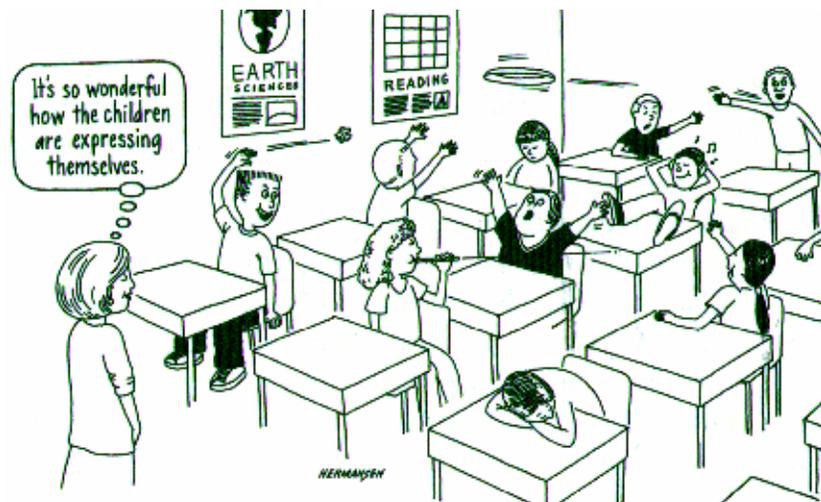


# Free Facilitator Guide

## *Conscious Classroom Management: Unlocking the Secrets of Great Teaching*



MARTHA ALLEN & RICK SMITH  
with contributions from mentor teachers across the country

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## About Rick

Rick Smith is an award winning teacher, education consultant and international presenter. He has taught tens of thousands of teachers and teacher-trainers worldwide, including two years training American Peace Corps volunteer teachers in Ghana, West Africa. His workshops include:

- ♦ Conscious Classroom Management: Bringing Out the Best in Students and Teachers
- ♦ Rebels with Applause: Brain Compatible Approaches for Motivating Reluctant Learners
- ♦ Strategies for Mentor Teachers
- ♦ Brain Compatible Presentation Skills for Teachers and Teacher Trainers

Some of Rick's experience:

- ♦ Teacher for fourteen years in San Rafael, California
- ♦ Mentor teacher/Support Provider for eight years
- ♦ Elementary Education adjunct professor, St. Mary's College Credential Program, Moraga, California
- ♦ Secondary Education adjunct professor, Dominican University Credential Program, San Rafael, California
- ♦ Workshop presenter, hundreds of schools and districts
- ♦ Keynote speaker, dozens of conferences nationwide

Rick's book, *Conscious Classroom Management: Unlocking the Secrets of Great Teaching*, has sold more than thirty thousand copies and is currently being used by the majority of new teachers in the ten largest school districts in America.

## Introduction

This guide is designed as a companion to *Conscious Classroom Management: Unlocking the Secrets of Great Teaching*. Rick’s book is packed with specific, research-supported suggestions and practical advice for effectively managing a classroom. It transforms the “invisible” art of classroom control into tangible tools that any teacher can begin to use immediately with very “visible” results.

The guide is intended for use in several contexts:

- ♦ beginning teachers working in an induction program
- ♦ all teachers through school or district workshops
- ♦ teaching credential candidates in colleges and universities
- ♦ mentors, training to work with classroom teachers.

The guide may be used by individual teachers working on their own or by facilitators working with groups of educators. It is particularly useful to incorporate this work in a peer coaching/observation format in which teachers work closely with a trusted mentor or peer. While we use the term “study session” to describe the format used to explore Rick’s ideas, you can easily substitute “workshop” or “professional development plan.” While we refer to the work of “teachers,” you can substitute “credential candidates” or “mentors.”

Each study session begins with a summary of the material covered and then presents pre-reading questions to focus the topic for study. After you have read the chapter, the guide will lead you through both discussion questions and specific skill-building activities aimed at clarifying the concepts in the chapter. These discussions and activities were designed to be done by a group of teachers working together, but they could certainly be addressed by individuals.

Since teachers’ feelings and assumptions about teaching and their students are often the determining force behind classroom practices, we also include opportunities for journaling and self-reflection. A list of “key points to remember” and a suggested action plan end each study session so that teachers can go from theory to practice, and prepare for the next session.

There is no need to approach the study sessions chronologically if you feel it would better suit your needs to skip one or jump ahead to another. Our one suggestion would be to avoid the temptation to dive right into consequences outlined in the last session, “Intervention – What We Do in Response,” before establishing the foundation – both philosophical and practical – outlined in the opening chapters. On the other hand, **if you are pressed for time or are about to start the school year**, you may want to review Session 10: “Getting Ready” before the returning to the others.

One last thing: This facilitator guide is a “living document.” It has been put together in part with suggestions from mentor teachers and professors from around the country. If you have a suggestion that you’d like to share, please email us, and we will gladly update the guide with your idea.

## *Ways to initially get teachers into the book*

This section is designed for meetings when teachers are first given the book. Often, books are handed to teachers as they leave a meeting, or are given out in a “gift bag” when teachers arrive, but then are not referred to during the rest of that meeting. As an alternative, try one of the suggestions below as a way to get teachers interested and engaged with the book right from the start.

### **Strategy one:**

Give out the books. Divide the group into pairs. Each pair will be responsible for one (or more) of the questions below. After introductions, teachers search the book to find the answers. They then report out to the group as a whole. Note: all answers to this “treasure hunt” can be found by consulting either the index or the table of contents.

1. What are examples of some characteristics of an effective “No” response to students?
2. What is Rick’s advice about something we can all do for five minutes each day to reduce stress?
3. What are some examples of non-verbal reminders about rules and consequences?
4. Why can classroom management be especially difficult for Physical Education teachers?
5. What is the difference between appreciation and praise? What is the effect of each?
6. What is the difference between being nice and being kind? What are the consequences of each?
7. What is “filler,” and why and when do we need it?
8. What are two good get-acquainted activities to use at the start of the school year?
9. What is the single biggest source of teacher stress? How can we counteract it?
10. How and when might you use a behavior contract with an individual student?
11. What is the ADOPT system and why might it be useful?

12. What is inner apology and why can it be so counterproductive in the classroom?
13. Explain the “firm and soft” paradox.
14. What is the “4-H strategy” for making positive connections with your students? What would it look like in your classroom?
15. Why is it important to establish classroom procedures before content is taught? What are some examples of important procedures that need to be explicitly taught?
16. What is “arguing with the ref” and what is a good way to deal with it?
17. What is one of the very hardest things for teachers to enforce consistently in the classroom, and why is it so important to do so?
18. What is an effective way to keep students on track if they have been absent from school?
19. What are the five key assumptions we need to make about consequences for misbehavior?
20. What are ways to use music or sound signals to aid in transitions?
21. How can students be involved in making the class rules?

### Strategy Two:

Give out the books. Provide time for participants to silently browse through the book. Afterward, they can pair off and each share one or two quotations that stood out. Some of these can be shared with the group.

Tell the group that in his workshops Rick asks that teachers do not take the book back to their schools and make it part of their professional library. Instead, he suggests, “Take it home and put it in your bathroom. That’s how it was designed. Go to the bathroom. Leave... with a strategy.”

# Session One/Two: “*Introduction and Assume the Best*”

## Reading

Introduction and Chapter Two (pages 3 – 18)

## Summary

Effective classroom management is essentially invisible. Paradoxically, the teachers who handle this component of education the best are often unaware of exactly what it is they do to achieve this success. By slowing down the camera – by looking more closely at what is happening both within the classroom and behind the scenes – we can increase our awareness of what works and why. The goal is to make effective classroom management tangible, moving it out of the realm of “instinct” into conscious decisions about how we want our classes to operate. Two components must be at work here: who we are and what we do. “Who we are” refers to our internal sense of self and thus how we come across to our students. “What we do” refers to specific strategies for maintaining a positive classroom environment.

Effective teachers have internalized certain key assumptions about their students and themselves. They realize that all teachers must teach the whole person, and that all students *want* to learn – both the academic content and appropriate behavior. When students test us – and they will – they want us to pass the test. As long as we assume the best, treat ourselves and our students with respect and take deep breaths, we will land on our feet and maintain a positive classroom atmosphere.

## Focus of this session

- ♦ Why is good classroom management seemingly invisible?
- ♦ What are key assumptions that help us successfully manage our classrooms?

## Pre- reading questions

1. Think of effective teachers you have had in the past or that you have observed. What made them particularly successful in maintaining control and generating a positive learning environment? (You may want to address the same question about memorably ineffective teachers you have encountered.)
2. What are your underlying assumptions about your students' attitudes about learning and about school? Do they want to be in school? Do they look forward to learning? Do they find school to be an exciting adventure? A tedious necessity?
3. What classroom management problems do you face or do you foresee facing?

## Discussion Questions

1. Did the description of Mrs. Allgood remind you of any teachers you have had in the past or have observed? Did her responses seem realistic? Do-able?
2. What about Mrs. Meanswell? Does she remind you of teachers you have known? Have you observed her? Been her? Did her responses make you squirm at any point?
3. Describe a "Phil" from your own experience? How did you respond to him? What worked and what did not work?
4. Did you ever have a student who drove you so nuts that you started to assume that he/she was out to thwart you? How did that assumption affect your connection with that student?
5. Have you ever given a class an evaluation form in which they had the opportunity to assess your abilities as a teacher? What did/could you learn from this? Why might it be a frightening step to take? Why might it be a valuable step to take?
6. How would you describe the culture of your school in terms of teacher attitudes about teaching and about their students?

## Activities

1. Student sort: Write down – from memory - the names of the students in one of your classes. Then check your class list to see if you have forgotten anyone. Next, write the name of each student on a 3x5 card

- and sort the cards into whatever categories seem appropriate to you. The simple act of sorting can illuminate certain of your underlying teacher values. Did you sort by ability – and if so, what sort of ability – athletic, musical, academic? Did you sort by personality? Maturity? Country of origin? Economic background? Sense of humor? Attitude about learning?
2. Once you have done your first sort, try another. Identify two students to whom you want to give extra attention in the next few weeks.
  3. Choose a student in your class who chronically misbehaves. Write a letter to that student (you will not be actually sending it) that interprets his or her behavior as a call for help, as opposed to an attempt to get you off track.

## Journal Write

Respond to as many of these prompts as feel appropriate.

1. Describe your favorite teacher.
2. What brought you to teaching? What are your goals, professionally and personally?
3. What assumptions do you hold about your students?
4. Reflect on this quote from the introduction (p. 7): “The combination of who we are and what we do makes for effective classroom management.” How does this apply to you in your classroom?

## Key Points to Remember

- a. Effective classroom management is essentially invisible.
- b. Assume the best about your students.
- c. Teacher must teach procedures and behavior.
- d. Students want to learn and they want to behave.

## Suggested Action Plan and Preparation for Next Session

1. Read Chapter 3: “Inner Authority”
2. Observe a teacher you admire and find at least three things to appreciate about his or her classroom management. Write a note, thanking him or her.
3. Find a trusted mentor or peer with whom you can do some peer coaching.

# Session Three: “Inner Authority”

## Reading

Chapter Three (pages 21 -29)

## Summary

Developing our inner authority can make all the difference in becoming an effective teacher. It is the key to a seemingly invisible, intuitive mastery. The opposite of this is “inner apology” which reflects a sense that our authority is questionable. This does not mean that a good teacher must never apologize, for it is often essential to do just that - the most effective apologies are grounded in inner authority, completely genuine, and include self-forgiveness.

There are several keys to developing and maintaining inner authority: assuming the best about our students, asking for help when appropriate, reducing our stress, increasing our level of calm, and holding our ground with caring and confidence. The more consistent we are in teaching and re-teaching classroom procedures, the more our students will follow our lead. Each teaching moment provides us with the opportunity to look in the mirror and reflect.

## Focus of this Session

- ♦ What is “inner authority”?
- ♦ How can I grow in “inner authority”?

## Pre-reading Questions

1. Think about the ways in which you direct activities and give directions in your classroom. Are you confident? What do you intend for your tone to be?
2. Do you have difficulty apologizing when you have made a mistake? How do you approach this issue in your classroom?
3. Do you worry about what others, especially your students, think of you?

## Discussion Questions

1. Re-read pages 24 – 25. Discuss the difference in the two approaches outlined. How would you describe the difference between “self-effacing” and “self-affirming,” between “deflecting the heat” and taking the heat”?
2. Make a list of statements you make on a regular basis in your classroom that tend to bring you into inner apology. Do the same with statements that tend to bring you into inner authority. Examine the differences in each category. What you can do, in terms of preparation or anticipation, to help you come more from inner authority in those areas where you most struggle?
3. Brainstorm ways in which being consistent and prepared could help you build your inner authority. Be as specific as you can. What would this *look* like in your classroom? What would it *sound* like? Most importantly, what would it *feel* like?

## Activities

1. Role-play with a peer. Play the role of the teacher and ask your partner, playing the role of your student, to “please put that away and have a seat.” Try saying this statement from a number of different contexts – as a whisper; from across the room; from inner apology; from standing; from sitting; while walking toward the student; while walking away; in a brisk accusatory tone; in a self-effacing tone; from inner authority. As you try the different contexts, assess where you are on the continuum of inner apology/inner authority. Discuss what contexts are most comfortable for you and most challenging. Hint: If you want to practice speaking from inner authority, as you speak to your partner, assume that he/she absolutely wants and needs to hear what it is that you are saying.

In addition, this role-play can be done with any classroom direction or discussion that you would like to practice giving. Perhaps, for example, your student earned a low grade on an assignment, and you anticipate that he will want to complain about it and blame you. How will you respond?

You could also practice a challenging conversation with a parent, administrator or fellow teacher.

These role-plays can be done with a partner, or alone in front of the mirror.

## Journal Write

1. The end of this chapter suggests that trying to develop our inner authority can be a “trial by fire,” a steep learning curve. How true is that for you? What next steps do you want to take?
2. Are the ideas in this chapter applicable to other areas of your life as well? Where have you seen yourself or others being inwardly apologetic? Where have you experienced inner authority?

## Key Points to Remember

- a. Our inner authority affects how we give directions and talk one-on-one with students.
- b. Inner apology can be counterproductive in the classroom and preys on our insecurities.
- c. Apologies to the class that are grounded, sincere and affirming of the teacher’s caring reflect a teacher’s inner authority.
- d. Approaches that work include assuming the best, asking for help, holding our ground, and being consistent and prepared.

## Suggested Action Plan and Preparation for Next Session

1. Read Chapter 4: “Ask for Help”
2. Make another entry in your journal about what you see as you “look in the mirror” (see page 28) about your progress on the inner authority continuum.
3. Call three to five parents of your students to discuss their child’s behavior in your classroom. Make sure that at least some of your calls address positive student behavior. Facing parents in this manner is a “two-for-one special.” It can help us grow in inner authority while helping improve student behavior in the meantime.

# Session Four: “Ask for Help”

## Reading

Chapter Four (pages 31 -41)

## Summary

All teachers make mistakes, and denying this not only sets impossible standards for ourselves but also leads our students to think we expect them to be perfect. Our openness is the key to letting go of seeking unattainable perfection. It is the *single-most important* quality for any teacher; it lets our students know that it’s okay to take risks, explore, and make mistakes in the classroom. We are role models for our students. Openness to asking for help is also a win-win situation, with those who give us help benefiting as much as we do. Openness and letting go of our need for perfection will not only help us become better teachers, it will also model that behavior for our students. Those who help will also benefit, creating a win-win situation.

It is also important to keep a record of all potentially controversial decisions; use a discipline log or create a system that works for you.

## Focus of this Session

- ♦ How can we reach out for help when we need it?
- ♦ How can we counter the isolation that we sometimes feel as a teacher?

## Pre-reading Questions

1. What are the most important qualities of any teacher?
2. In what areas would you like to get assistance or work together with someone else?

## Discussion Questions

1. How does it feel to ask for help? Share stories – the good and the not-so-good.
2. When is it appropriate for a student to be transferred to another classroom? Who makes the decision? If you have a student you think

- needs to be transferred, what are steps you can take to get the process started?
3. What method of documenting potentially controversial decisions, conversations and actions works best for you? Why?
  4. Reread or review Rick's story of his "bumpy start" (pages 35 -36), take a breath, and then share your own stories.

## Activities

1. Combine the lists you have made of the qualities of a good teacher (see "Pre-reading Question #1 above). What other qualities would you add after having read this chapter?
2. Make a list of the sources of help for teachers within your school and in your larger community. Include everything from the names of teachers who can serve as models, to community drug and alcohol agencies and parent volunteers. This is a great time to ask your mentor for suggestions, especially if you are new to the area.

## Journal Write

1. What is the atmosphere about collegiality and collaboration at your school? In your district? Are there ways you would like to improve this atmosphere?
2. In what ways are you a positive role model for your students? How would you like to be remembered by former students ten or even twenty years from now?
3. Reflect on this passage from the chapter (p. 38): "Those who give us help blossom even more than we do." In what respects has this been true in your experience?

## Key Points to Remember

- a. Ask for help!
- b. Openness is the most important quality in any teacher.
- c. Share your evaluations with trusted teachers.
- d. Document everything.
- e. Give students a chance to ask for help as well.

## Suggested Action Plan and Preparation for Next Session

1. Read Chapter 5: “Got Stress?”
2. Decide on a method of documenting interactions with students and parents (page 39), and implement it.
3. What are some assignments and activities that you have the students do that require or encourage them to ask for help (cooperative learning groups, for example)? What are some ways you could restructure some of your assignments or activities to more allow students to practice asking for help?
4. Make an appointment with your mentor or trusted colleague to discuss your evaluation and/or your goals for professional development this year.

# Session Five: “Got Stress?”

## Reading

Chapter Five (pages 43 - 52)

## Summary

The single biggest source of stress for teachers is unrealistic expectations of themselves. Being a teacher is often like trying to fly an airplane ... while building it. Our job description is infinite and a sense of incompleteness comes with the territory. It is important to schedule time for whatever helps us deal with the stress that comes with being a teacher. It can help to take five minutes of unstructured time for ourselves each day. The better we as teachers feel about ourselves, the better our students will respond to us, both behaviorally and academically. We are role models and need to be as soft with ourselves as we are with our students in our best moments.

## Focus of this Session

- ♦ What causes us stress? How do we best address it?
- ♦ How can we care for ourselves as we care for our students?

## Pre-reading Questions

1. What is the biggest cause of teacher stress in your experience?
2. What works best for you as a means of countering this stress?

## Discussion Questions

1. What are some specific, practical ways to reduce the stress of our jobs?
2. What hints can you share about dealing with the paperwork that can threaten to overwhelm us?
3. What would you do with your “five minutes a day” (page 47)? How can we internally disengage from our role as a teacher and reconnect with ourselves as human beings?
4. Could the staff at your school have more old-fashioned fun? What would be a good first step?

## Activities

1. Make a list of the sources of stress in your life, both personal and professional. Then look at each item on your list, and determine how much control you have over it. Put your active focus on those sources of stress that you have the most influence over. With a partner, make action plans to address each do-able item, and practice “letting go of complaint” with those items you can’t change. It can be helpful to focus on one step at a time with celebrations and self-appreciations built in. Please don’t make releasing stress into a stressful job.
2. Make an appointment with another teacher to spend an hour walking in the park – and agree that you will not talk about school or your students.

## Journal Write

1. Write a letter to yourself from a future time when things are less stressful. Give yourself encouragement and a road map for getting to that future.
2. Respond to the following quotation (page 47) “sometime during the day, take five minutes of unstructured time for yourself. Disengage from the job description and remember yourself.” Does this seem valuable to you? Possible? How and when might you do this?

## Key Points to Remember

- a. Choose enthusiasm over burn-out.
- b. Address the causes of stress and possible antidotes.
- c. We need to care for ourselves as well as our students.
- d. Welcome feelings of incompleteness and inadequacy that inevitably come with this profession, but don’t listen *too* closely!

## Suggested Action Plan and Preparation for Next Session

1. Read Chapter 6: “Holding Our Ground.”
2. Re-read the chapter summary on page 52 of Chapter 5. Consider photocopying it and placing it in a conspicuous place in your home or classroom.
3. Place an inspirational photograph, image, quotation, or object on your desk or back wall in your classroom. When things get rough, gaze on

your inspirational image for support (One teacher has on his back wall a wonderful picture of a beach in Hawaii. In rough moments, he looks at the picture and thinks “warm tropical breezes, warm tropical breezes...”)

4. Take five minutes each day at school for yourself (page 47).
5. When taking home papers to grade, only take as many as you realistically expect to do. When you are done with that stack, celebrate and know that you are done for that night.
6. Reward yourself at the end of the week with a dinner out, a massage, flowers or some other act of kindness to remind yourself that you are working very hard and doing a good job. Go out with friends on Tuesday night!

## Session Six: “*Holding Our Ground*”

### Reading

Chapter Six (pages 54 - 60)

### Summary

This is the first chapter in the section of the book devoted to “Prevention.” Holding our ground is challenging for teachers, but the ability to be firm without being mean is central to everything we do as teachers. Effective teachers know to lower their volume, lower their tone and face their students squarely when disciplining a student. They learn not to over-explain their decisions, to table explanations until later and get any conflict off of center stage. They replace reactivity with calm, knowing that if they respond with anger they may win the battle but will find themselves facing many future battles. An effective “no” has no blame, no complaining and no wiggle-room.

### Focus of this Session

- ♦ How can we learn the invisible art of holding our ground in the classroom?

### Pre-reading Questions

1. Think of a time when you were particularly angry at a student. How did you respond? What was/wasn’t effective in this situation?
2. How do you feel when you have to say “no” to a student? How do you feel about how you feel?
3. How has anger caused you to lose ground, both in and out of the classroom?

### Discussion Questions

1. Think of times you have seen a teacher respond effectively to a disruptive student. What did he or she do that worked best? How can we work to make these seemingly intuitive responses more tangible?

2. What strategies were less than effective? Have you witnessed a time when a teacher has won the battle with a student, but then found him or herself “in a land of battles”? (62) How might this be avoided?
3. What is the line between anger and reactivity? Is there ever a role for the expression of anger within the classroom?
4. What are some of the strategies that will help dissipate anger?

## Activities

1. Find a partner and have each of you in turn play the part of an insistent student asking to leave the classroom. The teacher’s job is to not allow the student to leave, no matter what. Continue the role-play, with the teacher limited to only two responses: “No” and “I understand and the answer is No.” After each person has had a turn, discuss what this felt like and identify several successful approaches that you might use in your classroom.
2. Role-play an obnoxious student and an effective teacher who has learned to lower his or her voice and tone, face the student squarely and take a deep breath before speaking. Avoid over-explaining and work to get the conflict off center-stage. Again, switch roles so everyone can experience what this feels like and then discuss applications in your classroom.
3. Try the Aikido approach. Role-play with an obnoxious student. When the student tries to push your buttons, simply repeat what the student says, without giving in. For example, the student says “You’re not fair! You never listen to what I say!” and the teacher calmly responds with “I see that you’re saying that I’m not fair and that I never listen to what you say.”
4. Brainstorm effective strategies – and perhaps unorthodox approaches – that you have seen work in a classroom. Can we begin to make the invisible quality more tangible? What strategies have been effective when you deal with anger in your own life outside of the classroom?
5. Sometimes students benefit from an alternative to simply being told “no.” Role-play situations where this might be the best strategy.

## Journal Write

Respond to as many of these prompts as you feel are appropriate.

1. Describe your most challenging student or classroom situation.
2. What came up for you personally when doing the activities above?
3. What specific practices can you take back to work with your students?
4. Reflect on the significance of this passage to your own experience (page 62): “We can allow ourselves these natural feelings of anger, guilt, or anxiety, and yet not indulge or act them out. Let’s let them in for tea but not serve them a seven-course meal.”

## Key Points to Remember

- a. Don’t over-explain.
- b. Get conflict off center stage.
- c. Lower your voice.
- d. Lower your tone.
- e. Directly face student.
- f. Realize anger is a feeling but reactivity is a choice.
- g. Breathe!

## Suggested Action Plan and Preparation for Next Session

1. Read Chapter 7: “Positive Connections.”
2. Observe a teacher you admire and find at least one time when he or she succeeded in “holding the line” with grace, dignity and love. Write a note, thanking him or her.
3. In the next week, actively practice being both firm and soft in saying “no” without explanation, blame, complaining or wiggle-room.
4. Look for ways in which you make students responsible for your feelings (i.e., where you blame students). Practice assuming the best about these students – that they want to participate and want to learn behavior.

# Session Seven: “Positive Connections”

## Reading

Chapter Seven (pages 65 - 79)

## Summary

Positive connections between teacher and student have a huge positive impact on classroom management and student motivation. This chapter aims at breaking this seemingly intuitive art into visible, workable pieces. Sometimes that means doing what’s best for our students, as opposed to what’s easiest. When we focus on being liked by our students, we shift power over to them; when students are convinced that we truly care for them, however, they will gladly shift the power to us. This makes the classroom a safe environment where the teacher and the students can focus on learning.

We can give students choices whenever possible, relate the lessons to their lives, communicate with their families, learn about their backgrounds and cultures and express genuine appreciation for them when appropriate. This chapter provides many specific ways to create trust and meaningful connections with our students.

## Focus of this Session

- ♦ How can we build positive connections with our students?
- ♦ What are some specific strategies that can be used in our classrooms?

## Pre-reading Questions

1. What is the difference between being “nice” and being “kind” in the classroom?
2. What are some specific strategies you can use to make positive connections with your students?
3. Can teachers try too hard to be “pals” with students? What would this look like in the classroom? How do you find the right balance?
4. How can being a caring adult help to create a safe environment in the classroom?

## Discussion Questions

Perhaps the most effective way to discuss the issues in this chapter is to first do the activities below and then generate an opportunity for sharing ideas and concerns. Teachers can select an email partner and make a commitment to exchange emails, sharing ideas, successes and frustrations about ways to create positive personal connections within the classroom.

## Activities

1. Make a graphic organizer or poster which illustrates some of the specific suggestions offered on pages 69 – 71 in this chapter. What would your classroom look like and sound like if you incorporated these ideas? Discuss which two or three specific strategies you will try.
2. Using the diagram on page 74, brainstorm specific ways that we balance personal connections with a willingness to hold our own ground.
3. Make a commitment to call five or more parents per week for three weeks. Focus your calls on positive things their child has done recently in your class.

## Journal Write

Respond to as many of these prompts as you feel are appropriate.

1. What are appropriate ways in which your caring can be expressed in the classroom? What are inappropriate ways? What evidence will the students provide (if any) that you are positively connecting to them in appropriate ways?
2. Describe two specific students with whom you would like to forge a more positive personal connection. What are some ways you could begin to do this?
3. Are there physical changes you could make in your classroom - bulletin boards, desk arrangements, student displays - that would foster a greater sense of classroom community?
4. What specific practices can you take back to work with your students?
5. What are some specific small steps you can take to give your students more choices and greater autonomy?

## Key Points to Remember

- a. Relate materials to students' lives.
- b. Give questionnaires to students.
- c. Share stories and photos.
- d. Attend extra-curricular events.
- e. Communicate with parents.
- f. Involve students in making rules and procedures.
- g. Honor birthdays.
- h. Create a student bulletin board.
- i. Provide choices, whenever appropriate.

## Suggested Action Plan and Preparation for Next Session

1. Read Chapter 8: "Teaching Procedures"
2. Read over your journal entries and try some of the ideas you outlined.
3. Write a letter or email to parents or call home to let parents know how their students are doing in class, especially if they are doing well!
4. Email your partner (see Discussion Questions suggestions above) about your successes, frustrations and plans.

# Session Eight: “*Teaching Procedures*”

## Reading

Chapter Eight (pages 80 - 103)

## Summary

This chapter is filled with specific suggestions for ways to make a teacher’s life easier and to make teaching both more enjoyable and more effective. Spending time teaching classroom procedures not only makes the environment run more smoothly, but it also facilitates teaching content. Teachers need to break things into parts and address students’ learning styles, focusing on kinesthetic and visual approaches especially, just as in teaching content. It is important to review the procedures once they are taught, and rubrics can be used for this. Once these procedural “tracks” are laid down, the “train” of academic content can run more effectively and more quickly.

## Focus of this Session

- ♦ What procedures are important for our students to do well?
- ♦ How can we teach and reinforce these classroom procedures?

## Pre-reading Questions

1. What procedures do your students have trouble with?
2. How do you teach these procedures and how much time/priority should you give to this?

## Discussion Questions

1. Describe the beginning of a typical class in your room? How might this time be used more effectively? How might you teach the procedures you want to see?
2. How well do your students work in small groups? What works well and what does not? How might you teach the procedures you want to see?

3. What is your policy about tardies? Clean up? Bathroom use? Tattling? Pencil sharpening? What works well and what does not? How might you teach the procedures you want to see?
4. What behaviors are creating problems with cooperative groups in your classroom? What procedures would alleviate those problems?
5. How do you get the attention of everyone in your class? What has worked well in helping students to make efficient transitions from one activity to another? Share your secrets!
6. What are some ways to hold students accountable for following directions and learning procedures? What are some natural group and individual incentives (such as saving time practicing procedures and thus earning time for in-class projects)?

## Activities

1. There are twenty-eight procedures explained in the “Things to Do” section at the end of this chapter (pages 93-103). Jigsaw possible ways to teach them and present these strategies to the whole group. Then individually make a list of two or three ideas you would like to try with your class in the next month. Decide the criteria for successful implementation of these strategies, and find ways to meet the criteria.
2. Make a list of the phrases/directions/reminders that you find yourself repeating more than you want to. For each item on your list, see if you can come up with a non-verbal way to teach/remind your students. Focus on visuals, rubrics, sound signals and hand signals. In addition, where are there opportunities to have student monitors give the directions that you don’t want to repeat?

## Journal Write

Respond to as many of these prompts as you feel are appropriate.

1. How effective is group work in your class? Describe your ideal vision of how your students *could* work in groups.
2. How effective are oral presentations in your class? Describe your ideal vision of how your students *could* present work to one another.
3. How do you know if students have understood your directions? How might you ensure that there isn’t confusion?
4. How can you translate your verbal directions into visual and/or kinesthetic directions?

5. Reflect on the following quotation as it relates to your teaching practice (p. 82): “Once I clearly laid down the ‘railroad tracks’ of procedure, the ‘train’ of content ran much more smoothly in the direction I wanted.”

## Key Points to Remember

- a. Procedures are the railroad tracks – content is the train.
- b. Each classroom procedure needs to be taught, practiced and reviewed.
- c. Use the Budweiser approach – a minimum of two procedures per class or lesson (see page 90).
- d. Proximity helps keep students focused.
- e. Pauses and eye contact can be effective in getting student attention.
- f. A timer or music can be useful in helping students make transitions.
- g. Break directions into small “chunks.”

## Suggested Action Plan and Preparation for Next Session

1. Read Chapter 9: “Consistency.”
2. Try some of the ideas you reviewed in Activity #1 above.
3. Ask your students for their feedback about the effectiveness of various procedures you use in class. Incorporate their suggestions.
4. Write into each lesson plan that you make this week a minimum of two procedures that you want to teach and/or review during that lesson. Include how you plan to teach/review each procedure.
5. Practice checking for understanding when you give directions to your students.

# Session Nine: “Consistency”

## Reading

Chapter Nine (pages 104 - 112)

## Summary

Being consistent does not mean being a robot; it arises out of caring for our students and their learning. Consistency in three areas of classroom management is especially important for effective teaching: policies about hand-raising, response to students’ arguing, and dealing with one-on-one conversations within the classroom.

A clear hand-raising policy is one of the hardest things for a teacher to enforce consistently. It takes discipline, but it makes an enormous difference in the class noise level. When students call out answers without raising their hands, we need to honor the procedure rather than the content. Likewise, student arguing needs to be handled proactively, by teaching a clear procedure. Arguing is in itself a disruption, deserving of a second consequence. Lastly, it is important to get all students on-task before having individual conversations with any of them. We must minimize the number and length of private conversations during class, and maximize our opportunities for the private conversations we do have by building activities where the rest of the class will be focused and on-task.

## Focus of this Session

- ♦ What procedures, if enacted consistently, are keys for keeping the classroom chatter to a minimum? In other words, when confronted with a chronically noisy class, what classroom procedures and policies, if enforced consistently, will serve as anchors to allow the teacher to grow as a classroom manager?
- ♦ How can we consistently teach and reinforce these classroom procedures?

## Pre-reading Questions

1. How consistent are you about having students raise their hands before answering? Do any of your students consistently speak out? Do any others never volunteer?
2. What do you do to ensure that all students are participating?
3. Do you have students who argue with you about your directions or consequences? Do you take the bait? What are the consequences for you and your students if you do?

## Discussion Questions

1. The chapter identifies three threads that are keys to follow in establishing consistency in the classroom. What would be *your* top three?
2. What has been your experience with using hand signals or other non-verbal cues for students? How did this work?
3. What role does ‘being the adult’ play in how you handle a parent or student attempting to argue? What role does ‘holding your ground’ play in these situations?

## Activities

1. Role-play a classroom where students speak out and argue with the teacher. Practice effective ways of addressing this. Switch so that everyone has a chance to be teacher.
2. Role-play a situation where parents speak out and argue during a parent conference.
3. Role-play giving directions to students to raise their hands in order to speak. Then role-play shifting to allow students to brainstorm – and then come back to hand-raising. Try delineating the difference clearly, perhaps by standing in a different part of the room, and clarifying visually the difference between the two procedures.
4. This would be an excellent time to have pairs of teachers observe or videotape one another’s classrooms. Make arrangements for that and have the pairs meet to discuss exactly what each teacher would like the other to look for.

## Journal Write

Respond to as many of these prompts as you feel are appropriate.

1. How does it feel when a student argues with you? How do you respond – externally and internally? What about when a parent argues with a decision you have made?
2. Respond to the quotation in the gray box in the book on page 112. Do you agree that caring leads to consistency? Does consistency allow for more caring?
3. How will you go about reinforcing the consistency you wish to see in your classroom?

## Key Points to Remember

- a. Establish hand-raising policies.
- b. Avoid letting students argue with the teacher.
- c. Avoid the “pop-corn” effect.
- d. Hold our ground without over-explaining.
- e. Consistency arises out of our caring for our students and their learning.

## Suggested Action Plan and Preparation for Next Session

1. Read Chapter 10: “Getting Ready.”
2. Observe and/or videotape another teacher. Give caring feedback about hand-raising policies and response to arguing in that class. Have someone else observe/videotape you as well. Make time to have a conversation about what was seen, what worked well and what suggestions each of you could make for increased consistency.
3. Draw, write, or post a message from yourself to yourself on the back wall of your classroom that is a reminder about consistency. It might be a picture of a hand to remind you to focus on hand-raising. It might be a picture of an ear to remind you to speak loud enough (or more softly). It could be a two-sided arrow to remind you to look at and include all students - on both sides of the room, of both genders, of all cultures.

# Session Ten: “Getting Ready”

## Reading

Chapter Ten (pages 115 - 133)

If you are pressed for time or are about to start the school year, you may want to review this chapter before the others.

## Summary

Getting ready and organized before the school year starts is a key to smooth teaching and smooth classroom management. Consulting the lists given in this chapter on pages 116 - 122 may be a help. If you are newly hired and dropped into a class, avoid assigning so much homework in the first weeks that you will not have time or energy to deal with practicalities of room arrangement, get-acquainted activities and establishing rules and procedures. Several get-acquainted activities are outlined in this chapter as well, including names games, interviews and people hunts.

## Focus of this Session

- ♦ What preparation do we need to do before school begins?
- ♦ How can we prioritize if (when?) we are feeling overwhelmed?

## Pre-reading Questions

1. How do you want your room to be arranged, in terms of desk placement, bulletin boards, assignment collection, student work displays?
2. What preparation do you want to do before school begins?
3. What should you do on the first few days of school to establish rapport, procedures, and a focused working environment?

## Discussion Questions

1. How easy is it for a new teacher to learn the school or district policies and expectations? How could it be made easier?
2. How easy is it for a new teacher to know the resources available for help within the school and community? How could it be made easier?

3. What are the politics in your school? Are there different sides **of to** different issues? Does it matter to you to avoid being seen (at least initially) as part of one camp, as opposed to another?
4. Once school starts, you will need to teach and implement many classroom procedures. How can you design the procedures and the ways you will teach them before the students show up on the first day, so that you will be ready once they show?

## Activities

1. Make a list of school resources (mentors, nurse, janitor, counselor, psychiatrist, librarian) and their school phone numbers and email addresses. Duplicate it for all new teachers.
2. Together with other teachers, chart out a calendar for the year, marking in assemblies, holidays, school-wide testing periods, and the like. Duplicate it for all new teachers.
3. Play two truths and a lie. (page 129)
4. Write a self-evaluation of yourself as a teacher from the future. (page 129)
5. Draw a picture of your classroom and think about your usual “traffic paths” in the room. How might you rearrange your desk arrangement or your own placement in the room for more effective teaching? Discuss with others.

## Journal Write

1. What are your goals – both personal and professional – for this year?
2. The time before school starts can be exhilarating and filled with anxiety. What are your anxieties about starting school? Make a list and divide it into two categories: things you can take care of before the first day of school, and things you can only address once school starts. This will help you relax with certain anxieties, knowing that you cannot address them yet, and it will help you target the things you can take care of right away.
3. Rick suggests that we “require students to score 100% on a quiz of class principles, rules, and consequences. They can take the quiz as often as possible.” (p. 129) What are some questions you could include in such a quiz?

## Key Points to Remember

- a. Refer to the lists on pages 116 – 122.
- b. If you are just hired and starting soon, check out “What To Do First” on page 131.

## Suggested Action Plan and Preparation for Next Session

1. Read Chapter 11: “Lesson Design”
2. Use the lists on pages 116 – 122 to prepare your classroom, or just to reinforce your own awareness of school policies and concerns, as well as your clarity about your own procedures about giving assignments, monitoring student progress and dealing with supplies.
3. Make an appointment with a mentor or veteran colleague at your school site. In anticipation of that meeting, write down all the questions and concerns that arise for you – particularly the ones that might be keeping you up at night. Sift through the Before-School-Checklist and choose questions from it as well. When you meet with your colleague, go over all your questions. It can be helpful to schedule this conversation with two or three different colleagues, to ensure that you receive balanced answers as well as several perspectives.
4. Refer to journal entry #2. Prioritize the things you want to do before school starts. Set yourself realistic timetables for checking off your list, and build in times to relax and enjoy yourself.

# Session Eleven: “*Lesson Design*”

## Reading

Chapter Eleven (pages 135 - 159)

## Summary

Classroom management is intricately tied to what we teach and how we teach it. Effective teachers start with a clear focus on what they want their students to learn or do, and then on how the teachers will know that their students have learned or done it. This chapter introduces a basic five-step lesson plan, beginning with introduction, then direct instruction, guided practice and independent practice, and closure. It is valuable to connect the lesson both to previous learning and the students’ lives and the real world, and to always check for understanding. A logbook with assignments and handouts is useful for students to refer to when they are absent. Procedures for make-up work should be clear and consistently followed.

When a lesson works well, not only do students learn, but they also behave well. Using variety in lessons, giving opportunity for students to work together, and increasing “wait time” can help make lessons more effective. Build in success as much as possible, by breaking the lesson into parts, slowing down the delivery, including all students, and giving meaningful and immediate feedback.

## Focus of this Session

- ♦ What is a valuable model to use for organizing, executing and reflecting on lessons?
- ♦ What are some specific strategies that can help a lesson be more effective?

## Pre-reading Questions

1. How do you begin to plan your lessons? What is your first step?
2. How do you know if students have learned what you have taught?
3. How do you handle absences and late work?

4. What do students in your class do when they have finished with their work?

## Discussion Questions

1. What are your beliefs about instructional design? What role do teacher expectations play in bringing out the best in students? What are your expectations for your students, and how do you plan to hold your students accountable to your expectations?
2. Given a body of information to impart to your students, what process do you go through each time to make the information “learnable” for them? In other words, what is your internal checklist for making sure that your lesson plan will help your students learn?
3. What strategies have worked the best for you in engaging all of your students? Share your ideas.

## Activities

1. Work in pairs to design a short unit for your class or classes. Begin by clearly stating the outcome you want to achieve. What will the students know or do by the end of the unit? Then plan backwards, charting what skills they will need to learn to accomplish this. Consider how to relate it to previous learning and the students’ lives, as well as ways to best engage everyone in the class.
2. Consciously increase your focus on closure in one or more of your lessons, using the ideas toward the end of the chapter.
3. As a group, brainstorm ideas for “sponges” (page 138), for “fillers” (page 152) and for building in teacher “down-time” (page 153).

## Journal Write

Respond to as many of these prompts as you feel are appropriate.

1. How clear are your students about what you want them to learn?
2. What students would you like to see more actively involved?
3. How can you involve more “legal” talking? (page 146 – 147)
4. What subtle biases, if any, do you need to be aware of in your responses to students?

5. Read the section “frustration” on page 154. Write reflectively about frustration, both for yourself and your students.
6. “As much as possible, build in success for students, even if the successes seem miniscule at first.” (p. 150) What would this look like in your classroom?

### Key Points to Remember

- a. The five-step lesson plan is a helpful template for designing lessons.
- b. Start each lesson with a focus on what students will learn, not on what you will teach.
- c. Connect lesson to previous learning and the real world.
- d. Check for understanding.
- e. Make plans for absences and late work.
- f. Use variety and pair or group work.
- g. Slow down delivery and break lesson into smaller “chunks.”
- h. Have a repertoire of sponge and filler activities.
- i. Involve all students, especially in the closure of each lesson.

### Suggested Action Plan and Preparation for Next Session

1. Read Chapter 12: “Rules and Consequences”
2. Continue to meet with your partner (see Activity #1 above) to refine your plans. Observe one another if possible, and discuss what worked well and what you would like to change.
3. Consider starting a student logbook (page 143 – 144).
4. Practice increasing your wait time (page 148)
5. Design a system for dealing with absent and returning students.
6. Use sponges and filler to teach the whole period – from “bell to bell.”

# Session Twelve: “Rules and Consequences”

## Reading

Chapter Twelve (pages 163 - 198)

## Summary

This begins the portion of the book that deals with “Intervention,” what we should do in response to challenging situations in our classroom. While assuming the best about our students, caring for them, preparing well and carrying a sense of inner authority helps prevent most problems, there are bound to be times when intervention is necessary. This chapter focuses on rules and consequences. Rules should be specific, clearly stated and worded behaviorally rather than morally. There are no punishments for not following them, but merely logical consequences used in a hierarchy, with the mildest first.

Non-verbal reminders or warnings are often enough to get a student’s attention, followed by verbal ones. Often the most effective approaches take place “behind the scenes,” where no one else hears the interaction and where the student can save face. When we assume the best about our students, we see consequences as simply a way to accelerate their growth. Students can help frame the rules and consequences, and make choices about consequences that they earn.

## Focus of this Session

- ♦ What specific rules should we have in our classrooms?
- ♦ What should be the consequences if they are not followed?
- ♦ How should consequences be implemented?

## Pre-reading Questions

1. Do the students in your class know the rules? What are they?
2. What is the hierarchy of consequences for failing to follow the rules?
3. How do you feel about yourself as a rule-keeper and/or consequence-giver?

## Discussion Questions

1. Page 164 lists principles for classroom behavior and page 167 lists assumptions about consequences. How do your own principles and assumptions differ from these? How are they similar? How could you shift the underlying principles that operate in your classroom?
2. When is it appropriate to send a student out of the room? What has been your experience – both positive and negative – in doing this?
3. What sort of “behind the scenes” efforts are most effective to curb misbehavior? What are some specific ways you can make meaningful contact with students, parents and other teachers?
4. What do you feel about the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic rewards? Appreciation vs. praise? Gifts vs. rewards? Are your consequences designed and implemented as punishments, or as tools for teaching behavior?
5. Brainstorm a variety of methods for documenting misbehavior. Would the “ADOPT” method (191 – 192) or card system (192- 193) work for you? Why or why not? How important is it that teachers within your school are consistent in their rules and consequences?

## Activities

1. Take turns practicing the “teacher look” that gets kids to know that you are committed to holding your ground.
2. Practice approaching a student’s desk and simply pointing to his work, rather than saying anything.
3. Role-play giving a student a consequence in a way that is both firm and soft, communicating that you are committed to holding your ground, while simultaneously allowing the student to save face (perhaps you may want to role-play the most ineffective ways of dealing with misbehavior as well. It can be quite therapeutic!)
4. Brainstorm examples of appreciation and praise. With a partner, practice giving praise and appreciation, and discuss the differences.

## Journal Write

1. After rereading pages 194 -195, “Implementation – One Step at a Time,” make a list of your own of the changes you would like to make, putting them in priority order. Decide on one class or situation

- with which you would like to begin. Write about how and when you would like to implement your first step.
2. Think about a time when you were genuinely appreciated. How was that different from a time when you were mechanically praised, or praised in order to get you to do something?
  3. How does the following quotation (page 185) relate to your experience as both a student and a teacher? “Ultimately, teacher yelling, displeasure, and anger are tiring and tiresome consequences...If yelling at our students is habitual, we may ‘win the battle,’ but we’ll end up creating a war.”

## Key Points to Remember

- a. Limit the number of rules to five or six.
- b. Make them specific and clear, and word them behaviorally, not morally.
- c. There are no punishments, just consequences.
- d. Consequences serve as a pause to get student attention.
- e. Use a hierarchy of consequences, starting with the mildest.
- f. Provide yourself with some wiggle-room.
- g. Give students input in forming rules and consequences and test them on them.
- h. No need to moralize or jump up and down; let the consequences do the talking.
- i. Allow students to save face.
- j. Document misbehavior with a system that works well for you.

## Suggested Action Plan and Preparation for Next Session

1. Read Chapter 13: “Breaking the Cycle of Student Misbehavior.”
2. Read over journal entry #1 and try some of the ideas you outlined. Start small, with one class or situation (probably your favorite one) and with one small, specific change.
3. Discuss your hierarchy of consequences with a colleague and/or mentor. Which ones are dictated by school policy? Which ones do you have some say about? Which ones do you avoid using because you don’t feel comfortable with them? Create a plan to either get rid of the consequences you don’t like, or to find a way to get comfortable with them.

# Session Thirteen: “*Breaking the Cycle of Student Misbehavior*”

## Reading

Chapter Thirteen (pages 201 -213)

## Summary

Consequences, as described in chapter 12, don’t always work. In these situations, there are several approaches that can help. All involve assuming that best about students. Students want to feel respected and heard, and listening carefully and making clear “I-statements” is often enough to turn a student around. Students change when they *want* to change, know *how* to change, can *practice* new behaviors, are *conscious* of their choices and receive *support*. It is helpful to break the change into simpler and simpler steps and to give the student periodic opportunities for self-appreciation and/or reflection about his choices.

## Focus of this Session

- ♦ Why do students act out?
- ♦ How can we help our students make permanent positive changes?

## Pre-reading Questions

1. What do you do when a student continues to misbehave?
2. What do you *feel* when a student continues to misbehave?
3. Which of your students are you most concerned about? Why?

## Discussion Questions

1. How do we lead our students to want to change?
2. How can we help them practice more appropriate behavior and how can we foster, support, and appreciate their positive choices?
3. How can you prioritize the strategies suggested in this chapter, given the limited time that you have?
4. What resources does your school have to help students whose problems may be beyond the scope of any one teacher? Your mentor

- or other veteran teachers can be a great help in finding these resources. Ask for their help.
5. Discuss a conversation you had with a challenging student, when you were able to “reach” him or her. What was it that you did or said (or didn’t do or say) that seemed to make the difference?

## Activities

1. This would be a good time to have grade-level meetings in order to generate a list of specific students whose behavior may be a cry for help. Compare notes, brainstorm suggestions and generate a specific action plan for each one. Be careful not to let this degenerate into a complaint, “ain’t it awful” session; instead insist on coming up with specific action plans. *Who* is going to do *what*, *when*? In many cases, a student who is acting out in your class is behaving well in another. Find out who is having success and what approaches have worked well for other teachers.
2. In groups of three, have each teacher, in turn, talk for 5 full minutes, uninterrupted, about a student whose behavior is a concern. The second teacher then uses I-statements and active listening strategies to feedback what he or she hears. Avoid giving advice at this point. The third teacher then gives feedback about what he or she has observed in this interaction. Rotate so that everyone has a chance to do each role.
3. In groups of three, person A talks for two minutes, describing a challenging student/situation. Then persons B and C take two minutes to ask clarifying questions, which person A answers. Then persons B and C talk to each other about person A in the third person, offering suggestions and advice. Then all three debrief. Rotate to give everyone a chance to share their situation.

## Journal Write

1. What was your reaction to Activity #2 above? How did it feel to have someone simply listen to you? How did it feel to listen and refrain from giving advice?
2. What was your reaction to Activity #3 above? Did it help to have your partners speak of you in the third person when giving advice?
3. Sort the students in your class (see Session One’s activities for details) again in terms of their behavior and your concerns about them. Write

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- your reflections about the results of this “sort.” Which students would benefit from a one-on-one conversation, from a behavior contract, from good old-fashioned positive attention?
4. Think of a teacher from your own school experience who made a positive connection to you and think of how he or she accomplished this. Think of someone you know who is an active listener and think of how you feel when you talk with this person. Write about – or to! – these people.

## Key Points to Remember

- a. Understand why students act out (see page 202).
- b. Practice active listening and making I-Statements.
- c. If student are crying out for attention, find ways to give it to them that helps them and the class.
- d. Keys to change = want to change, know how, practice, be conscious of choices, receive on-going support.
- e. Use private conversations and writing.
- f. Assume the best – students *want* to change!

## Suggested Action Plan

1. Read the final chapter: “Putting It All Together.”
2. Make arrangements to continue to meet with another trusted teacher to share ideas, frustrations and successes.
3. Continue to observe and be observed.
4. Continue to reflect on your practice in your journal.
5. Try to determine the main three or four reasons why your most challenging student acts out. Refer to page 202 for possible reasons. Then rank order each reason according to how much power or influence you realistically have in making a difference in each case. Finally, make an action plan that focuses primarily on the things you can change, and let go of worrying about the things that you can’t change.

# Session Fourteen: “*Putting it All Together – Final Thoughts*”

## Reading

Chapter Fourteen (pages 214 – end)

## Summary

Effective classroom management isn’t simply a matter of giving out consequences or even of connecting positively to students or designing effective lessons. It involves many complex and interconnected experiences and choices. True learning combines a willingness to take risks, to be lost and frustrated mixed with a healthy portion of fun and sense of wonder. As we facilitate ways for our students to learn and grow, we provide ourselves with these same skills. The internal muscle of “inner authority” (Chapter 3) grows over time. There is no limit to how much this muscle can grow, and no area in life where this muscle isn’t present. As we continually reflect on our level of self-apology, bringing to consciousness our resistance to self-expression, we too get a chance to blossom and grow in self-regard, confidence and courage.

## Focus of this Session

- ♦ The big picture of classroom management – an observation checklist
- ♦ The big picture of teaching and learning – a recipe for learning
- ♦ The big picture of the connection between classroom management, teaching, and our own lives

## Pre-reading Questions

1. What do you look for when observing another teacher?
2. What role does fun play in teaching and learning?

## Discussion Questions

1. How does classroom architecture (page 218) affect classroom management?

2. Discuss a time when there was a sense of magic in your classroom. What do you think brought about that sense of magic, and how can you recreate it?
3. How do your students respond when they feel lost? How do you respond? What are ways you can help your students (and yourself) “stay in the game” when feelings of “lostness” and frustration kick in?
4. How do the concepts of inner authority, holding our ground, and assuming the best influence our lives and our happiness outside of the school setting?
5. Discuss lessons where your students had fun. What are additional ways to increase the level of enjoyment in your classroom?

## Activities

1. Use the observation checklist on pages 216-218 to reflect on a lesson that you just taught or are about to teach. What parts of your lesson rate high? What parts of your lesson can be improved?
2. Brainstorm lessons that you have taught that caused students to experience frustration. With a partner, reframe the lesson, to either minimize their frustration, or to allow them to welcome it.

## Journal Write

1. Respond to the following quotation (page 222): “The muscle that allows us to successfully manage our classrooms is the same muscle that allows us to move mountains in the world.”
2. Respond to the following quotation (paraphrased from page 222): “What more challenging environment can there be to continue to assume the best about people, than the arena of classroom management?”
3. Reflect on ways that your classroom can contain “true learning [which] is exhilarating, mind expanding, and fun.” (p. 220)

## Key Points to Remember

- a. Use the observation checklist – a simple guide for effective classroom management.
- b. Recipe for learning – a way to bring wonder into the classroom.

- c. The skills of classroom management are connected to life skills, both for individuals and society.

### Suggested Action Plan

1. Use the observation checklist in assessing your lessons, both before you teach them and after.
2. Seek ways to bring more fun into the classroom, knowing that it is an essential element for student success.
3. Look for ways that your own vulnerability and risk-taking in the classroom serves as a catalyst for your students' vulnerability and risk-taking.
4. Have a wonderful school year!!

### *And Finally...*

Please email Rick with feedback about his book, this guide, your teaching, your mentoring, or anything else...