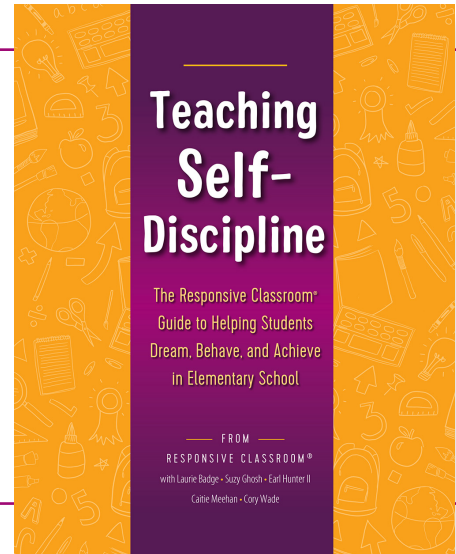


Discussion Questions for

Teaching Self-Discipline: The Responsive Classroom Guide to Helping Students Dream, Behave, and Achieve in Elementary School

From *Responsive Classroom* with Laurie Badge, Suzy Ghosh,
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Overview of the *Responsive Classroom* Approach to Discipline

Discipline is a subject that can be taught and learned. The social and emotional competencies of cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control are the foundational ideas for the *Responsive Classroom* approach to discipline. As you read through descriptions of teacher leadership styles on pages 4–8, do you identify with any from your experience as a student and as a teacher? How has your experience as a student impacted your adult teaching style?

Review the Responsive Classroom Discipline Framework on page 10. How does the *Responsive Classroom* style of teacher leadership relate to the discipline framework?

Chapter 1: Creating a Safe and Predictable Learning Environment

Establishing order by setting up the physical classroom space, routines, and procedures are key components of a successful learning environment. Think about how your classroom looks right now, including display space, furniture arrangements, classroom supplies, and decor. What is something you are particularly proud of in your classroom space? What is something you would consider changing?

The first step toward positive teacher language is developing awareness of the language you currently use. From there, you can set goals for growth. For example, you might want to shift a current practice or introduce a new one. What is one goal you would like to set for yourself around positive teacher language? Review the suggestions on pages 26 and 27 for assessing your use of positive teacher language and setting a goal. What is your goal for teacher language this year? What concrete step can you take right now in pursuing that goal?

Chapter 2: Investing Students in the Rules

Establishing rules is essential to building a healthy and productive learning environment. This process begins with students setting goals for themselves, with classroom rules emerging naturally from these goals. What are your hopes and dreams for the year? How can a teacher work with students to co-create a list of rules from student goals? What are some creative ways for students to share their hopes and dreams and celebrate the classroom rules?

Chapter 3: Responding to Misbehavior

Part of learning self-discipline is making mistakes and learning from those mistakes. Logical consequences are a way of helping children see the connection between their behavior and the effect it has on others. Review the chart on page 77 that compares punishment and logical consequences. How does this information make you think differently about the importance of nonpunitive responses to misbehavior?

Even with logical consequences, it can be difficult for children to recognize and take responsibility for their mistakes. Review the descriptions of the three types of logical consequences on pages 79 and 80. What might these logical consequences look like in your classroom? Brainstorm a list of concrete, realistic examples of possible misbehavior, related rules, and logical consequences.

Chapter 4: Solving Problem Behavior

This chapter explores three additional strategies for students who need additional support to build good self-control and follow the rules consistently. A problem-solving conference between child and teacher provides an opportunity to come up with solutions together. Individual written agreements give coaching and reinforcement to students who need structured support. For behavior problems affecting a group, class meetings are a way for everyone to identify and work on solving the problem together. Consider an example of problem behavior you have witnessed or experienced in your teaching career. Which of these strategies would you choose to implement, and why?

Communicating with parents early and often is an essential strategy when teaching positive behavior. One way to support productive parent-teacher conversations is to get in touch early when problem behavior starts. What structures for connecting and communicating with parents does your school already have in place? What are other ways that you build positive relationships with parents?

Chapter 5: Managing the Effects of Toxic Stress

A safe, healthy, and supportive learning environment is vital for all students, especially for those experiencing the effects of toxic stress. The Responsive Classroom approach to supporting students experiencing toxic stress has six components (or pillars). Choose one pillar from the list on page 116 and review the suggested tips and techniques. Does your school already use any of these techniques? If so, how are they implemented? Are there any new tips or techniques that you would like to put into practice to support students? What specific social and emotional skills can support students experiencing toxic stress?