

Discipline Survival Kit for the Secondary Teacher

Study Guide Questions

When you flip through your copy of *Discipline Survival Kit for the Secondary Teacher*, you'll find that each section is divided into smaller sections. Each section is subdivided so that readers can find the information that they need quickly. Just as the introductory information in the book suggests, teachers can read the book from start to finish, browse through the entire book section by section, or use the table of contents and the index to find answers to specific questions.

The study guide questions here have been designed in the same way. You can take a systematic, section-by-section approach to working with the material in the book or you can simply choose to work through the issues that are most important to you. However you decide to approach the material in the book and in these study questions, these questions are designed to provide a focus as you work together with a mentor or colleagues to master the material in *Discipline Survival Kit for the Secondary Teacher*.

Working with these questions should be an interactive experience that helps you learn, refine, or practice some of the good principles that influence veteran educators. As you learn the material and begin to implement the information and strategies, the questions will help you make plans to adapt and use the information in the book to meet your needs. Let it serve as a springboard for discussion, open communication with other educators, and serve as a tool to help you reflect on your own professional growth.

If you would like to ask the author a question, make a comment, offer suggestions, or give helpful feedback, please e-mail her through her Web site, www.juliagthompson.com.

Section 1

The Discipline Dilemma: Crowd Control or Self-Discipline?

1. On page 2 the author states, "If you have discipline problems during the school year, take heart. Everyone who teaches does. *Everyone*." Do you agree with this assertion? What are the implications of this belief for your classroom practices?
2. Although all teachers may face similar discipline dilemmas, not all teachers have serious discipline issues in their classrooms. Recall a teacher in your past who never seemed to experience serious discipline issues. What techniques did that teacher use that you could implement in your class? What are some positive and negative factors that affect the discipline climate in your classroom?

3. In “55 Ways to Handle Discipline Problems” on page 8, which of these methods seem to be applicable for your classroom needs? In your past experience, which ones have not been as effective as others? What other methods of handling discipline issues can you add to this list?
4. What are some examples of the intense negative peer pressure that teens face today? What examples of positive peer pressure do you notice among your students? How can you help students cope with negative peer pressure as you boost the impact of positive peer pressure?
5. If, as the author believes, adolescents do not want absolute freedom, how can teachers provide their students with structure and boundaries as well as freedom and choices? Cite an example of a specific strategy that could accomplish this.
6. Read “The Basis of a Good Teacher-Student Relationship” on page 15. Use the information there to create a graphic organizer that identifies the integral qualities necessary for a good relationship between teacher and student. What can you add from your own experience? How can you enrich your own relationships with students?
7. Because it is crucial to teach positive classroom behaviors, choose a behavior that you would like to integrate into the culture of your classroom and design an activity that will allow you to teach that behavior.
8. Use the self-assessment titled, “How Well-Disciplined Is Your Class?” on page 20 to evaluate the discipline practices you are currently using. What can you learn from this? How can you improve your discipline climate?
9. How can teachers benefit from professional introspection or self-reflection? Many teachers find it difficult to find the time for this. How do you find the time? What methods of introspection work best for you?
10. On page 28 the author states, “Conventional wisdom tells us that it isn’t the problems we face that determine our successes or failures. It is our attitude about our problems that ultimately determines whether our teaching is a success or a failure.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? What positive attitudes can you cultivate that will make a difference in your classroom?
11. How important is it to become a proactive teacher? How do students and teachers benefit when the teacher is proactive? In what ways are you already a proactive teacher? What other steps can you add to the five already listed in “Becoming a Proactive Teacher” on page 29?

Section 2

Getting Ready to Make a Good Impression

1. Read the thirty characteristics of a student’s vision of an ideal teacher in “What Your Students Really Want from a Teacher” on page 33 to determine the characteristics that

could apply to you. Are there any that you disagree with? Did any surprise you? What would your students add to this list? What would you add? How can you use this information to improve your classroom charisma?

2. Consider having your students complete the worksheet titled, "Design Your Ideal Teacher" on page 35. How can you use their responses to improve your teaching style? How important is student feedback?
3. Why does the author suggest that it is necessary for all teachers to enforce school rules? Which of the rules at your school do you find hardest to enforce? Why? How can you change them?
4. Use the "Organizational Tasks Checklist" on page 37 to determine what you must accomplish during the hectic time before the start of a term. What else will you need to do? How will creating checklists such as this one make it easier to fulfill your professional duties?
5. Examine the sample classroom rules on page 41. Do these rules seem appropriate for secondary students? How do they differ from your own classroom rules? How can you involve students in shaping the rules for your class? Why is this important?
6. Read over the student worksheet titled, "Student Checklist for Rules, Procedures, and Expectations" on page 47. How could you use it to help students learn this important information at the start of a term? What would you add to the checklist? What would you eliminate?
7. On page 57 you will find twenty-five responsibilities that you have during the first week of school. Number 16 states, "Start right away to make sure every student in your class feels important and part of the classroom community." Why is this a sensible practice? Brainstorm ways that you can create a welcoming and inclusive class atmosphere.
8. In addition to using a student information form similar to one in this section, what other methods can you use to learn about your students? Why is it necessary to know as much as possible about your students?
9. What are the benefits of having students complete a textbook survey such as the one included in this section? How can you adapt this one to meet your needs? What other methods of previewing text materials have you found useful?
10. Why is it necessary to have ready answers when students ask, "Why do we have to know this?" What answers will you give? Why do students ask this question? What actions can you take that will prevent them feeling the need to ask questions such as this?
11. According to Number 15 on page 66, "Involve your students in the routines of the classroom. They need to assume some of the responsibilities for running things if they are to feel a part of the whole process of the class." What are some of the class chores

that you can use to involve your students in running things? What are some of the positive and negative results when students assume classroom responsibilities?

12. One of the ways to promote good mental health is to follow the advice in Number 28 on page 69: “Nip trouble in the bud. It’s far easier to deal with *one* student who is misbehaving than with several.” Think of a time when you were able to stop misbehavior from spreading. How did you accomplish this? Brainstorm a list of other ways that you can “nip trouble in the bud.”

Section 3

Door to Door: Using Class Time Wisely

1. On Page 72, the author states, “Teachers have door-to-door control over the ways our students use the all-too-few hours they spend with us in our classrooms. Teachers control whether class time is wasted or used wisely.” What are the positive implications of this statement? What are some of the negative implications? What factors regarding classroom control are beyond your control? In what ways do you make sure that time is used wisely in your classroom?
2. Which of the twenty ways to make every minute count on page 74 seem most effective? What are some other ways that you have learned to make every minute of class time count? Consider asking a colleague to observe you class to make suggestions about how to improve the way that you use class time.
3. In addition to the various routine tasks described in this section, what other tasks specific to your school, your class, and your subject do you need to plan? How will planning how you will manage these tasks benefit you and your students?
4. Secondary teachers everywhere grapple with the problem of students requesting to leave the room. What are the issues that seem to cause problems? What is your policy? How do you enforce it? What role should student collaboration be in creating and enforcing a policy? How do your colleagues manage this issue?
5. Activities for the first ten minutes of class can be divided into three categories: reviewing material, accessing prior knowledge, and building interest in the upcoming lesson. Why are all three activities crucial in getting class off to a good start? Work with colleagues and use your own past school experiences to brainstorm a list of activities in each category that will appeal to your students.
6. Why is it important to plan for the transition from one activity to another? Explore the author’s Web site (www.juliagthompson.com) to research the 101 productive transitions listed on the “Works” page. As you read this list, you may recall others. Compile a master list of useful transition activities that will work well for your students.

7. The author suggests dividing the last ten minutes of class into two parts: one lasting eight minutes and the other lasting two minutes. Do you agree or disagree with this division? If not, what is your procedure for ending class? How does having a routine for ending class benefit students?
8. In the section titled, “What to Do When Wasted Time Causes Problems” on page 90, the author lists four problems that waste time and provides possible solutions for each one. Identify a problem you and your students may be experiencing that causes wasted class time. Generate possible solutions to this problem in the same way that the author has for the four problems in this section.
9. In addition to the strategies listed in this section to help students become aware of how they use class time, what other time-management tools have you observed other teachers using? How can you help students learn to manage their time wisely without losing valuable instructional time?
10. The author provides a list of “27 Power-Packed Time-Management Tips for Students” on page 94. How can you use this list to help your students? Research some of the many Internet sites devoted to study skills and time management for students. How can your students access and benefit from the sites you discovered in your research?

Section 4

A Partnership Approach to Discipline

1. Why does learning to work well with supervisors and colleagues affect a teacher’s ability to maintain a productive classroom climate? How can you improve the way you do this? Identify teachers at your school who seem to work well with their colleagues and supervisors. What can you learn from them?
2. On Page 106, the author advises teachers to, “Be quick to involve parents when there is a problem with a student.” What have you observed about the effectiveness of this strategy? Why do teachers sometimes delay? What can you do to improve your interactions with parents when there is a discipline issue?
3. While it is important to maintain accurate documentation of parent contacts, it is not always easy to keep up with this paperwork. After reading “Documenting Parent Contacts” on page 112, what additional strategies can you suggest to make this task easier?
4. After reading “The Teacher-Student Link” on page 112, do you agree with the author’s belief that successful learning is dependent on a successful teacher-student relationship? How would you define that relationship? What can you do to foster a caring relationship with your students?

5. When a student confides in a teacher, that adult has certain legal responsibilities to fulfill. What principles guide those responsibilities? How can you protect yourself when a student wants to confide in you and still help the child?
6. Why is it necessary to get feedback from your students? What methods do you use to do this? How can you use the knowledge you gain from student feedback?
7. Why is it important for students to get to know each other as you get to know them? After reading “22 Icebreakers” on page 124, select the ones your students would find appealing. What can you add to this list from your past experience? Research some of the many Internet sites devoted to icebreaker and team building activities. How can you use some of the activities you discovered in your research to help your students learn more about each other?
8. There are several student inventories in this section. How can you use them to get to know your students? When would this be appropriate as well as useful? What changes can you make to the inventories in this section to make them relevant for your students?
9. Summarize the main points of “Class Leaders and the Power Struggle” on page 136. Why is it crucial to remain positive and respect your student’s dignity even when you are engaged in a power struggle? How can you win students over instead of engaging in “hand-to-hand combat for the control of the class”?
10. What types of rudeness are most common in your class? Why is it necessary for a teacher to teach students how to deal successfully with rudeness from their peers? How can you communicate the list of forty positive responses to your students? How do you handle it when students are rude to you? Has this been effective? Why or why not?
11. List the games that your students enjoy. Why are games good teaching tools? Which of the games in this section would appeal to your students? What other resources can you use to learn about more games that your students would enjoy?

Section 5

Preventing Discipline Problems

1. Why does the author suggest that most of the discipline problems teachers face each day can be prevented? What types of misbehaviors can be prevented most easily? Think of a situation when you could have prevented a discipline problem, but didn’t. Why not? What was the outcome? What did you learn?
2. What are some techniques for preventing discipline problems that you already knew about before reading this section? What guidelines should guide your thinking as you

work to create a productive classroom environment where most discipline problems are successfully prevented?

3. Brainstorm a list of the small misbehaviors that can snowball into larger disruptions. After you have created this list, decide what can keep these misbehaviors manageable.
4. Why is it important to evaluate your lesson plans for successful teaching? How can you use the questions on page 150 to improve your teaching practices?
5. Secondary level students should have a copy of Bloom's Taxonomy for their notebooks. How would becoming aware of critical thinking skills be helpful to them? Where can they find a copy? How can you and your students use the information in Bloom's Taxonomy to help them succeed both academically and behaviorally?
6. What do you already know about the art of asking questions? What are your strengths? Your weaknesses? Which of the suggested strategies on page 155 do you find most useful? What can you do to improve your questioning techniques?
7. Why are behavior contracts effective in solving certain discipline issues? What types of issues do behavior contracts address most effectively? What are some of the negative aspects of using behavior contracts and how can you overcome them?
8. What guidelines should you use to make sure that your classroom is a safe place for your students? Examine the common-sense safety practices in "Creating a Safe Environment for Your Students and Yourself" on page 162. Which seem obvious? Which ones had you not previously considered? What you can add to the list?
9. Why is monitoring important? Think about the monitoring techniques that you use. Which have been successful? Which have not worked well? How can you improve the way that you monitor your students as they work?
10. Although having students work in groups is an effective learning activity, it is not to be undertaken lightly. Why? What should the teacher's role be in ensuring that group work is successful? What strategies to make group work effective have you observed in colleagues' classrooms that would work well in yours?
11. On page 173, read the information titled, "Keeping It to a Dull Roar: Helping Students Learn to Control the Noise Level." What additional strategies could you add that will enable students to learn to manage their own volume levels? Why is noise self-management necessary for a productive learning environment?
12. Why do students pay attention to some teachers and not others? Build a repertoire of techniques that will make your students pay attention to you every time you speak by selecting some useful ones from the list that begins on page 176 and adding others that your students will find interesting.
13. Read "Averting Disaster: Helping Students Make the Grade" on page 178. What strategies can you use to help students "make the grade" academically? Why is this important?

14. How can a syllabus be considered a successful discipline strategy? How can your students benefit from a syllabus? What kinds of information would they find most helpful?
15. According to “Handling Homework Hassles” on page 187, homework success can be divided into three areas of teacher and student activity. What tips in each category can you use to help students manage their homework responsibilities? What Web sites can you suggest to students who would need homework assistance?
16. Which guidelines from “Student Notebooks: Organizing for Success” on page 194 can you offer students to help them maintain organized notebooks? How is this a skill that all students need to develop?
17. After reading, “Teaching Students to Make Good Decisions” on page 196, consider the various ways that you encourage students to make decisions. What can you do to insure that the decisions they make are good ones?
18. Which of the innovative activities in the list that begins on page 198 would appeal to your students? What technology-based activities could you add to this list?
19. Have you ever had an awful day at school? What happened? What could you have done to avert it? How can you use the information in this section to make sure all of your school days are as pleasant as possible?

Section 6

Dealing with Problems Once They Occur

1. On page 204, the author reviews the steps of the problem-solving approach to discipline that many teachers find helpful. Think of a discipline problem that you are currently experiencing and apply these steps to it.
2. Which of the fifteen options for dealing with misbehavior on page 205 have you tried and found successful? Which ones should be used for small misbehaviors and which for more serious ones? What other options can you add to this list?
3. What kinds of tangible rewards work well with your students? What are some of the problems associated with tangible rewards? How can teachers overcome these problems to use tangible rewards with maximum effectiveness?
4. Read “How to Avoid the Most Common Discipline Mistakes” on page 214. Which of these mistakes are ones that you would like to eliminate from your teaching practices? How can this knowledge change how you manage your class?
5. On page 222, the author states, “Your intervention strategies will be more effective if you are positive with your students so that they know what they should be doing to succeed rather than having a teacher dwell on the negative aspects of their behavior.”

Why is a positive approach more effective than punishment? What can you do to make sure that your interventions are more positive than negative?

6. How do you characterize a difficult class? What interventions have you found to be successful? Which ones in the list of 50 interventions on page 223 would help your students?
7. On page 229, the author suggests that you play lots of games with your difficult students. Does this surprise you? Why does this strategy succeed? What do you need to do to prepare students to play games without conflict?
8. How often does peer conflict affect your class? How are you aware of this? What can you do to manage them? What are your professional responsibilities in regard to student conflicts?
9. Do you agree with the author that overtly defiant students are usually easier to cope with than those defiant students who frequently mumble under their breaths and are quietly disrespectful? Why or why not? Which strategies for dealing with defiant students would work well in your class? What other strategies can you suggest?
10. One of the most common discipline problems for secondary students involves students who are tardy to school or to class. What is your school's procedure for dealing with this problem? What is the procedure in your classroom? What could you change to make your procedure more effective?
11. Is excessive talking a problem in your class? What are some teacher actions that can result in a class that talks excessively? What is the difference between excessive talking and accountable talking in your class? How do you know? What do you do to manage excessive talking?
12. Why should referring a student to an administrator only be something you resort to after all other attempts to solve a problem fail? Think of a specific time you have had to refer a student to an administrator. In hindsight, what other interventions should you have tried?

Section 7

Strategies for Solving Specific Problems

1. In this section the author offers suggestions to successfully manage a list of discipline issues common to secondary students. Do any of the items included in this section surprise you? What other issues could you add to this list? Which ones cause you trouble? Which ones are not problems for you? Why?
2. Since the publication of this book, several school shootings have made school bullying a national concern. How seriously do you take bullying? What should you do if you

suspect that a student is being bullied? How do you deal with it? Where can you learn more about how to cope with this discipline problem?

3. School fights are among the most serious discipline issues. What are the signs that students are preparing to fight? When and how should you intervene? What are your legal responsibilities?
4. The author suggests various ways to change passing notes in class from a disruption into a positive learning experience. How can you use this in your class? What other potentially disruptive issue can you change into a positive learning activity?
5. Cheating in all of its forms is a widespread discipline issue in secondary schools. What types of cheating do you find in your class? How do you deal with classroom cheating? How do you deal with Internet cheating? Where can you learn more about how to cope successfully with this issue?
6. In recent years, in addition to fire drills and bomb threats, two different types of drills have become commonplace in schools across the nation: intruder and tornado drills. Are you prepared? What are your school's procedures for these two emergencies? Which of the strategies for fire and bomb threats can help you manage those other drills successfully?
7. Students with attention and focusing problems are in every classroom. Identify students in your class who struggle with these issues. How are you already working successfully with them? What additional strategies can you use to reach these students? What online resources can assist you in learning more about students with attention and focusing problems?
8. How do students who have been absent make up missing work in your class? What is your school's policy on this? Which strategies in this section will help you make sure that all students make up missing work in a timely manner?
9. Coming to class without materials is a discipline issue that can disrupt class day after day. What strategies in "Lack of Materials" on page 290 appeal to you? What other tactics have you found to solve this problem?
10. In "Building a Classroom Culture" on page 294 the author gives twenty-six strategies for creating a classroom culture that supersedes individual differences. Think of an example of a classroom with a strong positive culture. What strategies did that instructor use to create that culture? Which of the strategies in this list and that you have observed in other classrooms that can help you as you work to do this in your room?

Section 8

Moving Beyond Crowd Control to Self-Discipline

1. In this section, the author offers five general strategies to help students become self-disciplined. Prioritize these strategies in terms of how useful they would be in your classroom. What do you currently do to help students become self-disciplined? What other strategies could you use?
2. How important is it to help students learn to be goal-oriented? What experiences have you had that you can use to help students with this? What will the benefits be?
3. Why is intrinsic motivation a more successful motivational tool than tangible rewards? Describe how you currently use intrinsic motivation techniques. How can you adapt some of the strategies in this section to meet your needs?
4. How can you let your students know that you believe that they are capable of mastering the material that you have assigned? Why is this important? Brainstorm a list of the ways that you already do this. What else can you do to convey your faith in students?
5. What is the success cycle and how can you create it in your class?
6. Why do so many teachers report that their biggest problem with discipline is having a consistent approach? What does being consistent mean to you? Which of the ten quick strategies on page 324 would work well for you and your students?
7. How do your students use problem-solving activities? What are the positive results of this practice?
8. On page 327 the author states, "Make sure your students know that you pay attention to what they do. Students who know their teacher is paying attention to their behavior are not going to misbehave as readily as those students who believe they can get away with bad behavior." Do you agree with this statement? How can you use this information to help students behave better?
9. How can you find out about your students' strengths? Why is it important to focus on them instead of the deficits in your students' abilities, skills, and knowledge?
10. What is the relationship between self-esteem and good behavior? What mistakes have educators in the past made as they attempted to increase student self-esteem? What can you do to increase student self-esteem?
11. Which of the sixty motivational tools on page 333 would work best for your students? What other motivational tools have you found to be successful? How can you implement them?

Section 9

The Most Important Factor in Discipline: The Teacher

1. Why is the teacher the most important factor in discipline?
2. How can you learn to be more aware of the positive and negative signals your body language sends? How can you learn to be more attentive to your students' body language? Why is it necessary to pay attention to body language?
3. Complete "A Checklist of Positive Attitudes for Teachers" on page 340. What did you learn about your attitudes? How can you use this knowledge?
4. Why is it important to deal with school stress? What sensible methods of dealing with on-the-job distress do you currently use? Skim the lists of techniques on page 344 to determine if there are any that you would like to add to your repertoire. Are there any online sources that can offer additional support?
5. On page 346, the author states, "Sometimes the best way to handle a stressful situation is to accept it as something you cannot change." Do you agree? What aspects of your career should you learn to accept as something you cannot change? How will this help you and your students?
6. On page 350, you will find a list of some of the ways that teachers lose credibility. How important is credibility in building respect? What can you do to earn your students' respect?
7. Read "Enlarging the Learning Environment" on page 351. Assess your teaching skills in this area. What are you currently doing to help students explore the world around them? What can you do to improve how you achieve this?
8. On page 352, you will find an exercise titled, "Self-Check for Permissiveness." Take the quiz to determine the areas where you may be too permissive and those where you may be too strict. How can this knowledge make you a better teacher?
9. On page 354, you will find a self-check exercise concerning your strengths and weaknesses. Rate yourself to determine the aspects of your teaching style that do not need improvement and those that do. Formulate a plan to capitalize on your strengths and eliminate your weaknesses.
10. How do you define professionalism? What is the role of professionalism in maintaining an orderly classroom? What actions do you take to grow professionally?