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## CHAPTER 1

# How to Use This Curriculum

### *GENERAL GUIDELINES*

When you begin teaching these lessons, you can expect a variety of responses. Remember that most administrators, students, teachers, and parents have never heard the word “love” used in an academic setting. It is very likely that they have never been taught a working definition of “love,” although many of them will have heard of Gary Chapman’s book *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts*. And why wouldn’t they? As of 2014, he had sold over 9 million copies! With this in mind, it is very important that you set the stage so that everyone can be on board with what you are about to teach.

Some school districts require curriculum review/adoption before you are allowed to teach different types of materials. A suggestion before you start is to get permission from your principal or district office. The beauty of this material is that it is so versatile, you can use it without it being a curriculum. When I use the word “curriculum,” in this instance, I’m talking about making it mandatory material to be taught in every classroom or specific grade level at your school. Most districts agree that mandatory curriculum is something that teachers must teach because it has been adopted by the school board and is going to be taught to all or certain groups of students for a prescribed period of time. Therefore, mandatory curriculum is usually taught to a captive audience. It wouldn’t surprise me if you easily gained approval from your district to make this mandatory curriculum. Current research clearly indicates that a student’s highest level of academic success hinges on a significant connection with an adult in the school (preferably the teacher).

School district personnel have always known this fact but until now, have had very few options for a curriculum that “fits the bill.”

For clarification, as you are reading the different sections of this book, if I use the word “curriculum,” it can either mean curriculum that your district chooses to adopt permanently or curriculum you choose to use as support material for whatever your district currently requires. I say this to answer any questions regarding whether this is curriculum or support material; the answer is either/or. But I will be referring to it as the “love language curriculum” for simplicity.

### **Should I Team-Teach?**

Team-teaching these lessons is not required to achieve excellent results, but working with a specialist can produce excellent results with the added benefit of allowing your students the opportunity to make yet another significant connection in the classroom. The lessons are designed to connect students with the teacher, each other, and their families. I think the perfect arrangement would be for the teacher and specialist to work together. Teachers gain the benefit of connecting with their students on the love language level, and specialists connect with students on the personal safety level. Regardless of whether you are the teacher or specialist bringing these lessons to the classroom, try to include each other if possible. The act of working together is a great example for students to witness positive connections in action and for them to make another significant connection with an adult in the school.

These suggestions have been written with the understanding that this curriculum is going out to a lot of different school settings with a variety of personnel situations. Unfortunately, not everyone is afforded the luxury of a specialist/school counselor. Remember the heading says “General Guidelines.” The design of these lessons gives you many options, and you should use the one(s) that work best at your school. For example, if your district has its own adopted curriculum for reporting bullying, harassment, etc., then any one of the personal safety lessons can be replaced with the district’s approved curriculum that coincides.

### **Let Everyone Know the Lesson Objectives**

Let parents know your objectives for teaching these lessons. To inform parents, I’ve written a letter (See Appendix 1) you can copy and use. Most people don’t have a working definition of love. After you give them one, everybody will be able to breathe a little easier and realize you are about to embark on something great that will increase the potential for students to reach their full academic achievement.

If you are a specialist and don’t have to have the teacher’s permission before you teach in their classroom or aren’t planning on team teaching, they should still be

apprised of the lesson objectives. Having the support of the teacher is very important since these lessons will impact their classroom significantly, and they should be provided the opportunity to be included. Once teachers see how this material changes the lives of students and staff, they will understand the huge benefit of knowing their students' love languages, but until then, keep them informed.

### **You Have a Love Language!**

"Know Thyself" was the motto carved in stone on the entrance of the school founded by Greek philosopher Plato. I think Plato was on to something. One thing I'm really convinced of is this: whoever teaches these lessons really needs to have a handle on this material as it applies to him or herself. You are about to teach something that is applicable to every human alive. This includes you. Sometimes instructors don't like to talk about themselves, or anything personal for that matter. Sometimes this is good. But for the most part, people who simply teach material are mostly boring and don't connect with students on a human level. More importantly, it makes it hard for students, especially children, to relate to the person who is teaching it. Love language material is very personal. It is about how you show and receive love. It's about making connections with your students. So be thinking about how you show and receive love.

You have a love language of your own, maybe even two. Discovering your love language is necessary before you teach this material. It would be great if you can present, as appropriate, times and situations where you became aware of your love languages. When I teach, I use stories about myself that are current or about when I was a kid. I will elaborate more on how I teach when we get to the actual lessons. Students want to see you model your pride in and awareness of your own love languages. Your example encourages them to identify their own. It makes it okay to have a love language. Read through this material, get a grip on your love languages, jot down some notes about your life that are funny or interesting, and make it personal. Well, not too personal. I don't think any students want to hear about how you discovered that quality time wasn't your love language after you got a divorce. Use common sense. Laugh a lot.

Be ready for staff and parents in a good way. I can't tell you how many times staff members told me that they really looked forward to my coming in and teaching every year. Many adults use this information for what it was originally intended for—their marriages. Parents are in the same category. Students will go home and teach the lessons to their parents, and you will discover parents craving to know the information for their own marriage or life. As a result, you will receive many requests for books and information regarding this material. You may want to have copies of Gary's original book written for couples and perhaps Gary and Dr. Ross Campbell's book that helps parents discover their child's love language.

### **For Specialists**

Previously I said, “Know Thyself.” But also, “Know Thy Staff.” If you are a specialist and teach from room to room, be sure that you know your teachers and prepare them to be included. I often have teachers help me out in the classroom to act out scenes that demonstrate ways to show or receive love. This is not a curriculum where teachers should be absent during your presentation (see chapter on research). This material includes EVERYBODY. Teachers will be making reference to this material as they deal with students on a daily basis. It won’t be a difficult thing to do. They will simply refer to it naturally. If they aren’t in the room while you are teaching or using the lesson time as a prep period, they will miss out on a great deal. Plus, parents will have loads of questions for them, and they will want to be in the know. Also, because every love language has an opposite that has relevance for school and district policies, teachers will want to be present for these as well. It documents for them that key issues were addressed in their classroom before an incident occurs. There will be times when students misbehave or break school rules. Being able to check their attendance record and confirm that they were present for the lessons helps to shape the conversation toward what they learned to do rather than what they did wrong. Using the lessons as a talking point will go a long way toward correcting inappropriate behaviors.

### **Thanks for Following the Rules!**

Presenting the lessons that are opposite of the love languages will certainly make your administrators and school district happy. Let me explain why. Earlier I said that this material can be used as curriculum (permanent) or a venue for support material. Here’s how that works in general. All five of the love languages are positive ways to show and receive love. The bulk of the time spent during the lessons is focused on the positives or “what you should do,” as opposed to “what you shouldn’t do.” However, with every love language lesson taught, the opposite to that lesson is also taught for compare/contrast. It’s these opposite lessons that virtually all districts are required to address at some point during the school year. These areas are typically covered to keep the school safe and to fulfill the obligations of the district legally. The love language lessons are incredible for schools in this way. They cover the required areas while focusing on the positive things that students should be doing. In only a few short weeks with minimal amounts of time, all district areas are covered in depth at least once. The areas that most districts cover with some sort of curriculum are: harassment, exclusion, bullying/reporting, bringing illegal or inappropriate items to school, manipulation, and unsafe touch/child abuse. All of these topics fall under the category of “personal safety.” The love language material specifically addresses personal safety issues during each of the lessons.

Remember when they taught you in college that compare/contrast was a higher level

of thinking than true/false? By instructing with compare/contrast you will cover both the positive side of the love languages (what to do) and the opposite (what not to do). When a teacher presents with the compare/contrast method, students have both sides laid out before them. The picture is much clearer and students make better connections. We are all about the connections! Love languages focus on the positive and “what to do” rather than the negative. When students start applying the love languages to their lives, then they won’t be conducting themselves in unsafe ways. Students will know what to do and how to conduct themselves in their relationships with others. This will go on for a lifetime, not just at school.

### ***NUTS AND BOLTS***

Teaching the five love languages at the beginning of the school year is a good idea because these lessons have been created to build connections (read the chapter on research regarding connections). I typically teach the love languages over seven weeks, on occasion have taught them over eight, and sometimes in as few as six. To be really thorough, seven is ideal. This is especially true for your first run at it. I’m sure there will be some who would like to teach these lessons but may be extremely limited in the amount of days available to them. My thinking is, it’s better to teach the material than not. The lessons could be taught back-to-back over seven days, but the students may lose the benefit of doing the school-home assignments. These lessons have been written for educators who are located in school settings and hopefully have enough time to teach them according to design. For those of you in other settings, e.g., summer camps, you will find it easy to edit the lessons according to your needs.

This book and curriculum have been written in such a way that the lessons are short and to the point. I don’t want educators to have to wade through pages of babble. Each chapter and lesson has been designed to be meaningful and efficient. The lessons are rarely longer than forty-five minutes and are often shorter. The exceptions are the seventh and eighth lessons. Both of these may require sixty minutes due to the intensity, activities, and nature of the information. In chapter 7, I have suggested that you may want to teach it in two parts. This, of course, would create the need for another day of teaching. You will have to decide which works best for you after reading the material.

Each chapter starts out with an introduction. The introduction contains information that is vital to the lesson plan. Within the introduction you will find background information, the significance of that particular love language, educational philosophy, and, in some cases, pitfalls to avoid. While reading the introduction, you may want to underline key points or ideas. The introduction will give you a base of understanding that clarifies how the lesson is supposed to flow.

There are two styles of lesson plans provided for each lesson. The first lesson plan is scripted and written in **bold** letters. For the most part, you could literally sit down with your students and read it to them word for word. Within the scripted lesson plan there are (*italicized words in parentheses*); these appear after a question and will provide you with an answer or give directions to an action that must be performed. On occasion, the word (*rhetorical*) in parentheses will follow a question; this simply means what it suggests: the question is being asked to provoke thought. Other words are within [brackets]. Words within brackets contain ideas or thoughts that will be useful to the instructor but don't necessarily require any action.

Having scripted lesson plans provides a wonderful advantage. It gives you the opportunity to read the actual words that I used while teaching the lessons many times. As I mentioned earlier, you can read these lesson plans to the students word for word and it will work, but this isn't my suggested approach. Rather, I would recommend that you read the scripted lesson plan over a few times, get a good feel for the lesson, and use the abbreviated lesson plan for teaching. Reading a scripted lesson plan can be done, but it tends to lose spontaneity and doesn't sound original. Having said all of this, I do believe that there are times when you really should read the scripted lesson plan and not use the other format.

Scripted lesson plans are excellent, direct instruction. They keep the students and the instructor focused on arriving at the objectives. Here are some times when a scripted lesson plan can be very beneficial:

1. When you need to use direct instruction that doesn't meander.
2. When there hasn't been enough time to prepare.
3. When you are uncomfortable with the information and fear that you might miss crucial points.
4. When you are completely new to teaching, not a teacher at all, or feel that you can teach the scripted lessons as if they were your own words.

The second lesson plan format is an abbreviated style. The abbreviated lesson plan follows the scripted lesson plan, highlighting key points and giving directions. Each point is sequentially numbered and correlates with a paragraph in the scripted lesson plan. For example, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 may be grouped at the beginning of a lesson plan indicating that these points are found in the first paragraph of the scripted lesson plan. The scripted lesson plan can be used to give insight on key points where more clarification is needed.

Both types of lesson plans have been written with six main components:



1. Objective (which includes student targets)
2. Review
3. Anticipatory Set
4. Teaching/Presentation
5. Closure
6. Independent Practice

To recap, the best way to teach these lessons is:

1. Read each chapter introduction thoroughly, underlining key points and thoughts.
2. Preread the scripted lesson plan several times to get a feel for the flow, paying special attention to (answers) and (directions).
3. Read the “Final Thoughts” section, which will add depth to the lesson plan after you have read and understood it.
4. Read “From the Classroom” for inspiration.
5. Use the abbreviated lesson plan for teaching. Insert your own stories, school procedures, and ideas.

The Academic Focus Pages bring tremendous focus to the lessons and cement the concepts for students. The variety of cues, questions, etc., will bring deeper understanding and greater meaning. A lot of time and research went into the construction and implementation of the AFPs.

The remaining chapters provide equally important material. In chapter 9, you will find information about how to use the data that is generated from the lessons. Each person has unique needs for this material. For example, counselors will use it when a child comes in for help. A school nurse will use the information to help treat a child who frequently visits the health room. Teachers will use the information to motivate and connect with the class, and administrators will use it to assess the climate of their school, address behavior issues from a positive point of view, and be able to document that school safety was covered across the board in a thorough way.

And for those of you who are required to meet Common Core State Standards, we’ve provided documentation to present to your school district or principal (see appendix 2). The lessons themselves cover a variety of areas for ELA: Speaking and Listening in all six grade levels.