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DISCIPLINARY STRATEGIES

for Working With

CHALLENGING STUDENTS

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Strategy Applications for Specific Grade Levels

Strategies	Preventative Applications		Targeted Interventions	
	Possible Use	Recommended	Possible Use	Recommended
Class Climate	K–12	K–12		
Morning Meetings	K–12	K–7	K–12	
Teaching Movement	K–12	K–5	4–12	
Respect Policy	K–12	K–12	K–12	
Adult Mentoring	K–12	4–8	4–8	
Quiet Time/Meditation	K–12	6–12	6–12	
Conflict Resolution	3–12	6–12	6–12	6–12
Peer Mediation	5–12	5–12	5–12	5–12
Triggers and Band-Aids	K–12	K–12		
Peer Pressure	5–12	5–12	5–9	
Group Contingency	K–12	5–12	5–12	
Self-Regulation/Goal Setting	K–12	3–8	3–8	3–8
Personal Responsibility			5–12	5–12
Video Monitoring			5–12	5–12
Let's Make a Deal!			5–12	5–12
Restorative Justice	K–12		4–12	4–12
Response to Intervention	K–12	K–12	K–12	K–12
The Flipped Classroom	4–12	4–12	4–12	
Project-Based Learning	K–12	4–9		
Technology	K–12	K–12	K–12	K–12

SECTION I

Whole-Class/Whole-School Preventative Strategies

A teacher's ability to manage students is as critical in teaching as the teacher's knowledge of the subject. Without effective management of students, little learning will take place, even when the teacher is highly knowledgeable of the subject content. While most teachers pick up the basics of class management in their teaching preparation courses, most veteran teachers would agree that they often face disciplinary situations in the real world of teaching that they have never encountered previously in their student teaching internships. Simply stated, a one-semester student teaching rarely offers the opportunity to deal with as many types of disciplinary problems as today's teacher will encounter.

In this section, I present a variety of preventative whole-class/whole-school strategies that will help curb disciplinary problems before they occur. I primarily describe these strategies as whole-class because it takes the entire class to implement them. For example, teachers cannot implement a morning meeting (see Strategy 2) without the involvement of the whole class. Further, individual teachers can undertake any of these strategies in his class, even if other teachers in the school are not doing so. Therefore, these are techniques that teachers should consider building into the fabric of their classes from the first day of school. I do not recommend that teachers should employ all of these techniques in any single classroom. Rather, teachers should find two or three of these preventative class-management strategies and build those into their class, as the basis of preventative discipline.

However, I also recommend for school-wide implementation each of the strategies in this section of the book. In most examples in the literature (e.g., descriptions of quiet time, conflict resolution, and peer mediation), these strategies tend to be implemented school-wide rather than in a single class, which is why I use the phrase whole-class or whole-school.

Because these strategies are generally preventative in nature, I recommend that educators begin school-wide implementation of at least two or three of them. I cannot overemphasize the importance of preventative strategies in today's schools.

In today's education climate, all schools must spend the time and resources to undertake the preventative strategies of their choice. Given that these strategies are considered best practices in the 21st-century school, every member of the school faculty should implement at least a few of these strategies school-wide, as use of best practices places one in the most defensible position should some negative "news-catching" disciplinary event occur in the schools. I therefore have a dual specific recommendation here: First, administrators should ensure that they implement at least two of these whole-class/whole-school disciplinary strategies school-wide. These preventative efforts will alleviate many behavioral problems and show that the school is ahead of the curve in managing disciplinary issues.

Next, teachers should individually work to implement at least two of these whole-class/whole-school strategies, if these are not done on a school-wide basis in that particular school. Also, I suggest that teachers in such situations approach their department chairpersons and school administrators and recommend two or more of these strategies for school-wide implementation.

The specific class-wide/school-wide strategies include

Strategy 1: Creating a Positive Class Climate for Effective Discipline

Strategy 2: Morning Meetings to Improve Behavior

Strategy 3: Teaching With Movement to Curb Problem Behaviors

Strategy 4: A Classroom Respect Policy: Rules for My Class

Strategy 5: Adult Mentoring to Reach Unreachable Kids

Strategy 6: Quiet Time and Meditation

Strategy 7: Conflict Resolution Training

Strategy 8: Peer Mediation in the Schools

SECTION II

Targeted Disciplinary Interventions for Challenging Students

While almost all teachers can and do master the intricacies of general class management, there are many students whose behavior is a challenge to even the most experienced teachers (Bender, 2007; Marzano, 2003; Sousa, 2009). Having a set of intervention strategies in hand for these students can make the difference between teachers who enjoy their teaching role and those who, ultimately, leave the classroom. For intense disciplinary situations, teachers must respond to the immediate disciplinary problem in the class (e.g., an enraged student, or several students verbally challenging each other, fighting). Also, teachers must then implement a long-term individual intervention to alleviate that type of behavior in the future. This section addresses each of those needs.

The strategies in this section are not intended to be used by the whole class, but rather as specific targeted strategies for individual students. When a teacher sees a behavioral problem, she must intervene, and often, something more than the typical management strategies such as talking with the student, sending a student to the administrator, or calling a student's parents in for a conference will be needed. While I do strongly recommend that teachers use all of the general class management strategies, there are times when those ideas are simply not enough, and teachers will need to implement other interventions to curb behavior problems.

First, this section presents a set of immediate teacher responses to enraged, angry, or misbehaving students—I refer to these as Band-Aid strategies. Teachers should use these to defuse explosive situations and regain control of the classroom. These are in Strategy 9. Next, this section presents a set of individual, longer-term disciplinary strategies that teachers should employ in those more challenging disciplinary situations. In each case, I recommend collecting some type of baseline data on the problem behavior, and collecting data during the intervention itself. In the data-driven world of teachers today, teachers without

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such intervention data are not prepared to deal with tough kids, and schools may be open to legal action if teachers do not use these best-practice interventions in dealing with various behavior problems. The only way to document the efficacy of disciplinary interventions is data collection on individual students' behaviors (Bender, 2007, 2012a; Marzano, 2003, 2007), so I emphasize such data collection in these strategies.

This section of the book assumes that teachers have implemented one or several of the whole-class management strategies I discussed in the first section, as those often provide a basis for the interventions here. The specific intervention strategies include

Strategy 9: Triggers and Band-Aids: Avoiding Power Struggles

Strategy 10: Peer Pressure to Improve Behavior

Strategy 11: The Group Contingency Strategy

Strategy 12: Self-Regulation and Goal Setting

Strategy 13: The Personal Responsibility Strategy

Strategy 14: Video Monitoring to Improve Behavior

Strategy 15: The Let's Make a Deal! Strategy: Negotiating Power in the Classroom

SECTION III

Discipline Challenges in 21st-Century Classrooms

In discipline, as in every area of education, there are typically many ongoing influences or changes that teachers must deal with. While effective disciplinary tactics and strategies, once proven, do not typically change, other educational transitions can and do impact how teachers discipline students. This section presents five current challenges that impact how educators discipline in schools, and for each challenge, I describe at least one strategy. The challenges and strategies herein are

Strategy 16: Restorative Justice and Restorative Circles

Strategy 17: Response to Intervention for Behavioral Change

Strategy 18: Discipline in a Flipped Classroom

Strategy 19: Project-Based Learning to Enhance Class Discipline

Strategy 20: Apps, Laptops, and Technology for Enhancing Behavior