

Introduction

The purpose of this book is to assist teachers in developing a personal plan of action to handle discipline in the classroom. Because of the plethora of misbehaviors in today's classroom, not having an effective discipline plan will thwart an instructor's goal of teaching. If you are a teacher, this needs no explanation. You already know how disruptive students can be.

Back in the dark ages of the 1950s and 1960s, all a teacher needed to be effective was a good lesson plan. Now, that is not enough. A plan for handling behavior is also necessary. And it must be one that can do the following:

- Be individualized to fit each instructor's teaching style and personality
- Prevent misbehaviors and encourage cooperation
- Motivate a student to stop disruptive behaviors
- Motivate a student to want to learn
- Be quick and easy to use

Smart Discipline for the Classroom encompasses these goals. Also, you will find Smart Discipline strategies to be adaptable to the different needs and personalities of children. More important, the system provides for "Plan A" and "Plan B" strategies that are progressive and always provide a "next step."

Plan A strategies are ones that take seconds to implement. They are quick and easy methods for both strengthening the teacher-student relationship and gaining immediate cooperation.

Plan B strategies take more time to implement but are designed to turn around the attitudes and behaviors of specific children. Most frequently, they will be used when Plan A methods have not produced satisfactory results.

All the strategies are presented in a logical progression. However, that does not mean they have to be used in that order—quite the contrary. The Smart Discipline strategies are designed with flexibility in mind. It is my hope that you will be able to pick and choose methods that will fit your teaching style and that will work in a given situation with a particular child.

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM THIS BOOK?

Smart Discipline for the Classroom originally was written with teachers in mind. However, over the past several years, a diversified audience has come to use the information. The list seems to be ever growing and now includes

- School counselors
- Principals
- Teacher educators
- School secretaries
- School nurses
- Cafeteria workers
- Bus drivers
- Coaches
- Sunday school teachers
- Therapists
- Alcohol and drug counselors
- Foster parents
- Stepparents
- Police officers

This is a long list, but not a surprising one. All the people represented have a common need to relate to young people in a way that will motivate them to cooperate and accept guidance. In today's world, it is indeed a difficult task to gain the necessary cooperation from students of all ages—even young ones. The fact is that all of us who work with students are finding the task an increasing challenge.

We need all the help we can get to successfully meet this challenge and to guide children down a path toward success in life. The strategies and principles described in these pages are the stepping stones to meeting this important task with confidence.

THREE PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I have presented the information contained in this book to groups of teachers all across America. Each time I do so, the feedback is overwhelmingly positive. However, several teachers in each location typically bring up one of three problems that they view as insurmountable. They describe the problems with statements such as the following:

Although I like the ideas, I don't have the time to use them. All of my time is taken up with trying to control the class, teaching, and completing paperwork.

My problem is that I have too many students for these ideas to be practical.

I've got a student in my class whose behavior is really rotten. I've tried everything and nothing works.

Because these issues are recurring and very real, I would like to address each one at the outset.

Time is an issue for every teacher. And there always seem to be more and more things for teachers to do that take away from teaching time. Smart

Discipline is not one of them, however. The effort invested in implementing these strategies will prevent discipline problems. This saves time in the long run.

Having an overload of students is also common. Some teachers have 100 or more students at a time to deal with in a study hall or cafeteria seating. So, “How do I discipline a large group?” is a legitimate question.

The answer is, “You don’t.” Trying to discipline a group of any size is a losing battle. To be successful with discipline, it needs to be done on a one-to-one basis. And in reality, you will only need to use Smart Discipline with a few students. Get them cooperating with you, and the rest will follow suit.

Last, there is the problem of what to do with the student who is resisting your best efforts (and driving you up the wall). One of the main reasons I have included a large variety of discipline strategies is because of this very problem.

Being successful with the most difficult discipline problems requires persistent, positive effort with a diverse assortment of techniques (E. Jones, 1987). With every student, something will work. For those of us who have chosen to work with students, it is our challenge to find out what that something is.

It is my hope that within these pages you will find what is needed to meet this challenge and to put your students on the “superhighway toward success in school and in life.”

WHAT *SMART DISCIPLINE FOR THE CLASSROOM* COVERS

Smart Discipline for the Classroom covers the following topics:

- Disruptive behaviors and their causes
- The usual approaches to discipline and their drawbacks
- The commonsense principles on which Smart Discipline is based
- Prevention strategies
- Intervention strategies to motivate a student to stop disruptive behaviors and adopt productive behaviors
- ADHD—information and strategies that work
- Designing a customized Smart Discipline plan to fit your needs
- Effective strategies for gaining parental involvement and support

The Smart Discipline Advantages

- Retains teacher’s authority
- Provides quick and easy solutions
- Adapts to different students
- Helps teachers stay calm and in charge
- Builds self-esteem
- Adapts to individual teaching styles
- Fosters behaviors conducive to learning
- Steers clear of power struggles
- Prevents misconduct
- Uses ADHD strategies

- Offers progressive steps
- Motivates students to pay attention
- Stops disruptive behaviors
- Builds strong teacher-student relationships
- Helps students successfully learn
- Helps teachers successfully educate
- Motivates respect for teachers, self, and others

As you can see, a lot is promised. The ultimate promise is that you will be able to take your plan into the classroom and achieve the results you need and want. If you cannot do this, I have failed in my purpose. But, in teaching and in learning, failure only comes to those who give up.

So, never—never—never give up!

Good luck!