



# **SELF-DISCIPLINE**

15 Skills for Life

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# Why Self-Discipline?

**We can reduce discipline problems at school when:**

- Student take responsibility for their actions
- Teachers teach self-discipline skills
- Adults model self-discipline

# Definition of Self-Discipline

- Hagger and Hamilton (2019) said that self-discipline "is conceptualized as an individual's capacity to suppress or inhibit prepotent or dominant responses in favour of an alternative action that is strategic and services a long-term or higher-order goal (p. 325)."
- Vasiloff (2020) created a simplified definition:

**“Wait, Think, Act”** (p. 22).

- Waiting gives you time to think before you act

# Self-Discipline Developmental Groups

## The Three Groups

- **BASIC SKILLS**
- **CONSTRUCTIVE SKILLS**
- **GENERATIVE SKILLS**

## Optimal Grade Level to Teach

Kindergarten to Grade 3

Grades 3 to 6

Grades 6 to 9 and beyond

# The Basic Skills

1. Listening
2. Following Instructions
3. Asking Questions
4. Sharing: Time, Space, People, Things
5. Interacting Socially

# Basic Skill: Listening

**We know if students exhibit listening skills when:**

- They can answer questions about what was said
- They can rephrase what was said in their own words
- They complete the task that was given to them

# Basic Skill: Following Instructions

**Learning how to follow instructions is important because it:**

- Eliminates off-task behaviors
- Allows students to get started on a task and finish a task
- Enables students to set realistic goals



# Basic Skill: Asking Questions

## Proficient in Asking Questions

- Asking needed questions
- Trying to clarify what the speaker said

## Unskilled in Asking Questions

- Asking repetitive questions
- Asking inappropriate questions
- Making statements instead of asking questions

# Basic Skill: Sharing

**Students who can share get along better because:**

## **Sharing Time**

- Students learn to wait their turn

## **Sharing People**

- Students wait until a person is available to get their attention

## **Sharing Space**

- Students honor each other's personal space

## **Sharing Things**

- Students can wait until others are finished using materials

# Basic Skill: Interacting Socially

## **Positive social skills will:**

- Reduce bullying
- Help students feel comfortable around others
- Reduce the chance of students being excluded

# The Constructive Skills

1. Cooperating
2. Understanding the Reasons for Rules
3. Independently Accomplishing Tasks
4. Exhibiting Leadership
5. Communicating Effectively

# Constructive Skill: Cooperating

## Cooperation allows for:

- Productive group activities
- Giving students the opportunity to complete their part of a project
- Building group cohesiveness

# Constructive Skill: Understanding the Reasons for Rules

## **If students understand the reasons for rules:**

- It helps students respect the rules
- Students are less likely to break the rules
- It makes it possible for students to be involved in making rules

# Constructive Skill: Independently Accomplishing Tasks

## **If students can independently accomplish a task:**

- They can develop a plan for solving a problem
- It allows them to set realistic goals
- Their completed work can be self-evaluated

# Constructive Skill: Exhibiting Leadership

## Qualities of Leaders

- Having the ability to delegate
- Respect everyone's ideas
- Handle criticism effectively
- Work for the good of everyone

## Leadership allows for:

- Standing up against bullies
- Combatting negative peer pressure
- Being able to take a personal stand on issues



# Constructive Skill: Communication

## **Teaching effective communication is important because:**

- It allows students to appropriately express needs, wants, and opinions
- Offensive words and gestures can be reduced
- Unproductive habits such as whining and complaining can be discouraged

# The Generative Skills

1. Organizing: Time, Space, People, Things
2. Resolving Problems
3. Initiating Solutions
4. Distinguishing Facts from Feelings
5. Sacrificing or Serving Others

# Generative Skill: Organizing

## Advantages of being organized:

### Organizing Time

- Avoid procrastination: Homework and projects completed on time

### Organizing People

- Classmates can be selected that work effectively together so projects can be completed

### Organizing Space

- Students can find items in lockers, bookbags and desks

### Organizing Things

- Students can find clothes and supplies so they can get ready for school

# Generative Skill: Resolving Problems

## Teaching how to resolve a problem:

- Helps students take responsibility for their actions
- Avoids confusion over what happens when rules are not followed
- Reduces power struggles

# Generative Skill: Initiating Solutions

## **By teaching students about initiating solutions:**

- Students choose effective strategies as they start to resolve a problem
- It helps students acknowledge behavior choices
- Students are encouraged to initiate change

# Generative Skill: Distinguishing Facts from Feelings

## When students rely on facts:

- They can stay calm in stressful situations
- They can analyze a situation
- They understand when it is appropriate to get angry or passionate about something

## When feelings guide students:

- They overreact to minor incidents
- They raise their voice or shout when it is unnecessary
- They react impulsively instead of thinking things through

# Generative Skill: Sacrificing or Serving Others

## Teaching students about making sacrifices or serving others:

- Allows students to view things from another's perspective
- Gives students opportunities to do something outside their comfort zone
- Limits the desire for students to have a self-centered attitude

# Conclusion

## **While self-discipline may not solve all problems:**

- Many discipline problems can be averted by teachers and parents modeling self-discipline skills and students practicing self-discipline skills
- Students can adapt better at school and be more successful by being self-disciplined
- The 15 Self-Discipline Skills are life-skills and can be utilized well beyond high school



# References

Hagger, M. & Hamilton, K. (2019). Grit and self-discipline as predictors of effort and academic attainment. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 89(2), 324-342. Retrieved March 26, 2021 from <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com>

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