

Preface

The 44 smart strategies featured in this book are proactive and affective prevention strategies. To use an analogy to explain the need for them, think of the variety of intangible, psychological, behavioral, social, and intellectual factors found in classrooms as resilient bubbles that are floating around in the classroom trying to coexist; the numbers increase exponentially as the numbers of students and their needs increase. As the bubbles travel throughout the room, some of them manage to garner a space, some overlap into each other and some pop immediately on contact with another bubble. The bubbles reflect the volatility of attitudes and perceptions, emotions, morals, assumptions, and ideologies; they reflect the permeation of love needs, family interactions, peer influences, and teacher encouragement or biases. Consequently, the bubbles either hold their own, blend nicely, or burst. These dynamics are occurring in the background of every classroom, generated by the needs and interactions of students, teachers, parents, and administrators.

To be effective, educators must be aware of these omnipresent dynamics and the result these dynamics can have on the classroom environment, achievement, and instructional effectiveness. To teach effectively, teachers must address the psychological, physical, and emotional needs of students, enhance the quality of interactions, improve personal attitudes, clarify perceptions, and challenge personal assumptions. In doing so, they modify the bubbles, making them more like the new super bubbles currently on the market that stick and stack and come together easily. The core or essence of avoiding classroom mistakes lies in the strategic management of these intangible classroom dynamics.