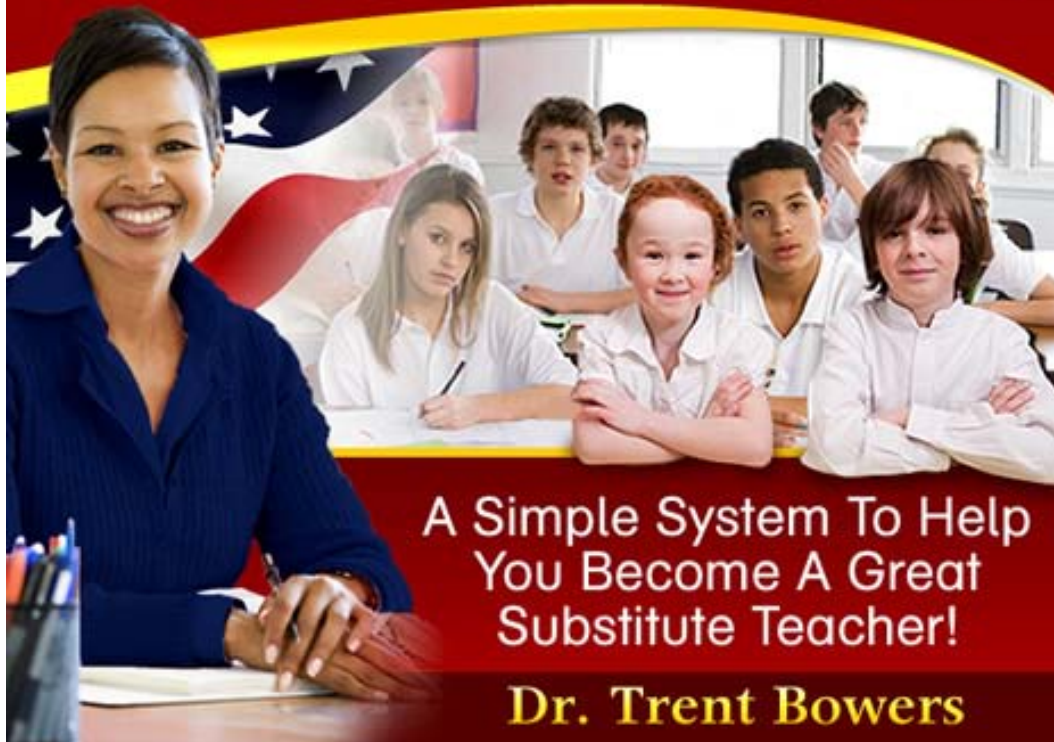


# FROM SURVIVE TO THRIVE

WHAT GREAT SUBSTITUTE  
TEACHERS DO DIFFERENTLY

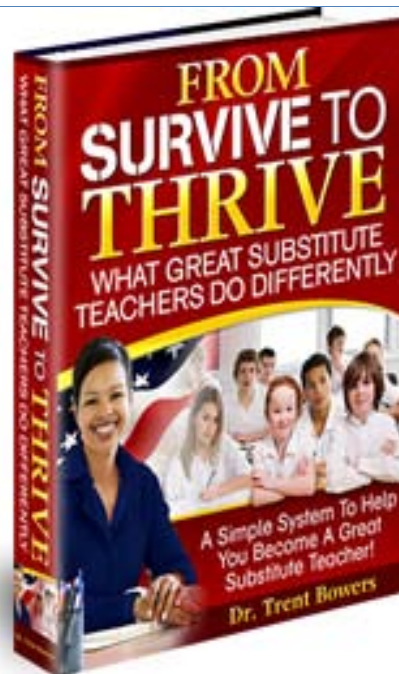


A Simple System To Help  
You Become A Great  
Substitute Teacher!

**Dr. Trent Bowers**

WORTHINGTON CITY SCHOOLS

# *From Survive To THRIVE: What Great Substitute Teachers Do Differently*



Worthington Schools

Dr. Trent Bowers

This book was developed to assist substitute teachers in the Worthington City School district. It provides solid advice that will allow substitute teachers to be successful and therefore will help all of our students to be successful.

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## About the Author

Dr. Trent Bowers is the author of “From Survive To THRIVE: What Great Substitute Teachers Do Differently.”

Dr. Bowers has been a Teacher, a Coach, a Dean of Students, an Assistant Principal, an Elementary School Principal, an Adjunct Professor of Educational Leadership and is currently the Coordinator of Human Resources for the Worthington City School District in Worthington, Ohio.

This book was developed to assist substitute teachers in the Worthington City School district. It provides solid advice that will allow substitute teachers to be successful and therefore will help all of our students to be successful.

Dr. Bowers holds degrees in education from Taylor University and The Ohio State University. He holds his doctorate in Educational Leadership from Ashland University.

Dr. Bowers lives in Worthington, Ohio with his wife and three daughters.

## From Survive to Thrive: What Great Substitute Teachers Do Differently

Over the course of a kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade education, the average student will spend an entire school year with a substitute teacher leading their education. For this to occur, a student only has to average 13 days per school year working with a substitute. Between teacher absences for illness, family illness, professional development and personal leave, 13 days is easy to obtain. If a student happens to fall into a category where they have a first grade teacher out on maternity leave for twelve weeks, a sixth grade teacher out caring for an elderly parent for six weeks and a tenth grade teacher who was in an accident and out for twelve weeks, the student will spend over a year and a half of their 13 year formal education with a substitute teacher.

Because these statistics are very real, there is a critical need to make certain that instruction that engages students in learning continues regardless of who is teaching the class. Our students cannot afford to waste a year and a half of their limited formal education career doing filler activities from a substitute teacher's bag of tricks. Our students deserve to learn. Our parents deserve to know that when they send their children to our schools, they will learn. Our community deserves to know that regardless of who is in the classroom, students are learning and therefore their tax money is being put to good use.

Regardless of whether you are a substitute teacher by choice, or whether you are substitute teaching until you can obtain a full-time classroom position, **you are very important to our education system!** You are very important to the future of my three daughters who will be in your class. As a substitute teacher you make a difference in the lives of students. Because you are only in a given classroom for a short period of

time, you may not get to see the pay-off for your work. However, the cumulative effect of many days spent with substitute teachers needs to add value to a student. This will only happen if each substitute teacher learns how to be effective in their role.

This book is designed to provide you with the necessary tools to be a “Great” substitute teacher!

- I am not interested in you learning a “bag of tricks” that you can pull out to fill time when you need something to do with students. The great substitutes don’t need to do that.
- I’m interested in you learning the personal, management, and instructional strategies that will allow our students to learn and grow while you are in the classroom.
- By using these strategies, you will see the efficacy in what you are doing and have a more satisfying substitute teaching experience

**I have high expectations for you as a substitute teacher because we have high expectations that our students will all learn and grow to meet their unique potential.** As a parent of three little girls, I have high expectations that they will always be treated with care and with respect. I have high expectations that the teacher in the classroom will keep them safe. I have high expectations that the time they are in school is used wisely and is used on task.

As a substitute teacher you are a role model! You are the leader in the classroom. You are the adult who has been hired to care for and help every student in your classroom. What you do, what you say, what you wear, and your tone of voice, will all



be analyzed and reported upon. Most importantly your interaction with our students shapes how they view adults in the world. You are employed to be a role model.

Over the course of this book I will help you meet the high expectations that I have for you. In the first section we will define what it means to be a “**Professional Substitute Teacher.**” We’ll look at how this differs from the traditional version of a substitute teacher and how you will have to make a choice on who you’re going to be.

The next section of this book will detail the “**essential five**” for the substitute teacher. The five things every substitute teacher needs to do everyday if they are going to be successful in the classroom and in the school.

After the essential five for substitute teachers, I will help you **manage the classroom.** Consistently this is the greatest challenge for substitutes. By following my simple plan you will be prepared to walk into any classroom and consistently thrive.

Finally we’ll look at some **important topics** in education and you will learn how to deal with them. We’ll discuss, special education, instructional techniques, a positive and optimistic demeanor, and looking for a permanent job.

In the final section of this book, you’ll be able to read about real life substitute teachers who are meeting my high expectations. Of the over 300 substitute teachers that my school district employs, these substitutes make-up the top 3%. Their personal strategies provide you with excellent case studies on which to learn.



## The Professional Substitute Teacher

Just as calling oneself a professional does not make one a professional, working in a profession does not make one a professional. Being a professional is more than working in a profession. It seems that every field and every occupation likes to label its members as professionals.

We all have a sense of what it means when someone says, “He or she is a real professional.” It’s very much like a “good attitude.” You know it when you see it. Professionalism is earned, not superficially applied.

Professionals work in a specialized field of study that requires preparation and adherence to principles and standards. These conscientious, high achievers carry themselves differently than the rest of the pack. Their demeanor is their differentiator. Their commitment to excellence is part of their legitimate claim to the label, “professional.” To become a professional substitute, you must study relentlessly and consistently hold yourself to high personal standards. You must commit to excellence in all you do.

The Professional Substitute Does Four Things:

1. They Take Their Job Seriously.
2. They Build Positive Relationships.
3. They Dress For Success.
4. They Smile.

## They Take Their Work Seriously

The professional substitute takes their work very seriously. The very utterance of the word substitute teacher conjures up images of a class in disarray with some hapless sole at the front while the students shoot spit-balls, write notes and make paper airplanes. If you were raised in American public schools, you have memories of watching movies while your teacher was away, or having free-time to play paper football on your desk. The very idea of a substitute teacher leads directly to the idea of free-time, no homework and less structure.

All of these views of substitute teaching are unfortunate because they are often accurate in their interpretation of reality. However, *it doesn't need to be this way*. A professional substitute teacher takes their role seriously. They understand that they have a very important role to fill in the school district. They understand that they have the ability to make a positive difference in the lives of students and they understand that their main role is to make sure students learn.

Because there are long held cultural beliefs regarding substitute teaching, it is often expected that the substitute will show a movie or come to class with a book of word searches to complete. Not only is it expected, but it is accepted. Therefore the substitute that takes their job seriously and works to help students learn, is often the exception rather than the norm. It is very easy for substitute teachers to get lazy, pop in a DVD and search the internet, when they could be providing a meaningful learning experience. The professional substitute resists this slippery slope and focuses on what matters most: Helping students learn.

Because the professional substitute teacher takes their job seriously they don't make comments that other substitutes

might make. A professional substitute does not say “I’m only a substitute.” They understand how important their role is for students and take pride in their work. Likewise, a professional substitute does not say, “I’m only here one day, so why kill myself.” Again the professional substitute understands that those “one day” assignments add up to a significant portion of a student’s formal education.

## They Build Positive Relationships

Working as a substitute teacher is difficult work. My father was a Secret Service Agent. As a special agent he had a mandatory retirement age of 55 years old. Much too young to really retire. Because he was an education major in college, when he retired, he returned to school and renewed his teaching license. After obtaining his license he became a substitute teacher.

One of the things that he would mention to me is that he could be at some schools all day long and no one from the school would go out of their way to say “Hi” to provide him with directions, or to help him find his way around the school. With many teachers focused on helping *their* students learn, this can be an unfortunate reality. The professional substitute finds ways to work around this by building relationships with staff.

To be successful in this arena, the substitute must be proactive. Typically this means checking in the office when you arrive and introducing themselves to whomever from the school has been assigned to greet and help substitutes, this is generally the school secretary. There are several things that professional substitutes do differently when they go to any school.

- They introduce themselves to the school office.
- They ask the school office member to show them to their room and where any other important areas are located, ie..restrooms for students, gym, library, etc.
- They ask the school office member if they would direct them to the important emergency plans that they need to be familiar with.
- They ask the school office member if there are any students in the class that have special situations that they should know about.
- They let the school office member know that they are here to help students learn and they would be happy to help in any capacity should they be needed by the school.
- They sincerely thank the school office member for their time and attention.

After the substitute has been in the school and is familiar with the school, subsequent visits will require only checking in, saying hi, and chatting with the office personnel on a more personal level. For example, “Hi, Mrs. Halpin, I’m happy to be back at your school today. How’s your family? Anything going on today that I should know about? I’ll be in

for Ms. Fox if you need me.” Building positive relationships with the staff in the office is important both in the beginning and later when you may need some extra help.

The professional substitute teacher also works to build relationships with the teachers in close proximity to your classroom. The professional does not wait for the teachers to come to them, he/she makes the effort to introduce themselves to the other teachers and asks them, “Would it be okay if I come over and ask for your help, should I need it?” By building this bridge early, the professional substitute has built an important ally when they may need help with a lesson or activity that is set to occur. As a substitute there is no way to know all of the different situations that occur at a given school. No matter how detailed a teacher’s plans may be, there are many things in a school that just happen, and they may be very different from the things that happen at the school you were at yesterday. Building a positive relationship with each of the classroom teachers in close proximity will go a long way towards helping you achieve success.

Finally, the professional substitute builds a positive relationship with the students in the classroom. One way to do this is to **RELATE** and **RESPOND**:

**R.E.L.A.T.E.** emphasizes the importance of being proactive in building positive relationships when interacting with student. The steps include:

- **Respecting** the dignity of the student
- **Explaining** who you are
- **Listening** to what the student is really saying
- **Asking** questions for clarification
- **Trying** to be flexible
- **Empathizing** with the stress that accompanies change in the classroom.



When an issue inevitably arises in the classroom a professional substitute will **R.E.S.P.O.N.D.** Responding appropriately involves the following steps:

- **R**ecognizing the student's perspective
- **E**stablishing rapport
- **S**ingling out the "real issues"
- **P**roviding information about what action can be taken
- **O**perationalizing a plan of action to help the student
- **N**otifying the student about the action taken
- **D**iscussing the circumstances with the classroom teacher.

Building positive relationships with students is easy when the students understand that you are a professional and you are there to help them learn and grow. When they see that you take your job seriously and treat them with respect, they will react in kind. By implementing the principals of RELATE and RESPOND you have the tools necessary to see success.

## Dress for Success

Your appearance says a lot about you. Use it to enhance your personal and professional success. People do pay attention to how you look. That's why it important to be impeccable in your presentation of self. I suggest you dress one level up from what is required by the school.

The world of public education is increasingly more casual. However, how you choose to dress for your assignment can affect the initial respect you receive from the students as well as other teachers and administrators in the building. It is not important that you have an expensive outfit to wear. What is important is that you have a conservative outfit that looks like you are taking your job seriously and that you are a professional person.

Clothing is a delicate issue. In our culture we have become much more casual on a day-to-day basis. Often teachers want to express themselves through their clothing. It has been my experience that more and more of this is acceptable once you have been granted a full-time job. While your generation may find something, such as tattoos, perfectly acceptable, the generation making the school-wide decisions may not. Knowing that ahead of time will allow you to make decisions about what to wear. When in doubt come over dressed. You'll never regret wearing your best clothes. You may regret choosing not to.

It is important to remember that most school administrators will be ages 30 – 65. Therefore they may span three different "generations" each with their own set of expectations.

Those administrators ages 30-44 are considered to be part of Generation “X.” This group of administrators may be more comfortable with informality and individualism than previous generations. This group of school administrators are typically in mid-level administrative positions such as, school principals, assistant principals, etc.

Senior leadership positions will typically be held by members of the “Baby Boomer” (age 45-63) and “Traditionalist” (age 64+) generations. Baby boomers are characterized by achieving success through long hours. They expect formality and protocol in the workplace. Likewise Traditionalists have great respect for rules and authority. They are likely conformers and have the expectation that future generations behave likewise.

Substitute teachers should strive to fit into the culture of the school they are teaching in while dressing one level up. For example, if all male teachers wear a shirt and tie, then the substitute teacher should also. However, if the school culture is very casual and all staff members wear jeans and tee-shirts, the substitute should dress one level up from this. Cotton pants and a button down shirt or golf shirt would be appropriate. Dressing well will help you garner immediate respect with both students and teachers. It will also show that you are serious about your job as a professional.

For males, the dress is simple. The professional substitute teacher will arrive to the teaching assignment in slacks that have been pressed and a long sleeve oxford shirt.

Here are a few details that male candidates should never do:

- Do not arrive for an assignment wearing short sleeves.
- Do not arrive for an assignment wearing shoes other than comfortable dress shoes.
- Do not arrive for an assignment wearing pants or a shirt that have not been pressed.
- Do not arrive for an assignment with facial piercing or visible tattoos.
- Do not believe the administrator if they tell you the dress is casual. This means you don't have to wear your best suit. You still need to show you are serious by wearing all of the things I have mentioned above.

For females, attire is a bit more complicated than it is for males and females need to be very cognizant of their clothing. The key word is MODESTY. What may be in fashion in New York may not be appropriate for a teaching assignment in Ohio. Make certain that your blouse is buttoned appropriately. Make certain that your clothing, while tailored, leaves something to the imagination. Clothing should be professional. A dress, skirt, or dress pants that are professional are acceptable attire. Shoes should not be opened-toe even in the warmer months. Wear tasteful, understated accessories. (Did I mention you should dress with modesty?)

Here are a few details that female candidates should never do:

- Do not wear your “going out” clothes to the assignment.
- Do not wear opened-toe shoes. This means No Flip-Flops! (This is a baby boomer or traditionalist hang-up, but you don’t want to risk it.)
- Do not wear clothing that is too tight or too revealing.
- Do not wear multiple earrings in one ear.
- Do not wear facial piercings or visible tattoos.
- Do not wear undergarments that the students can see. (Think about colors under clothing before you get dressed.)

Before you head out for a teaching assignment pause and look at yourself in the mirror. Ask yourself, “does my appearance show that I respect myself and the people I’ll meet today?” If yes, go out and complete your assignment! If not, go back and change into something more appropriate.

## Smile

The professional substitute teacher does something other subs may not do. They: Smile! It's the secret to charisma. If you have a good charisma, you already know what a warm smile is a powerful weapon

The reason the smile is so effective is because you reflect goodness to someone. Do you remember a moment when a person smiled to you? How did you felt then? When something like this happens it makes me feel GOOD! A smile makes you feel a little better, gives you confidence, make's you more attractive ... When someone smiles at you, you feel good about yourself, and you give that smile back. It gives you an emotional boost.

- Smile Effects

First of all, smiling puts your students and other staff at ease. When someone smiles at you, usually you smile back at them. This is an unconscious action. If you walk the halls at school, you'll see that not many people are smiling. They have problems, or other things on their mind. There is also the conception that if we smile or we show our vulnerability and soft side. (Have you heard the phrase "don't smile until Thanksgiving.")

People smile when they like something, when something make's them feel better, etc. (Remember what you can do with a smile. A simple smile could make others think that they have something special. )

Smiling also releases endorphins which calm you and make you happier. Remember: Smile and make others smile, and you'll see only positive effects. Just give it a try today! Professional substitute teachers understand the simple value of a smile. No matter what our age we struggle with the change of routine. When the regular classroom teacher is not at school there is a significant change in the classroom. As the substitute, simply smiling will help your class relax and feel more comfortable with the idea that things may indeed be okay

### **The Professional Substitute Does Four Things:**

1. They take their job seriously.
2. They build positive relationships.
3. They dress for success.
4. They smile.



## The Five Daily Essentials for Substitute Teachers

The five daily essentials for substitute teachers is a simple blueprint that will provide you with five easy to do tasks that will exponentially increase your success.

The Five Daily Essentials for Substitute Teachers are:

- Make sure you know the building safety procedures and plans!
- Engage the students you teach in meaningful work!
- Treat all students with respect!
- Be present!
- Be positive and optimistic!

### **Daily Essential #1: Make Sure You Know the Building Safety Procedures and Plans!**

Each school you are assigned to teach in will have building safety procedures. There will be simple procedures such as what to do if there is a fire drill, tornado drill, earthquake drill, etc. In most states the procedures for those simple drills are posted by the exit door in every classroom. Hopefully you will be in a school that also has an organized method for helping you determine what to do in other safety situations. These may include: school lock-down, dangerous intruder, bomb threat evacuation, or plans for if a serious medical situation arises in the classroom. It's important that as

a substitute your first proactive task is to ask for these plans and if possible a verbal explanation of each.

Hopefully you will be in a school that has an organized plan for getting this information to substitute teachers. When I was a school principal, all emergency plans were in a clear acrylic box mounted inside every classroom door. The plans were in the same place in every classroom. The first instruction in every teacher's substitute plans was to locate the plans and to review them. Then the teacher in the classroom next door was assigned to review the plans with the substitute before the school day began. It was a good plan, that worked most of the time. But, sometimes the teacher next door would get too busy and not come over, and sometimes the substitute would come late and neglect this critical detail.

When you have reviewed the emergency plans you are able to be the leader and the role model should a crisis occur. Because you know the plans you are less likely to panic and less likely to make a poor decision. Should an emergency occur, your job is to stay calm and execute the plan of action. Students will follow your lead, so how you respond will be critical. Your first task each day is to make certain you know the school safety procedures. Hopefully you'll never need them.

Don't ever neglect this detail. You never know when a crisis plan is going to have to be put in place. It can be any time of day, the first time you are ever at a school or five years later. It's impossible to tell. However, as the substitute you are responsible for keeping all of the students in your care safe. When I send my daughter to school, I trust you with my most precious gift. Don't put her in danger because you don't think anything could happen.

## **Daily Essential #2: Engage Your Students in Meaningful Work!**

A paradigm is the way we see the world. Being expected to engage students in meaningful work is a paradigm shift for many substitutes. They believe the substitute teacher is at school to maintain some order, survive the day and send the students home. These subs don't have very high expectations. The second thing that great subs strive to do daily is to engage all of their students in meaningful work to make certain students learn.

Student learning is the goal of formal education. At one time, it was thought that it was the teacher's responsibility to teach the material and it was up to the students whether or not they learned the material. Today, we understand that teaching is not enough. We must make certain that each student learns the "state standards" set by the individual states as well as the critical skills they will need to compete in a global marketplace. Everyone must work to make this happen.

Great substitutes take their mission seriously. If they have been left detailed lesson plans by the regular classroom teacher, they work hard to implement the plan. To make this happen the substitute needs to arrive to school well before the students do. (Some subs think because they are only subbing that arriving with the students is okay this tells me everything I need to know about the substitute. Obviously they do not take their profession seriously and they obviously don't plan to follow the lesson plans the teacher left behind to ensure student learning. This substitute probably has a large bag with an apple on the side that says "World's Best Substitute, I've got my eye on you!" and many books on word searches, and how to fold a paper football.)

Those substitute teachers who are serious arrive to school early to study the lesson plans. They make certain they have the needed materials within reach and formulate a plan to guide the instruction of the lesson. They know that lecturing will not engage students. They use cooperative learning techniques and hold students accountable to participate and share-out learning.

Great substitute teachers take students learning seriously and they want to assess that learning so they know how the students are doing. One strategy to assess student learning while you are teaching is to use exit slips. As students leave class they write what they learned or what they are still struggling with on the slip. The substitute teacher compiles the information and leaves it for the regular classroom teacher. Then, when the regular classroom teacher returns he/she knows what the students know and what they still need more practice on. The classroom teacher and the substitute teacher work as a team because they are both responsible to help all students to be successful.

### **Daily Essential #3: Treat All Students with Respect!**

The professional substitute teacher understands that the students in their care are people too. They work to share power with students and not force power over students. The professional substitute understands that young people need the experience of having others listen to their feelings, thoughts, and ideas and take them seriously.

The professional substitute is able to show respect to all students because they have mastered the ability of being “quick to forgive and difficult to offend.” They consistently hold students accountable for their transgressions but they never hold onto anger and resentment. The substitute is proficient at listening, responding and being assertive as it is necessary. However, they do not allow irritating actions or comments to push their emotional buttons.

Professional substitutes provide students with opportunities to use their personal power in constructive ways. They allow students to be part of the decision making process and they seek feedback from the students on how to accomplish a given task or lesson. The professional substitute realizes that a student who is not provided with constructive ways to use their personal power will likely find destructive ways to use this power.

In the classroom with a substitute, the students must know that their self-respect will always be maintained. There is no better way to damage a student’s self-respect than to embarrass them in front of their friends, reprimand them in public or to let them fail in front of the class. Self-respect is enhanced when students have the opportunity to lead, to make decisions, and to give input. The professional substitute allows

students to become partners in creating and sustaining the classroom climate rather than just being the recipient of the substitute's demands.

Substitutes who are successful and treat students with respect do not choose which students to support and which students to ignore. They understand that it is easy to teach well-behaved, motivated students. Likewise it is easy to choose to engage this group of students. However, the substitute who treats all students with respect works to engage those difficult students who may make comments that are obnoxious or even offensive. The difficult students are often just trying to anger the substitute and to get the substitute to "crack." The professional substitute consistently reaches out to the more challenging students in the classroom. They work to create positive relationships with all students.

The professional substitute treats students with respect by understanding that what is fair, may not always be what is equal. They work diligently to provide each student with what he or she needs without comparing the actions of one student to the actions of another student. By being fair to all students the substitute is able to create work for each student at their own level without worrying about what others in the classroom think. This shows respect for the individual student.

Finally the successful substitute shows respect by modeling the behavior that they expect from students. When the substitute needs to give feedback, but is unsure of what to say, they try to put themselves on the receiving end of the message. When a student gets mad and starts using language that is offensive, they act in a way consistent with what they are trying to teach the students to do. The professional substitute conveys respect to their students through their consistent

actions. In turn the professional substitute usually is give respect by the students.

### **Daily Essential #4: Be Present!**

Substitutes who are present in the classroom practice mindfulness. They work to live in a state of full consciousness and awareness of self and others. They seek to be in tune with the world around them and to recognize their own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. The mindful substitute is actively attentive, open, available, and willing to engage in the give and take of relationships.

As humans we are “wired” to pick up subtle clues from one another and therefore, we depend on one another for our emotions. We gauge our emotional response on the feelings we notice in the people around us. Our bodies tell the truth. Even when we do not intend it, we send messages about our true feelings. It is possible for us to catch the emotions of people around us, even when the communication is completely nonverbal. Because of this, the mindfull substitute uses what he/she sees.

Presence occurs in several different forms.

- The first is an affirming presence. An affirming presence involves an attitude of unconditional regard for the person or persons involved are working with. This form of presence communicates the message that others have the right to be themselves.
- The second form of presence is a critical presence. Sometimes the substitute will sense anger or resentment in another’s presence. This triggers a



reflection on ourselves and how we may have acted toward this person. This reflection results in a willingness by the leader to listen and to work to open more authentic lines of communication.

- The third form of presence is an enabling presence. This presence is an admission on the part of the substitute that they cannot be effective individually and that accomplishing goals only occurs collectively.

Through presence, the professional substitute is connected to others. Every relationship is distinct, offering unique possibilities.

Being present separates successful professional substitutes from the rest. Many who substitute are physically present in the classroom, but because they are only going through the motions and counting the minutes until the end of the day, they are not emotionally present. The students quickly pick-up on these non-verbal cues and take their lead from the modeled behavior of the substitute. As a substitute you have committed a day of your life to work with these students. You should spend that time wisely, be truly present and mindful of those in the classroom and make a difference.

### **Daily Essential #5: Be Positive and Optimistic!**

Every day the substitute teacher sets the tone in the classroom with the attitude they choose to display. The substitute is on stage from the moment the students arrive until the bell rings and it's time for them to leave. If the substitute has a negative attitude the students will adopt this mindset too, and the class will not be very productive. On the other hand, if the substitute has a positive attitude toward the students, the subject, the profession, and towards themselves, optimism will pervade the class and promote learning.

The effects of a positive attitude have been widely studied.

They include the following:

- Improved job satisfaction
- Better self-esteem
- Improved personal interactions
- Better health
- Greater achievement levels
- Improved overall happiness

People with positive attitudes are often healthier and happier in their jobs and in their professional lives. They typically can achieve more in any given day. People want to be around other positive individuals.

People who have a positive attitude are generally optimists. Optimists cope with stress better than pessimists. Pessimists often allow their attitude to stop them from achieving their goals. Because optimists handle stress better, they report fewer illnesses associated with stress and recover more quickly when they do get sick.

Substitutes who are excellent do three things better than all other substitutes:

- **They Think Positively.** Train yourself to see the opportunity in every difficulty and the good in every person you meet. Be genuinely happy, not only about your success – but the success of others in your life.
- **They Smile.** Smiles are contagious. When you smile at others, they tend to return the favor. A smile can have a positive impact on someone who is having a bad day. By smiling, you'll attract other smiling people – the kind of people who will help you fulfill your dreams.
- **They Speak Positively.** You attract positive people when you say positive things. When someone greets me by saying “How are you?” I always smile and answer, “Great, and you?” even if I'm having a tough day. This doesn't mean that I don't share my troubles with close friends. I just don't wear them on my sleeve.

If you want to portray to the students that you are a positive person incorporate these phrases into your daily vocabulary...

- I know you can do it.
- I believe in you.
- I'm proud of you.
- I need you.
- I trust you.
- I respect you.
- I appreciate you.
- I value you.
- Thank you.

The Five Daily Essentials for Substitute teachers will be the foundation for your success. These essentials must be done every day you are working as a substitute. Done over and over they will become the norm for your behavior and you will increase both your effectiveness as a substitute teacher and your personal satisfaction with your profession.

**The Five Daily Essentials for Substitute Teachers are:**

- Make sure you know the building safety procedures and plans!
- Engage the students you teach in meaningful work!
- Treat all students with respect!
- Be present!
- Be positive and optimistic!

## Classroom Management

When I speak with our substitute teachers, usually the topic that they would like help in, is classroom management. It is very difficult to manage a public school classroom in the year 2009. When the diversity of ethnicities, socio-economic groups, family education levels, and expectations for education all collide in the typical classroom, there are great challenges. Because of the long-held cultural beliefs and lack of value for substitute teachers, classroom management is often even more difficult for substitutes.

Understanding the basic principles behind classroom management will allow you to be successful. Walking into the classroom with a plan in place will help greatly. It is possible to effectively manage and teach in public schools today. You simply need to develop the necessary skill set to make this happen.

In ideal situations, as a substitute, you will walk into a classroom that runs as a well-oiled machine. In these classrooms the regular classroom teacher has made his/her expectations to students very clear. The students obviously see the value in these expectations and follow them because they are mutually advantageous. Unfortunately these classrooms are more rare than we would like them to be.

In many classrooms across the United States the primary classroom management procedure is...nag, nag, nag. The classroom teacher simply nags the students into compliance. Many of the students choose to behave so as to avoid the teacher's constant and relentless nagging. This system of nagging works on a very simplistic level for the classroom teacher. However, when the regular classroom teacher is not at school, the students, free from nagging, do as they see fit.

This form of management creates nightmares for many substitutes.

Harry Wong, in his very popular book “The First Days of School,” writes that effective teachers manage their classrooms while ineffective teachers discipline their classrooms. The same can be said for substitutes. Did you catch the subtle difference? Those who manage their class take a proactive approach to helping students make good choices and focus on their important academic work. Those who focus on discipline take a reactive approach. They wait for students to inevitably make a poor decision and then they assign a punitive consequence. The hope is that the pain this consequence (not physical pain) causes will keep the student from making the same choice in the future. Unfortunately this rarely works.

Proactive behavior management is:

- Predictable and reasonable consequences to students’ behavior (consequences may be positive or negative.)
- Consistent use of routines and limits
- Feedback that encourages independence and success for all students
- Modeling for students appropriate behaviors and high expectations



There is great importance in managing student behavior. Research completed by Robert Marzano shows that when students are in classrooms where effective behavior management techniques are employed they have achievement scores that are more than 20 percentile points higher than students in classes where effective management techniques are not employed. This is true during a day of substitute teaching as well. To accomplish your goal of helping all students learn you will need to be able to manage the class.

Behavior problems occur for many reasons; however understanding some of the main reasons helps you avoid them.

Students often have behavior problems in the classroom when:

- They are bored with the academic work
- They are frustrated with the academic work
- They see no relevance for the academic work
- They do not understand the behavioral expectations
- They are experiencing external problems
- The teacher lacks external awareness

Five of the six reasons for student behavior problems can be attributed directly to the teacher in the classroom. Only one of the six reasons is attributable outside the classroom. As substitutes we have more control over student behavior than we may want to admit.

To decrease disruptive student behavior there are three things that need to happen:

- Building personal relationships
- Communicating expectations
- Effectively using time and space

### **Personal Relationship Building**

Personal relationship building is the foundation of classroom management. It's human nature that people will work harder and strive to please those people who they care about. For the substitute teacher building relationships in a short amount of time can be difficult. It's important to know the basics behind this process:

1. *Fairness*: Students are looking for a teacher who is fair in their eyes, someone who treats all students the same way. They want a substitute who has consistently high expectations for everyone in the classroom and does not treat some students differently.
2. *Appearance*: How you dress matters. If your clothing shows that you are serious about your profession then students will pick-up on this.
3. *Humor*: Those who manage classrooms successfully take their job seriously but don't take themselves seriously. They deflect situations with humor. However, they are not sarcastic and never find humor at a student's expense.
4. *Courtesy*: An aspect of effective management is treating students as you yourself would like to be treated if you were a student.

5. *Respect*: Showing respect for the student allows the student to keep their self-respect and is usually reciprocated by students.
6. *Realness*: Good substitute teachers do not need to be robots. They show their class that they are real people working to help them succeed.
7. *Active Listening*: Listening to students is important. Asking clarifying questions and restating what the student has said, helps to better understand students as well as de-escalate tough situations.

It is important for classroom management to establish personal relationships quickly when you enter a classroom. It's not hard to do as long as you focus on this as an important goal.

## **Communicating Expectations:**

Students can't meet expectations that have not been shared with them. This is one of the simplest yet least followed concepts. Each of us has an idea in our own mind of what should happen in the classroom. The problem is, each student has an idea in their own mind as well. This produces an obvious disconnect. As the substitute teacher it is important to share with the students exactly what it is you want them to do. This needs to be shared in a kind tone of voice with explicit detail. I firmly believe that 90% of people, students included, want to do the right thing and if they know what that is, they will attempt to do it. However, if they're not sure what that is, they'll do what they think is right.

It is important to communicate expectations regarding procedures in the classroom. For older students this is as simple as being explicit. Tell them exactly what it is you need them to accomplish and how you would like it to happen. For elementary age students, talking is usually not enough. For these students you will need to quickly teach a new routine. For instance, if you are going to be using cooperative learning several times throughout the school day as a way to help students engage in their learning, it is important to take some time at the beginning of the day to help students understand the procedure for working together in groups. The way you do this and what they do with their regular classroom teacher may be very different. Time spent up front will eliminate disruptions later.

### The Three Steps to Teach Routines:

1. Explain – state and explain the procedure, model and demonstrate the procedure
2. Rehearse – practice the procedure
3. Reinforce – re-teach, practice and reinforce the procedure so that it becomes second nature.

The second part of communicating expectations has to do with being consistent. Students need to know what they can do and what they can't do. They feel safe when the substitute teacher is consistent with his/her expectations. Fred Jones says that there are no **degrees** of consistency. You are either consistent or you are inconsistent. Students will always do much better with a substitute teacher who is clear and consistent.

### Use of Time and Space

The effective classroom manager is mobile. They use proximity to all students in the classroom to their advantage. The saying is that “You either work the crowd, or the crowd works you”, sounds about right to me. By circulating around the classroom the effective classroom manager is present in the classroom and is able to build relationships with the students. Likewise, students tend to be more on task when the teacher is near.

There are many ways to deal with classroom management, but it is important for you to use something that is simple and easy to remember. That's what you'll see in the essentials of behavior management:

*The Essentials of Behavior Management*

**Communicate • Orchestrate • Circulate • Motivate • Correct**

**COMMUNICATE** with the students.

- Share your expectations for student behavior at the beginning of the day (or class).
- Use the teacher's posted rules when possible.
- Have your own rules in mind in case there are none posted.

*Guidelines for developing rules:*

- Limit the number to three or four.
- State the rules positively.
- Give a rationale.
- Cover the most essential issues.

**ORCHESTRATE** student behavior during and between activities.

- Begin each activity by clarifying your expectations for student behavior during that activity
- End each activity by giving the class feedback on how well they met your expectations and by preparing them for the next activity

**CIRCULATE** throughout the classroom.

- Move among the students as much as possible
- Be unpredictable in your route when circulating
- Visually scan the entire classroom as frequently as possible

**MOTIVATE** students to follow the rules and to use time productively.

- Use praise frequently and appropriately. Effective praise is:
  - Descriptive and age-appropriate
  - Businesslike
  - Based on something important
  - Reasonably private (for older students)

- Reinforcement systems may be useful with younger students (K-3):
  - Self-monitoring form
  - Stars or points on the board
  - “Good Work” certificates
  - Mystery Motivators
  
- If an activity has gone badly, let the class know that the next activity provides a fresh start.
  
- Let the students know that you will be reporting back to their teacher. Be overt when writing notes, and share the basics of your report.
  
- Do not use the report as a threat.



**CORRECT** student misbehavior when it occurs.

*Correct Calmly*

- Don't get physical under **any** circumstances.
- Don't escalate the situation.
- Don't take student misbehavior personally.
- Don't worry about saving face.
- Don't engage in power struggles.
- Correct consistently.
- Choose your battles carefully.
- Don't threaten students with what the teacher will do when he/she gets back.
- Follow through on any warnings or consequences you have given.

*Correct Fairly*

- Don't punish the entire class for the misbehavior of one or two students.
- Once you implement a consequence with one student, implement it with all students who behave the same way.

### *Correct Immediately*

- Intervene as soon as a misbehavior becomes a problem.
- Inform the student that he/she has a choice: To continue the misbehavior and pay the consequence, or to behave responsibly.

### *Correct Privately*

- A semi-private interaction allows the student to save face in front of peers.
- When physical privacy is not possible, use a quiet voice when correcting.

### *Possible consequences you might use for student misbehavior:*

- Give a reprimand.
- Assign minutes owed off recess.
- Keep students after class to talk.
- Leave a note for the teacher.
- Write a description of the incident for the teacher, and have the student sign it.
- Send the student to the office.

## Suggestions for Dealing with Predictable Events

### *“That Is Not How Our Teacher Does It”*

- This is so common that you may want to pre-correct: “Today, I will try to do some things like Ms. Hernandez, but some things will be different. I hope you will be patient about this.”

### *When students are trying to be helpful:*

- Thank them for their assistance.
- Use some of their suggestions, if possible.
- When you don’t want to use a suggestion, say something like: “Thanks, but I think today we will do it...”

### *When students seem to be playing games:*

- Don’t confront them. Simply say: “Thanks, but today we are going to...”
- If someone insists, try humor: “I think I will start making notes on all of these helpful reminders.”

### *Changing Seats*

- When it's obvious, unemotionally give a warning that you will be following the seating chart for all activities (including any times that you may have to assign consequences).
- When a student gives a name that is clearly different from what is on the seating chart (e.g., "My name is George Washing"), try humor.
- When you are not sure, ask an administrator or co-teacher to verify the accuracy of the seating chart and the seating arrangements.

### *The Class Clown*

- Don't compete or get into a power struggle with the student.
- Use humor, but do not humiliate or alienate the student.
- Get the student on your side (e.g., ask him/her to help you with a task).
- Keep anecdotal notes if the problem continues.
- Let the student know that you will share the notes with the teacher and/or an administrator if the behavior persists.

### *Class Out of Control*

- Ask for attention and raise your hand in the air. If students do not respond: Don't shout and don't get upset
- Check the time and write it on the board, then wait. Once class is under control, again check the time and write it on the board. Calculate the difference (i.e., the amount of time the class was out of control) If it's a first offense, erase board and explain that next time you will leave a note for the regular teacher about how much time the class spent out of control. If it happens again, follow through and leave a note for the teacher

### *Conclusion*

Your management skills have a huge impact on student behavior.

The most important skills are:

1. Maintaining your confidence.
2. Greeting students at the door.
3. Remembering to communicate, orchestrate, circulate, motivate, and correct.
4. Smile at students, help them to feel at ease with your presence, and strive to enjoy working with the best students in the world!

The top three important points regarding classroom management:

### **#3 Never back a student into a corner!**

In the traditional classroom the teacher is ruler of all the world and the students are loyal subjects who do what they're told. This works until a brave, and maybe not too bright, student challenges the authority of the teacher. As a substitute teacher this is a no win situation. If you back a person into a corner and they see no options, they will fight their way out. Many times substitutes want to show their authority and give ultimatums. This is unwise. The substitute teacher needs to always remain as the adult and keep things in perspective. The students may seem like they are ten feet tall and bulletproof, however in reality they are just young students who need guidance. If you find yourself challenging a student, don't provide an ultimatum. Provide the student with several options and time to make a choice. Give them a way to save face with their peers. Your job as a substitute is to create as much of a win/win situation as is possible.

### **#2 Practice bounce-off responses!**

From time to time students will make comments about you as the substitute that would be hurtful were you human. However, as a professional substitute it is important that you learn to let insignificant comments bounce right off you as if they never happened. It is conceivable that a substitute who focuses on these types of comments would spend all of his/her time trying to discipline students and possibly escalate situations. It's not worth it, you have more important things you need to be doing. Let stuff bounce right off.

## **#1 Have important work to do!**

The number one secret to effective classroom management as a substitute teacher is to have something important to do. When students believe the learning activity is important, they work hard and become engrossed in their learning. When this happens, they forget to goof off or misbehave. The teacher who teaches for the entire class period and focuses only on what is most important, student learning, always has less issues with management. If it takes you ten minutes to take attendance, another five to find the remote control and then you show a movie all class while you read a book, you will have management issues. If you begin teaching and engage the students in managing their own learning as soon as class should begin, then things will move along at a brisk pace and students will quickly pick-up that this is important to you and therefore should be important for them. That's the secret. Teach them from bell to bell and involve them in their learning. Amazingly simple, yet, it works!

## Instructional Techniques

The following are only a sample of some instructional techniques that work in 21<sup>st</sup> century schools and will allow you to effectively teach students from bell to bell.

### I Can Statements

"I Can" Statements describe the knowledge and skills that students should attain at each grade level – often called the "what" of "what students should know and be able to do." They indicate the ways of thinking, working, communicating, reasoning, and investigating, as well as important and enduring ideas, concepts, issues, dilemmas, and knowledge essential to the discipline.

Students like to know how successful they are in their progress toward achieving the standards. One easy way to help students see their success is through "I can" statements. These statements are clear statements that identify each goal that is necessary in order to be successful. They are usually ordered from a beginning simple goal or skill to the ending complex goal or skill. Sometimes they are a listing of all the goals that the students need but they are not necessarily in an increasing level of difficulty. The heading of "I Can" is followed by specific action verbs.



For example, a Science teacher may have these "I can" statements for science experiments:

\_\_Think of a question I want to answer

\_\_Think of how to answer my question

\_\_Create a hypothesis

\_\_Find information about the question

Since these statements are in students' voice and not in the standard's educational jargon, students can easily tell where they are in their educational journey. The "I can" statements are brief and only contain the goals for one standard or just the components for one single goal. Students can check off each goal as they achieve it so that they can see what they have been successful in and what they still have to achieve. They can share these statements with their teachers and parents.

Teachers can find some examples of "I can" statements on the web or they can write their own. Educators can search for "I can statements" + general subject area such as "I can statements" +"Science" or even more specifically "I can statements" +"Revolutionary war." One teacher creates her own statements as her students go step by step through the goals in the learning process. Another teacher has the class record these "I can" individual steps on the board as they do each. Then the teachers have "I can" for the next class.

"I can" statements can be used from primary level through college. Also, since these statements precisely show all the steps in the learning process, some teachers use these as "I will" statements which they give before the unit starts. As

students read these "I will" statements, they are aware of what they will have to do to be successful. These statements serve as an organizer for their future learning.

Start using "I can" statements so that your students know what they have to do to be successful and to record their successes.

## K-W-L Charts

KWL charts aid reading comprehension. What's a KWL chart? The traditional KWL Chart can be used with any content area to start students thinking about what they KNOW about a topic, what they WANT TO KNOW about that topic, and what they have LEARNED at the end of the unit. It can be adapted for research by adding a column between the W and the L that requires students to think about HOW they will use resources to find the answers to their questions. A KWL Chart can be used as an assessment for learning because a teacher can quickly tell what students already know and understand about a topic

For example, before reading a book or beginning a new lesson each student writes down what they already know and what they want to know. Then afterward, they write down what they've learned. They do this for two reasons. First, by forming questions, they activate prior knowledge which makes it easier for them to learn. Second, it's easy for both the teacher and student to see exactly which ideas the student is, and is not, getting from the text.

When you have both your questions and your background knowledge written down, it becomes much easier to think clearly about whether your reading is truly answering your questions. It is also infinitely easier to create and recognize new ideas. In addition, you still have your original questions written down so you have a clear framework for expressing your ideas to others.

## SMART Boards

The SMART Board is an interactive whiteboard that turns your computer and data projector into a powerful tool for teaching and presenting. With the computer image projected on the Board, simply use your finger and press on the large touch sensitive surface of the smart board to control the computer. (This allows your students to do presentations to be done from the front of the room instead of having to be at the computer.) Using one of the pens from the SMART Pen Tray, you just write on the board and the touch-sensitive screen tells the computer what color pen you are using and your notes are projected onto the screen in the correct color. You can save these notes on the computer or send them to your printer to be given out as a study aid. These are just a couple of the many uses for this wonderful tool.

The Smart Board uses resistive technology, which means there is a small air gap between two sheets of resistive material inside the board. When you press on the Board with your finger or an ordinary dry-erase marker, a contact point is registered and its coordinates correspond to the same area on the computer screen.

Because the SMART Board is based on resistive technology, it does not require a special stylus or pen to perform mouse or pen functions at the Board, only pressure on the Board's surface.

Using the SMART Board, you can:

- Save notes written on the board to a computer file
- Use your finger to press on the board to control Windows and Macintosh applications and other multimedia materials projected onto the board's touch-sensitive surface.
- Write over top of your applications and save the annotations to a computer file. The notes and annotated images can be printed from a computer printer, e-mailed, posted to a network, copied and pasted into other applications, or saved as an HTML file. SMART Board Software, included with every SMART Board, dramatically enhances group collaboration.

Ways to Use the SMART Board in Your Classroom are Unlimited! Here is a list of ideas:

- Presentations and assemblies, music lessons, digital slide shows
- PowerPoint presentations done by students and teachers.
- Lectures and teaching, especially math.
- Bring up a map and show a route and have the students describe using N.S.E.W. directions.
- As a class, create a slide show. Use the Inspiration software and the web. Students can do their presentations, make reports, etc. Create a class quilt about each person - Who I am
- Create digital portfolios.

- Save lessons to present to students who were absent.
- Teach computer skills and keyboarding.
- Write stories and proofread them as a group.
- Brainstorming
- Teach students the toolbars and the purpose of each icon on the computer.
- Do “daily language” on the Smart Board. Have kids come up and make changes using editing and proofreading marks. Also use highlighter tool to highlight nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.
- Use it with the “Kidspiration” software. The Smart Board would lend itself perfectly for this for as a whole class brainstorming or for individuals presenting their ideas.
- Preschool computer learning to let the group play at learning and avoid mouse dexterity problems, common at this age group.
- In an art class.
- Illustrate and write a book.
- View PowerPoint presentations.
- Group Internet searches.
- Publish a final lesson or a slide show so that students could show their family what they did in the computer lab that day.

- Use the "record" feature to make a short movie to demonstrate steps in using computer software. Example - Teaching Adobe Premier - record a short movie of "Importing a Still Image." Make a lot of short movies with an index. Create a "How To" CD for class/students to use.
- Use the SMART Board to prepare a lecture and training sessions and burn it to a CD. Then use it for "substitute lesson plans" on a day you have to be gone. No more lost time when the teacher has to be out and very easy for the substitute to deliver!
- Science - creating a diagram of a cell, electrical circuit, water cycle, etc; create a slide show where each component is added, labeled and used as a separate slide so you can build something in sequential steps. Then save it to the computer for review or information for kids who were absent or need review. Likewise for literacy - put passages on the screen and have kids underline, highlight, mark key information for discussion or better understanding of passage.
- Use in library to teach library automation system and catalog searching.
- Student math problems on board
- You can hook up a DVD to the SMART Board and view movies.
- Graphics and charts with second language learners and special education students
- Use the SMART Board to assist in creating a school yearbook.

- Grammar practice; write words that make a sentence. Scramble the words and have the kids put together the words to make their own sentences.
- When doing presentations, questions from the audience can be written with the answers. All the questions and answers can be sent to the participants.
- Write a daily newsletter article with students. Discuss what was learned that day and write a paragraph about it. Students use the on-screen keyboard to help with writing the article. Add digital camera pictures, clipart, etc. At the end of each day, print the newsletter and students take it home.



## Balanced Literacy

Balanced literacy is most often discussed and used in elementary settings, but it has implications for teachers across all content areas and all grade levels. The capacity to read and write well is essential for all students. This is true not only for demonstrating competency on high stakes assessments, but as they continue on their learning journey as lifelong learners. The balanced literacy process focuses on reading, writing and word study, and includes reading to, with, and by children and writing for, with, and by children.

Struggling readers in our classrooms may be so focused on decoding that they are unable to access and use prior knowledge in a productive way. This means that teachers need to include modeled and shared reading and writing experiences throughout K-12 education. Even though many teachers do not consider themselves reading teachers **all** teachers need to develop an understanding and sense of competency with teaching the process of literacy within the context of our teaching assignments.

Balanced literacy is not only for elementary teachers as it easily transfers to secondary classrooms in all content areas. A balanced literacy approach to teaching is defined by five learning methods:

1. Reading **to** students: Reading to students helps them learn sentence structure, develop an understanding of story and text structure, build prediction skills, create mental images, make cognitive connections, and provides them with a strong model of proficient reading in the context of either literature or expository material.

2. Reading **with** students: Reading with students helps them to develop comprehension skills. Guided reading sessions (designed to explicitly meet the needs of a small group of students) help students build basic reading skills and become more proficient and independent readers.
3. Independent reading by students: Independent reading by students helps them build self-confidence, fluency, vocabulary, and provides them with opportunities to practice using reading strategies they are learning.
4. Writing for and with students: Writing for and with students provides them with models of spelling and mechanics of writing. These learned experiences also help them understand how reading and writing are connected, as well as in hearing and sequencing sounds in words.
5. Writing by students: Writing by students helps them not only build confidence as writers; it also provides practice in different types of writing.

## Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement. Students work through the assignment until all group members successfully understand and complete it.

Cooperative efforts result in participants striving for mutual benefit so that all group members:

- Gain from each other's efforts. ("Your success benefits me and my success benefits you.")
- Recognize that all group members share a common fate. ("We all sink or swim together here.")
- Know that one's performance is mutually affected by oneself and one's team members. ("We can not do it without you.")
- Feel proud and jointly celebrate when a group member is recognized for achievement. ("We all congratulate you on your accomplishment!").

Research has shown that cooperative learning techniques:

- promote student learning and academic achievement
- increase student retention
- enhance student satisfaction with their learning experience
- help students develop skills in oral communication
- develop students' social skills
- promote student self-esteem
- help to promote positive race relations

There are many types of cooperative learning structures. Here are a few examples:

*Think-Pair-Share* - The teacher poses a question to the class. The students think about their response, and then students pair with a partner to talk over their ideas. Finally, students share their ideas with the class.

*Rallytable* - Students are working in pairs, within their teams. Students will take turns writing on one piece of paper or completing a task.

*Numbered Heads Together* - Students within the team number off from 1-4. The teacher poses a question and the students put their heads together to discuss the answer. The teacher randomly calls a number and from each team the student with that number writes the answer on the team response board.

*Showdown* - Each student writes his answer on his individual response board. When everyone in the group is ready, the leader says "Showdown" and team members compare and discuss their answers.

*Teammates Consult* - Students all have their own copy of the same worksheet or assignment questions. A large cup is placed in the center of each team, and students begin by placing their pencils in the cup. With pencils still in the cup, they discuss their answers to the first question. When all team members are ready, they remove their pencils from the cup and write their answers without talking. They repeat this process with the remaining questions.

*4S Brainstorming* - Students in the group have roles: Speed Captain (prompts more ideas), Super Supporter (encourages/recognizes all ideas), Synergy Guru (encourages members to build upon one another's ideas), and Secretary (writes ideas). Members carry out their respective roles while the team generates a variety of possible responses.

## Using the Internet

Is the Internet a technology that can transform teaching and learning or is it one that distracts and pulls students away from the central learning in a classroom? On the surface the Internet in itself cannot be considered a great teaching tool, but paired up with instructional knowledge and careful evaluation by educators it can be very powerful. There are many strategies that can help students and teachers use the Internet more effectively. Here are some of the ways that the Internet has been used in the classroom.

- Research

The school library is not the only place where students can go for quality research resources. The Internet also offers many credible and expansive resources for students to use to do research. However there must be structure for the students when sending them online to do research. Elementary students especially, should be given a small list or a hotlist in which to use as the springboard for their research. Older students should still be given structure, but should also be taught how to effectively search the web on their own for resources.

- Introducing a Concept

Often students need a good introduction for them to proceed in understanding a particular concept. There are many good text and multimedia resources on the Internet that can serve as the first introduction. A treasure hunt is an excellent way to structure an introduction to a particular concept. Using websites like Brainpop can also give a student the background in which to gain a deeper understanding.

- Meeting the Needs of All Learners

For students who are often finished early or have more advanced skills in certain curriculum areas, the Internet can be an excellent way to supplement and extend upon their learning. There are also many sites on the Internet that offer remediation or more primary activities to help reinforce learning for those who need a little extra help. Blue Web'n offers many links to web sites and activities that teachers can use to help meet the needs of all learners.

- Information Literacy Skills

Students and teachers must have the literacy skills that are important for this new age of information. Teaching students skills like web searching and web site evaluation are becoming just as important as teaching math and reading skills. The AT&T/UCLA 21st Century Literacies Homepage is an excellent site that offers lesson plans and resources to teach your students the necessary skills to flourish in today's society and in the future.

- Accessing Primary Resources

There is no better resource than the Internet for locating and viewing primary source materials. The Library of Congress web-site American Memory is one of the best sites to see actual artifacts of our American History. Along with American Memory, there are many other museums and other locations on the Internet in which to see and experience many of the great treasures of human history. Giving students access to this, brings them closer to the very fabric of mankind.

- Promoting Higher Level Thinking

Getting students to work and learn at higher level is the goal of most teachers. Often times the curriculum that is given to teachers does not support this goal. With the Internet, teachers and students now have access to many inquiry-based learning experiences like WebQuests that have been created by other teachers. These activities give students the structure in which to use the Internet to help them solve high level problems. To create your own WebQuests or other similar Internet-based activities you can use or go directly to the resources available on Bernie Dodge's WebQuest page.

- Streaming Media

The Internet is not just about text and pictures. One of the true potentials of the Internet is the ability to deliver both streaming video and audio directly to a student's computer. A good example of this is the tutorial and info on Teaching and Learning with Streaming from University of Wisconsin. This site includes a streaming example titled, Tutorial: Instructional Design Strategies. Subscription services like United Streaming offer a wider variety of multimedia choices that are indexed based on content and standards, making it easier for a teacher to find just the right clip to support their curriculum.

- Email Pals

Having students correspond with students in other parts of the country or world is a powerful way to get them to better understand the differences and similarities that exist between people around the world. Sites like Epals



make it easy to setup and monitor student email discussions and also reinforce the lost art of letter writing.

- Discussion

Internet technologies like discussion boards and chat rooms allow all students an equal environment in which to participate in class discussions. They also extend learning and collaboration outside of the walls of the classroom. Tapped In is a free resource that many teachers are using to setup structured dialogues on curriculum topics for their class.

- Animation

Sometimes a two dimensional drawing on the white board does not give students the best way to witness a particular process. There are many animated examples of scientific processes available on the Internet. Using a search engine like Google to locate them can be relatively quick if you or your students use the right search terms. Brainpop offers many animated examples of science concepts, as well as a range of other curricular topics as well.

## Legal Aspects of Substitute Teaching

The general rules about legal requirements are fairly simple. **First**, always make certain your students are properly being supervised. **Second**, as a substitute don't touch the students. (Students do not know you well enough for even a pat on the shoulder or a grab of the arm. This will often get you in trouble quickly.) **Third**, use your common sense. Think about how you would want someone to treat your child and then treat the children you are working with, with more kindness and more care than you think is necessary.

The professional substitute teacher understands his/her legal responsibilities. There are several responsibilities that all great substitutes keep in the forefront of their mind:

### 1. Supervision of Students

Never leave your students unsupervised! The substitute teacher who has physical control of a classroom has a duty to keep students safe and orderly. In many states, a teacher acts in loco parintis –in the place of a parent- and is allowed to use his/her judgment in a manner similar to a parent. The standard is reasonable use of professional judgment for the safety and orderly education of students.

### 2. Child Abuse Reporting

The purpose of child abuse reporting laws in most states is to protect the best interests of children and to offer protective services to prevent children from harm. Likewise the legislation is designed to help stabilize the home environment, preserve family life whenever possible, and encourage cooperation among states in dealing with the problem of child abuse.

Any school employee (including a substitute teacher) who knows or reasonably believes that a student has been neglected or physically or sexually abused, must immediately notify the building principal and child protective services. Should child protective services not be available the substitute should contact local law enforcement. Notifying the school principal is not enough. You must report to child protective services or law enforcement.

It is not the responsibility of the school employees to prove that the student has been abused or neglected, or to determine if the student is in need of protection. Investigations are the responsibility of child protective services or local law enforcement.

### 3. Dangerous Situations

A substitute teacher is responsible for making sure the learning environment is safe. This includes things such as the arrangement of desks so as not to block exits and proper supervision during the use of potentially dangerous classroom equipment. A teacher must also consider the potential for problems in certain kinds of classes. Planned activities in a physical education, science, or home economics class may be uncomfortable for the substitute teacher. In such cases, the substitute teacher may choose to do an alternate activity that they feel can be conducted safely. Be sure to include your reason the classroom activity was changed in your communication with the classroom teacher.

#### 4. Due Care and Caution

A teacher is required to exercise due care and caution for the safety of the students in his/her charge. Essentially, this means acting reasonably and with safety in mind, being able to explain circumstances and your actions, and following school safety policies and procedures.

#### 5. Discipline Policies

A substitute teacher should know the State's position on corporal punishment (my policy is don't do it ever!) and the school's policy over various aspects of discipline. Some states require a school to have a policy, and often these policies indicate a specific person, such as the principal, as disciplinarian. In the State of Ohio corporal punishment has been outlawed. If in doubt, referring students to the building principal is sound advice. When sending a student to the principal due to discipline matters, the substitute teacher maintains the duties of care and supervision and due care for both the individual child and the remainder of the class. Proper action may be detailed in the school policy or may require your independent sound judgment. Possible solutions include having another child accompany the child, sending another child to bring someone from the office to intervene, or having another teacher watch your class while you take the child to the office.

#### 6. Release of Students

Due to possible restraints on who may have custody of a child, students should not be allowed to leave the building during the school day without express written consent from the school office.

## 7. Confidentiality

It is unprofessional and against the law in many states to disclose confidential information about your students to anyone other than the student, teacher or principal. Generally, a substitute teacher should avoid comments about individual students that may convey private information. These conversations may include, but are not limited to, grades, medical conditions, learning problems or discipline problems.

## 8. Administering Medication

Medication should only be administered by the school nurse or other appropriate trained health personnel. **The substitute teacher should never administer medication.** If you learn of medical requirements of a student, the school health professional should be notified.

## 9. Anecdotal Records

Maintaining notes on particular incidents in the classroom can protect you in problematic situations. If you feel that a classroom occurrence might be questioned, note the date and time, the individuals involved, the choices for action you considered, and the actions taken.

## Working with Special Education Students

The Individuals with Disabilities Act was purposed to allow those students with disabilities to acquire the same level of education as students without disabilities. To achieve this, students are to be placed in the least restrictive environment and each student is required to have an individual education plan. This plan must be legally followed by all teachers in order to lead to substantive learning. The individual education plan is a plan that must be followed by the school, regular education teachers and special education teachers. If accommodations on the individual education plan are not made the school is liable for disciplinary and legal recourse.

According to the law, students must be placed in the least restrictive environment and should only be removed from the regular classroom if the disability is so severe that even with extra help in the classroom the student cannot learn. For substitute teachers, this means that you will have many students in your classroom who are classified as special education students and have an individual education plan.

When students on individual education plans are in the regular education classroom for their entire classroom learning this is called full-inclusion. Full-inclusion is based on the idea that if learning disabled students are not allowed to join the general school population they will be missing out on the same education as those in the mainstream. Further, there may be a stigma associated with them for attending special classes and they will never really feel as though they are part of the school. Finally, when special education students are included in the regular classroom the regular education students have the opportunity to see special needs students as part of their class. When this becomes the norm, the hope is that there will be less prejudice against special education students.

All students are equal in “worth” but all students are certainly not the same. The individual education plan is a legal document that will guide how the teacher makes accommodations for a student with special needs. Making an accommodation for special needs students means changing the way you teach to them, not changing the expectations of what students are supposed to learn in class. Often the substitute teacher will need help in understanding or completing an accommodation. It is important that substitute regular education teachers do their best, ask for help if necessary, and document student progress. Schools and educators are held accountable to meeting the individual education plan.

One of the significant hurdles for a substitute teacher in a new position is understanding the educational jargon. There are many acronyms associated with special education that will be helpful for you to know.

The following are some of the most common acronyms and their meanings:

IEP: Individual Education Plan

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

LRE: Least Restrictive Environment

LD: Learning Disabled

ESE: Exceptional Student Education

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

ESL: English as a Second Language

ELL: English Language Learners

LEP: Limited-English Proficient

FAPE: Free Appropriate Public Education

ADD/ADHD: Attention Deficit Disorder / Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder

By knowing a little bit about the students and their diverse needs, you will be able to make appropriate adaptations throughout the day. It will be necessary to make adaptations for students with special needs, especially when they participate in the general education classroom. Making adaptations and accommodations for students with disabilities does not need to be difficult. Remember that students with disabilities already know their capabilities and limits. Your job is to encourage them and be ready to assist them as is necessary. **Focus on what a student can do.** Depending on the lesson plan or guidelines provided by the permanent teacher, it may be acceptable to modify assignments or activity for the whole group. Keep the assignment as similar to the rest of the class as possible.



Ideas for adapting lessons and assignments:

- Reduce the number of pages or questions
- Reduce the difficulty of activities and assignments
- Read aloud; use overheads; move the desk space for better hearing, seeing and monitoring; speak slowly; speak louder; repeat, rephrase, and redirect instructions and questions.
- Increase confidence, compassion, and cooperation by reinforcing success.
- Use a lot of examples.
- Model, review, and practice.
- Be patient and smile.
- Provide breaks between tasks and assignments.
- Break a large task into several smaller tasks.

In your assignments you will work with a variety of special education students. Listed below are the general categories for disabilities and some general thoughts on what is needed with each group:

## **Learning Disabled:**

Generally, students with learning disabilities have deficits affecting one or more of the following

- Information Processing (input and output of language)
- Perception (distinguishing letters, numbers, and symbols), memory (auditory or visual)
- Attention (distractibility). These students may have problems in reading, writing, spelling, math, listening, or speaking.

They do not learn at expected rates and may become frustrated, angry, or withdrawn.

When working with students with learning disabilities it is important to try and understand the student's frustration. Allow students more time to complete assignments and be patient. Teach lessons in small parts and combine auditory and visual information (say it and write it).

## **Autism**

Autism is a variable developmental disorder that is characterized by:

- Impairment of the ability to form normal social relationships.
- Impairment of the ability to communicate with others
- Stereotyped behavior patterns.

Autism can affect language, measured intelligence, rate of development, and responses to people, events, and objects. Autism affects each person differently and its characteristics can fall anywhere on a spectrum that ranges from mild to severe. Students with autism may not communicate or socialize in typical ways. They may also preoccupy themselves with objects or items that seem unimportant. You might see other behaviors such as body rocking, head banging, unusual and repetitive hand movements, uncommon posturing, or repeated speech.

When working with students with Autism they need explicit assistance in identifying cues for social occasions and responding in ways considered appropriate by others. When interacting with students with autism, use the communication system they use. Many students with autism require a very structured classroom, clear expectations, fast-paced instruction and positive consequences for acceptable behavior. Keep classroom activities as regular and predictable as possible.

## Emotional Disorders

Students with an emotional disorder may display a range of behaviors different from those expected in classrooms. The behaviors may include aggression, violence, verbal threats, destruction of property, seeking attention inappropriately, tantrums, hyperactivity, compulsiveness, impulsiveness, irritability, or withdrawal. Students with an emotional disorder seem to be unable to control their behavior. They may appear to have poor memory, a short attention span, and a poor image of themselves.

When working with students who have an emotional disorder, provide genuine praise for their success. Point out the student's success so he/she can build his/her self-esteem. Make expectations small and achievable. Maintain trust by making eye contact, talking in a straightforward way, and listening carefully.

## Working with Gifted and Talented Students

As a substitute teacher, your classroom will not only have special education students. There will also be some students who have been given the label of “Gifted and Talented.” Gifted and talented students are characterized as:

- Having above average ability.
- A high level of task commitment.
- Very highly developed creativity.

Many of your students will excel in one of these three areas. However, to be classified as a gifted student, the child will excel in all three areas.

Often gifted students seem to be square pegs in a round hole. They do not easily fit the mold of an “ideal student.” They may become bored with class or deeply involved with something unrelated to the lesson. Their friendships and alliances include a need for intellectual peers and chronological peers. The average gifted student’s attention span does not always coincide with the standard time allotment for classroom lessons and activities.

When working with gifted and talented students substitutes should do enrichment and extension activities. Likewise, alternate projects, comparisons, similes, and analogies are good learning activities. Often these students enjoy challenging puzzles and games. It is important that you don’t make them do things that they’ve already done, give them busywork if they finish early or force them to work with slower students. If a gifted student is pulled out for gifted service, they should not be held accountable for the material taught in the regular classroom while they were at gifted and talented class.

## Working with Multicultural Students

At present time, the United States of America is home to a very diverse population. No other nation enjoys the rich and varied cultural heritage found within our country. Since this diversity is reflected in our schools, it only makes sense that our instructional methods should benefit from and be sensitive to the special abilities and needs of people from different groups.

Generally substitutes will experience three types of multicultural diversity:

- **Ethnic Diversity:** Similarities and differences of groups of people classified according to common traits, values and heritage. Examples may include food, clothing, music, and rituals.
- **Racial Diversity:** Similarities and differences of groups of individuals with certain features. These features may include skin color, body type, and facial features.
- **Cultural Diversity:** Similarities and differences of groups and individuals that align themselves with others based on common racial and/or ethnic characteristics or affiliations. Typical associations often include language, customs, and beliefs.

In order to make your classroom multicultural friendly here is a list of things you can do:

- Use local role models from various groups as guest speakers and advisors.
- Plan activities that incorporate materials/objects that reflect various customs and cultures.
- Discuss various groups' heritage, values, and practices
- Honor each student's unique background/heritage and how it enhances society's characteristics.
- Encourage discussion of current topics and how they relate to various groups within our society.
- Present stories and/or artifacts from different groups as a basis for various activities.
- Write stories, sing songs, draw pictures, or play games depicting various cultural influences.
- Showcase different groups' contributions and/or participation involving historical events, literacy works, art, music, medicine, sports, and industry.

## The Top 3% of Substitutes – Interview Questions

The school district I work with employs at least 300 substitute teachers each year to cover all of our staff absences. The following substitutes were selected by myself as teachers who I felt were in the top 3% of all substitutes based on their staff evaluations. Their viewpoints are all a bit different. Their methods are all unique. Reading their responses may help you determine how you can best be successful.

Mr. Jeff Zupp

The Questions:

### **1. What do you do when you arrive at the school in the morning? Are there specific things you look for?**

The first thing I do is of course check in with the office and then look for a lesson plan. I check it over completely so I have a full understanding of what is expected and how I need to present it. No way should a sub wait until the bell rings before having a complete understanding of the plan. I often arrive before the required check in time to make sure I have enough time to review. If I have a question, I seek out input from other department members.



## **2. How do you build relationships with other teachers in the school?**

I interact with other teachers whenever the opportunity presents itself. I also follow up with teachers I have covered for and ask for their input on how I did. You would be surprised by how many subs do not do that. Some teachers are amazed that I take the time to follow up and have told me no one has ever done that before. It shows them that I take the assignment seriously and want to do a great job. Those teachers in turn tell other teachers of my dedication/concern and soon they are asking for me too. I am on many teachers preferred list due to other teacher input and my dedication. I also follow the lesson plan so they can pick up where I left off when they return. Being social studies certified helps when I get a social studies assignment. They have faith that I can teach the subject or at least answer questions. I know that is a major reason that both Mark McCort and Scott DiMauro request me. But the bottom line is teachers trust me and it helps build relationships with them as well as open opportunities with other teachers. I really appreciate it when I am requested and I know the teachers feel better knowing I am covering their classes. Even if I know little of the subject matter, such as Physics, the teacher knows I will accomplish what they want while they are out.

### **3. What is your classroom management plan for the day? Is there anything specific that you've found that works?**

I start with the lesson plan and work from there. But, my overall management plan piggy backs on my management style. I am FLEXIBLE!! I don't go in being a disciplinarian and lay down the law. I make the point that there is work to be done and if we all work together, it will be a good class. I interact with the students and am straight forward with them; that is critical. They have to believe you care and are not afraid to be "involved". I also try to learn their names, which is not easy since you may or may not see the students for long periods of time, either in that class or another one. But when you can see a student in the hall or even at a restaurant and call them by name, I can't tell you how positively they respond. I demonstrate that I have a sense of humor when it is appropriate and that usually helps build a sense of mutual respect. Of course, I have a build in advantage with my last name. Kids take it from Zupp to "whass up?" That helps set the tone for a relaxed atmosphere.

### **4. How do you deal with difficult students?**

I have had very few disciplinary problems. I think being male is a big advantage. If there is a problem or difficult student, I always respect the individual and deal with them one on one and don't embarrass them in front of their classmates. If there is a general problem affecting the entire class, such as continual talking, I usually tell them something along the line of "I am usually very easy to get along with as long as everyone observes the rules. If you don't observe the rules, then I will make a report to your teacher and he or she will take appropriate action when they return. That usually takes care of it; but like I said, those situations are far and few between.

### **5. If the teacher's plans are less than complete, how do you handle the time?**

This is a sub's worst nightmare. This happens often. I usually will ask if there are any questions on what we have covered and use the time to answer their questions and if I can't, I get input from other students. If there is still time, I suggest that they use the time to study or work on homework. I also usually tell them that if they use the time wisely, I will give them the last 5 minutes of class to talk. That has been a great carrot for me and the students, for the most part, stay on task.

### **6. If you have a "bag of tricks" what are they?**

I don't know if I really have a bag of tricks other than some of the methods I have mentioned above. It also depends on what grade level I teach. I am certified 7-12 and spend most of my time in this range. However, I have covered elementary and even kindergarten. That is a whole other animal. But what I find consistent throughout is to be involved and interacting with the students. If you take an interest, the kids will respond. Even if the assignment is for them to spend the period reading the next chapter, I will also read it and ask if they have questions. I think kids appreciate that. I know, for example, I have covered ceramics classes at Kilbourne on several occasions. The teachers have told me the kids enjoy it when I am there because I take the time to talk with them about their projects while other subs do not. Bottom line, I think my best "trick" is simply to interact with the students so they believe you care—even in a kindergarten class.

**7. Is there something that you think makes/made you successful as a substitute?**

I think pretty much everything I have mentioned above. To summarize, I would say: confidence, know the lesson plan, teach the lesson plan, learn as many kid's names as possible, and especially flexibility, interaction and involvement. Let me also add that I had several seniors ask if I was coming to graduation this year. While I could not make both graduation ceremonies, I did make it to Thomas' program. I saw some of the kids and they could not believe I came and really appreciated that. I have no doubt that if we see each other on the street that they will not hesitate to say hello.

**8. Is there a resource that you consistently used for help?**

While I have only returned to teaching in a classroom in 2002, I have taught snow skiing for over 25 years. I am a certified instructor with the PSIA. The classroom site may be different, but the objective is the same. You want to teach the subject, but you want to make it fun and interesting. I also try to put myself in the student's place and ask if I think I would say I did a good job if I was a student. I stay flexible so I can change directions in mid-stream. Trust me, when you are teaching a group of 10 people to ski, you have to think on your feet because they all learn differently.

**9. If you were to give future substitute teachers advice, what would it be?**

Be confident. Be flexible. Follow the lesson plan. Interact. Show you care. Don't lose your cool

Ms. Lisa Chenko

The Questions:

**1. What do you do when you arrive at the school in the morning? Are there specific things you look for?**

When I arrive at a school in the morning and enter the classroom that I will be teaching in for that day, I will start by reading the teacher's note from beginning to end, writing notes or questions, and highlighting what I feel is important. I always look for all the materials I will need to teach that day and I place books and materials in strategic spots in the classroom where I will need them for instruction. I then, introduce myself to my team teacher(s) for the day. Lastly, I write "Good Morning! 😊 My name is Miss Chenko," on the board.

**2. How do you build relationships with other teachers in the school?**

I always introduce myself to the other team teachers of the grade that I am teaching that day. I always eat in the teacher's lounge and contribute to the conversation at my table. I usually introduce myself to any other employee that I talk with that day including the support or custodial staff.

### **3. What is your classroom management plan for the day? Is there anything specific that you've found that works?**

I begin each new day with a story that about my pugs that most students will relate to and in turn, they will want to share their dog or pet stories. I will take time to listen to their stories and that helps me build temporary rapport for the day. I actually bring a “Webkin” pug with me to every classroom. The students will remember the pug if you return on another day.

When a teacher leaves a classroom management plan, I follow that plan exactly. If the teacher does not leave a plan, I use my best judgment and use my personal classroom management plan.

### **4. How do you deal with difficult students?**

I always talk to a difficult student in private so no other student can hear what I am saying to him/her. I talk in a calm, firm voice and tell the student what he or she is doing is not acceptable and what will be the consequence if the behavior continues. Always follow through with the consequence.

### **5. If the teacher's plans are less than complete, how do you handle the time?**

I have many educational games with me in my teacher bag of tricks. I created a game based on the television show “Are you smarter than a 5<sup>th</sup> grader?” My classroom version is called “Are you smarter than a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader?” since I was substitute teaching in the elementary schools (If you want me to type out all the rules to the classroom version of this game, let me know). You use 2<sup>nd</sup> grade BrainQuest for questions. Another fun educational game that most students already know how to play is Sparkle. For Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade, I usually pick a picture book to read or sing songs.

**6. If you have a "bag of tricks" what are they?**

I used the checklist that Worthington provided all substitute teachers at orientation. In addition, I always had my 2<sup>nd</sup> grade BrainQuest, my pug webkin, and stickers (for winner of educational games).

**7. Is there something that you think makes/made you successful as a substitute?**

First of all, I love to teach and work with young children. I easily develop rapport with students. I am also flexible.

**8. Is there a resource that you consistently used for help?**

I really didn't use any one resource. I used the school's resources when I needed to come up with a lesson last minute. I used the internet to find lessons last minute as well during the planning period.

**9. If you were to give future substitute teachers advice, what would it be?**

The quality of your experience in each classroom has a lot to do with your attitude.

Ms. Amanda Perry

**1. What do you do when you arrive at the school in the morning? Are there specific things you look for?**

When I arrive at school in the morning, the first thing that I do is check in at the office. I meet with the secretaries and introduce myself. I try to make my face known around the building so I will have a familiar face. When in the classroom, the specific things that I look for are, lesson plans, the materials for all the lesson plans, and I want to make sure that I understand what I will be teaching that day. If I have any questions at all I will ask a teammate.

**2. How do you build relationships with other teachers in the school?**

I actually have built many relationships with teachers in the district and how I did this is just being myself. I would volunteer in the classes when I was an extra and get to know them. Each time that I would go and help or just pass in the hall and say hi helps build the relationship stronger. I am so happy that I am able to do so because I have met some very neat friends through doing this.



### **3. What is your classroom management plan for the day? Is there anything specific that you've found that works?**

There are a couple of classroom management techniques that I use as a sub on different grade levels. One that I have found that really works well is a game which uses tallies. One team is me, the sub, and the other is the class. The sub will earn tallies if the class has disruptive behavior, noisy, not on task, things like that. The class earns tallies for working quietly, coming in the class orderly, good behavior, etc. If the class at the end of the day has more tallies than the teacher they win a prize, say a piece of candy. This seems to work well with the grades k - 6.

### **4. How do you deal with difficult students?**

Difficult students can be challenging, but what I have found is making sure the class knows my expectations before hand and what the consequences will be if not met. Usually in the elementary grades I will talk with them one on one in the hall for a warning, and if it persists, I will give name to teacher and explain what was going on. I will sometimes follow up with teacher and find what works best for him or her for that student. This way when I come in the next time the student will know that they cannot "walk" all over me as a sub.

### **5. If the teacher's plans are less than complete, how do you handle the time?**

As a sub you always need to have time fillers. Maybe it is a game or something as easy as silent reading. Always being prepared to fill in with extras is very important as a sub.

**6. If you have a "bag of tricks" what are they?**

My "big bag of tricks" usually consist of spelling sparkle, math games (around the world), an assortment of books where I could make copies of pages when need be.

**7. Is there something that you think makes/made you successful as a substitute?**

I feel that my determination, willingness, and being able to work on the fly have given me great success to being a substitute. I am always on time to where I need to be, I am very flexible at going to another school if need be and I have an open personality which fits in with many teachers and administrators.

**8. Is there a resource that you consistently used for help?**

A great resource is someone that the teacher you are subbing for works with. They are always the most helpful. They want to make sure that their colleagues classroom is in great hands and would be willing to help with anything. I found this to be the best.

**9. If you were to give future substitute teachers advice, what would it be?**

The best advice that I could give would be, ITS OK TO ASK QUESTIONS. I feel that some subs are nervous to ask questions because they think they will get their head bitten off. Teachers are there to help and as some might not be willing, there is ALWAYS someone willing to help you if you need it. We are in a profession where we do not work alone.

Mrs. Judy Nasar

The Questions:

**1. What do you do when you arrive at the school in the morning? Are there specific things you look for?**

First I arrive on time or early because it takes time to read the plans and find the items referred to in the plans.

I look for all materials referenced in the plans and the class schedule.

**2. How do you build relationships with other teachers in the school?**

I try to be friendly and helpful and thank them if they help with my day.

**3. What is your classroom management plan for the day? Is there anything specific that you've found that works?**

Most teachers in Worthington share their classroom management plans and I try to stay with that unless it does not work for me. When it doesn't work I give the student a warning first then have them explain to their teacher in writing why they did not follow classroom rules. Then if this doesn't work, I take 5 minutes of recess for each infraction. I also make it clear that I will be reporting the class behavior to their teacher.

**4. How do you deal with difficult students?**

I don't sweat the small stuff with these students. I'm there for a day so my goal is to keep the class safe, on schedule and participating in meaningful activities. Let the student know very firmly there is no tolerance for unsafe behavior. Set expectation that they must respect safety rules and others. Try to get them to complete their work but this is not my priority for these kids. Follow the teacher's suggestions for dealing with these students. In Worthington teachers leave what has worked for them with difficult students and usually these methods work.

**5. If the teacher's plans are less than complete, how do you handle the time?**

I continue on with the lessons. Review ..... Sparkle for spelling; math fact reviews. Math games; like I'm thinking of a number and give a clue odd or place value, etc. Someone in the class usually shares what they were doing prior to the teacher's absence.

**6. If you have a "bag of tricks" what are they?**

I bring one book. I have a pack of cards with "Where in the World" questions that includes clues. The kids try to guess the place after a few clues. Most students of all ages like these. I use it for fillers while we wait for the buses in the PM or if we finish early.

**7. Is there something that you think makes/made you successful as a substitute?**

I try to be human, follow the teacher's plans, and respect the students.

I listen to the students and ask for their help. I tell them 1<sup>st</sup> thing that I will need their help.

**8. Is there a resource that you consistently used for help?**

Not really, I listen to the team teachers and the students. These resources know the teacher and how he/she runs their classroom. I try to keep the routine as much as possible the same but change if it does not work for me.

**9. If you were to give future substitute teachers advice, what would it be?**

Don't sweat the small stuff; you are there for 1 day and will not change the world but do your best. Follow the teacher's plans or explain why you did not. Enjoy the students, arrive early if possible. It really makes a difference if you have adequate time to read through the plans and have time to understand the subject and the activities. Get the class places on time. Stay with the class until all are settled at specials, etc. Make sure the room is left in good condition (as good as or better than you found it).

If the teacher leaves instructions for group or partner work, I may change this to individual depending on the class and the activity.

Ms. Melissa Nameth

**1. What do you do when you arrive at the school in the morning? Are there specific things you look for?**

When I get into the classroom, the first thing I do is look for the lesson plans. I quickly scan over them and then check to see where the materials are for each part of the day. Generally, most teachers have them organized by subject and/or different parts of the day, but if they don't seem organized, I organize all the materials according to when I'll need them. Then I read through the plans more carefully, concentrating on the parts before the first break (recess, end of the period, etc.) when I will have time to look through later parts. Also, if things are missing (books, etc.) I try and find them in the room or ask one of the other grade-level teachers.

**2. How do you build relationships with other teachers in the school?**

I always try and introduce myself to at least the other teachers in the same grade level if I'm subbing in elementary school, as well as teachers with whom I have duty. While I was in long-term, I found that I built the strongest relationships with the teachers I ate lunch with every day because I got to know them the best. I also tried to talk to all the regular classroom teachers whose students I worked with at least twice a week (or more, depending on the students' needs) to touch base about what they were doing in the classroom and how I could help support that in ESL.

### **3. What is your classroom management plan for the day? Is there anything specific that you've found that works?**

I try as best I can to reinforce the regular teacher's classroom management plan. Most teachers are very good at describing how their discipline system works, and they generally leave a note about who to look out for that often has behavior issues. One thing I've found to work is to not be afraid to use the classroom management consequences. If kids are not behaving appropriately in the classroom I will "move them to yellow" or whatever the behavior ladder in that room is, and I try not to be too concerned with whether the students like me. It's difficult for most people, because we all want everyone to have a great day at school, but if the kids get out of control then no one can have a good day!

### **4. How do you deal with difficult students?**

I use the regular teacher's behavior management plan, but I also try and pull kids aside if they're having a really difficult time and talk to them about why they are having difficulty behaving appropriately. Sometimes kids have special needs that aren't necessarily obvious and the regular classroom teacher does little things to help keep them on track, like sending them on errands so they can get up and move around. Also if the students can tell me what they're having a difficult time with, I can try and figure out a way to help them instead of getting them in trouble for something that they might not be able to control. For other students where that is not the case, I still talk with them and try to figure out ways to help them, but I remain firm with the consequences I've set forth. For younger kids, it might mean missing a few minutes of recess, for older kids it's usually writing down their names and the regular teachers giving them detentions when they return to school.

**5. If the teachers plans are less than complete, how do you handle the time?**

I look for good books in the room and read-aloud to fill in extra time. Many elementary teachers read aloud from chapter books at a certain time of the day, and unless they specifically state not to read more than one chapter, I sometimes read more out of those. I've also filled in time with math games (around the world or math games from Everyday Math) or quick writing prompts. When I'm in middle school and high school and there is extra time, I let the kids work quietly on their homework or work from other classes.

**6. If you have a "bag of tricks" what are they?**

I'm really good at learning students' names, which is extremely helpful! Whenever you can call everyone by name, it shows the kids that you care more and makes it much easier to communicate.



**7. Is there something that you think makes/made you successful as a substitute?**

I follow the teacher's lesson plans as closely as possible. Unless something is really not working and the students are getting out of control, it's not my job to decide whether or not I think it's a "good lesson" because it probably fits into the larger unit the teacher is working on. Also, teachers don't always know what age the substitute will be certified for, so the plans need to be something that people of all backgrounds can implement. I also leave very detailed and honest notes about how the day went. I include any problems that occurred during each subject, what went really well, who the good helpers were, who I had problems with, why, and what I did to help correct their behavior. I know I will appreciate honest notes from subs when I have my own classroom, so that's what I do.

**8. Is there a resource that you consistently used for help?**

Not really.

**9. If you were to give future substitute teachers advice, what would it be?**

Stay positive! Some days will be completely awful, but so many more will be a lot of fun and you will have a wonderful experience. Try to keep all those good days in mind when you get a tough group or less than ideal plans. If you plan on having your own classroom, take notes about things you like or don't like, and even if you think you know exactly what you want your room to be like, keep an open mind. There are a lot of amazing teachers that we can learn from while subbing!

Mr. Russell Hall

**1. What do you do when you arrive at the school in the morning? Are there specific things you look for?**

I find the lesson plans and the materials for the lessons first. I check for Duties and see if I have any questions. If I do, I ask the teacher at this point. I try to run through the day, especially if I am traveling from room to room so I know where the students come from and where they go after class. I also let the students take the lead after this, especially at the elementary level. I also look around the room noting what is on the walls, what they are studying. I also find the emergency procedures and make sure I know where the fire exit is as well as the tornado safe zone.

**2. How do you build relationships with other teachers in the school?**

Overall politeness with staff, volunteers and students is important. I am acting as a guest in the school. I ask questions if I do not understand things or if I want to make sure that I match the style of the teacher so that the students can ease into the day with me more easily. I make connections and try to remember names and faces. When I come to schools where I have subbed before, I try to go back to the teachers and introduce myself to them, telling them that I subbed for them. I ask them if everything was to their satisfaction and make sure they have no further questions for me after their return.

### **3. What is your classroom management plan for the day? Is there anything specific that you've found that works?**

If I have never been in a school before, I watch while the students unpack, or are in the halls. I introduce myself as I am Mr. Hall as in Taj Mahal, Study hall, and if I think the class may need some extra discipline, Detention Hall. This is used on Middle and High School levels and gets the students to remember my name and gets them to remember my style of teaching so that I can do more teaching on subsequent days when I sub. When having discussions I know that students are going to have tangents, so I provide the tangents taking the whole class off task for a brief moment, followed by my moving us back into the discussion so that the students do not gain control of the situation and steer us too far off course. When Issues do arise, I begin a sort of classroom forum where we discuss the situation and put it into broader tones and make a teachable moment out of it. I had some racist comments made, more in jest than anything and I discussed with the student that as a stranger in their classroom, I may take offense to those comments because I may have members of my family or good friends who are of different ethnicities. The students reacted so well to being taught and being able to discuss these issues that the students apologized after and the rapport with the students was incredible afterwards. The only other things I have found is telling students that as a sub, I am a "Professional Tattle Tale, I tell the good, the bad, the strange, and the really wonderful." The classroom is still the teacher's and he or she will make the final decision. If things are difficult, I remind the students of this and ask if they would think their teacher would be pleased by their behavior. This subtle reminder works well in Elementary School, and even a little in Middle Schools. My voice will also be used. I deepen it when I need to "Yell", but I prefer only to yell in emergency situations where safety is

involved and the students pay attention right away because they have not heard me yell, ever.

#### **4. How do you deal with difficult students?**

I use my teacher stare. I also use teachable moments for the class and try to redirect things this way. If there is a situation with one student, I will send the student out into the hall. I first ask what happened to get them to go outside of the classroom. I then ask the student what they would do differently. For more minor things I give a warning, for the more serious things I tell the student that I will be telling the teacher in my note. I try to listen to the students and ask questions so that the student knows that I am interested in what is happening and let them then see things through the teacher perspective. This is a great exercise because it gets students to think outside of themselves. It works many times but not always. Only in cases of fighting, or severe disruption do I use the office. I will first use a teacher I met that morning if I need any help getting the students focused on the lesson rather than their behavior.

## **5. If the teacher's plans are less than complete, how do you handle the time?**

If the lesson has been taught and will not work, I seek the help of another teacher, or the librarian, giving them the topic and finding another activity to do. If we simply run out of lesson before the class is over, I will do more explanations if I feel comfortable with the material. I will also give time to work on things for other classes, or for the class that is working then. I will sometimes use a game to fill time. Other times, I will begin teaching from some current event or thing that I have with me. I have Hard Rock Guitars on my bag so I sometimes talk about them. On Elementary Levels, I will sometimes tell the students That I have traveled to five countries and have them guess which ones by writing on the board during the course of the day. Near the end of that day, I will answer questions about the different trips. Elementary Kids love this. High School kids I tell them to work using Air Quotes so that if they choose to talk, the students nearby who wish to work can get their things done. I do not allow sleeping because I do not want students to drool on the desk. I tell them it is a health hazard. The sarcasm I use only with Middle and High School Levels when I have heard it from the students first. I make the Sarcasm not targeted at individuals but rather at social norms such as the No Talking rules. I choose my battles and talking when I can not hear the conversations is not a battle that is usually worth fighting.

## **6. If you have a "bag of tricks" what are they?**

Other than the tricks listed above, I use my French a lot. When students are not listening, I give the instructions in French. This gets their attention very quickly. I let my teaching persona come out and it is usually a little off the wall such as at Kilbourne, They have a buzzer in lieu of a bell. When it rings I say "Okay either the Aliens have landed or that sound means classes have started. First I am going to mispronounce your names, I am sorry, and then we will go from there". When Giving instructions, at the end I ask Any comments Questions Queries, or Conundrums. They always ask what Conundrums are. This personality is a bit off the wall but it holds students attention and works well on Middle and High Level I NEVER use this in elementary school with the possible exception of Sixth grade near the end of the year where they have become more middle school than Elementary School.

## **7. Is there something that you think makes/made you successful as a substitute?**

I am flexible, I do not say no to things because I see my job as being able to do a variety of things. By also being myself, I become more comfortable and do my job easier. Being open to new things and going with the flow much of the time with lesson plans and changes in schedules has made me successful.

## **8. Is there a resource that you consistently used for help?**

I consistently use other teachers in the building because they know the students better than I know them.

## **9. If you were to give future substitute teachers advice, what would it be?**

Be yourself as a teacher. Let your own style come out instead of trying to be an imitation of their usually teacher. This does not work for me because I can only be myself. I also go with the flow as far as changes in the schedule, lesson plans or knowing what works and what does not. For Notes, I try to type them during the day on a computer in the room. This lets me change them if I need to, when things change, It also makes a neat printout for the teacher the following day. It is more professional and I do not need to worry about them being able to read it clearly. I also leave my telephone number and name so the teachers can begin to know me. If possible meet the teachers you have subbed for in the past and asking for feedback on your day and your performance.

### **Ms. Kelli Bannen**

#### **1. What do you do when you arrive at the school in the morning? Are there specific things you look for?**

When I get to a school I always check in at the office and make sure that they know that I am there and to see if there is any changes made with your assignment. If I do not know where the classroom is, the secretaries are really good at pointing you in the direction to go. Once I get to the room I look on the desk or table for lesson plans. They are usually on the desk or a main table. I always introduce myself to the teachers around me and ask them any questions that I have about the lesson plans or the day. If you cannot find the plans they are the first people to ask. I also try to check the teacher's mailbox a few times during the day for anything that might need sent home. I try to familiarize myself with the room so I know where things

are and review the lesson plans to make sure they make sense so I can ask a collaborating teacher if something is not clear and that I can locate all of the materials that I will need throughout the day. I figure out where the nearest bathroom is and the teacher's lounge. I also locate the emergency procedures so that I knew what to do in case of emergency.

## **2. How do you build relationships with other teachers in the school?**

I introduce myself to other teachers and sit with them at lunch. I offer to help them out with things they may need during my planning period or any other free time.

## **3. What is your classroom management plan for the day? Is there anything specific that you've found that works?**

I always introduce myself to the class and establish the rules. I make sure I tell students that the day may be a little different from when their teacher is there but that we are going to be flexible and have a fun day. I do my best to learn their names.

## **4. How do you deal with difficult students?**

Most of the time teachers leave their discipline procedures in their sub plans, which is helpful to you. If you try to stay with the regular teacher's discipline plan it usually works the best. Before you start substituting figure out your own plan as well and what works for you just in case what is written doesn't work. I usually just try to keep the students engaged and I haven't ran into many difficult students. If there is a major issue discuss it with the teachers next door.



**5. If the teacher's plans are less than complete, how do you handle the time?**

First of all, this rarely happens. If it does I have a notebook full of ideas for different grade levels. I tab them based on subject and grade level and I refer to them if I run out of things to do. In the notebook I wrote different games and activities that are educational for the class to do or play. For example, if it was a third grade math class I might have different multiplication game ideas listed.

**6. If you have a "bag of tricks" what are they?**

I always bring flash cards, a whistle, a jacket, Kleenex, office supplies, brain quest questions, my notebook full of ideas to do, dice, a soft ball (for certain learning games), a water bottle and a snack.

**7. Is there something that you think makes/made you successful as a substitute?**

I think going into each assignment, even if it is not your certification or your favorite school, you should go in with a positive attitude and have fun with it. I loved going into the different schools and meeting many different teachers. This will also benefit you because they can help give you ideas in the classroom.

**8. Is there a resource that you consistently used for help?**

I talk to teachers that I know and teachers that are around me if I need help. I sometimes look up ideas on different websites and in mailbox books.

**9. If you were to give future substitute teachers advice, what would it be?**

I would tell them to be flexible and to have fun with it. That is what I did and I had a blast. Be positive and if you have a bad day, tomorrow is a new day.

Mrs. Aimee Little

The Questions:

**1. What do you do when you arrive at the school in the morning? Are there specific things you look for?**

When I arrive at a school in the morning, the first thing I look for is the lesson plans. I like to read through the entire day. As I am looking over the lessons for the day, I locate the materials I will need. I like to put my materials in order, organizing them from first lesson to last lesson, I have found that this strategy keeps transitions smooth from lesson to lesson. Another part of my morning routine is walking around the room, exploring the classroom setup. I like knowing where certain materials are located, discipline charts, mailbox's and I walk around the desks in the room looking for nametags. Before the students come into class, I always introduce myself to the cooperating teachers and then I am ready to greet the students at the door.

**2. How do you build relationships with other teachers in the school?**

I try to introduce myself to as many teachers as I can within the schools I substitute in. By introducing myself to other cooperating teachers with whom I'm teaching constructs a relationship between them and I. When I go back to that

schools and see those teachers I will be able to say hello and greet them by name. I like to keep records of the teachers I encounter; there are many names that I need to try to remember. I gather staff lists off school websites and keep them with me, it helps me remember the names I put with the faces I meet.

Eating lunch in the teacher lounge is another place to connect and get to know other teachers in other grades. This is where I have met and gotten to know many of the teachers I have substituted for.

### **3. What is your classroom management plan for the day? Is there anything specific that you've found that works?**

Every classroom is different and provides different challenges. With the younger grades (Kindergarten, First, Second) I find it helpful to follow the classroom management plan already set by the teacher. The younger children do not react well to a lot of change so I try to follow the regular teacher's directions as much as possible. I also find if I have the confidence to run the class as if it is my own the students respond in a positive way. It also makes the day run smooth with fewer problems.

### **4. How do you deal with difficult students?**

I try to talk with the students and explain that I understand the routine is different today. By trying to talk with the student and figure out if there is a way to make them feel more comfortable is the first step. I will leave a note for the teacher to let them know if I have had any trouble with any students. I have found the teachers are very good about dealing with difficult students. Students do not like having their names left behind and if they understand you will leave a list, they usually begin to follow the classroom rules again. If they become really

out of hand and disruptive, I call the office and have them taken down.

**5. If the teachers plans are less than complete, how do you handle the time?**

I have been left with time to fill when I sub in a classroom; I keep a few strategies in the back of my head for those times. I always have a fun and educational game or two ready to pull out when I need to fill some time. I have also used the cooperating teachers in the corresponding grades. Many times those teachers have activities that they can contribute to fill time, this is a good strategy because the activities are usually in line with what the students are learning at the time.

**6. If you have a "bag of tricks" what are they?**

I have an index card organizer full of extra activities for those "just in case" times. "The Number Game" is a game I use for kindergarten to second graders. It is a great way to practice counting by 5's, 10's and even 3's. I love "Sparkle" for the older grades. This game is great for spelling practice. I also have a number of fun writing prompts and group games that I keep on hand.

**7. Is there something that you thinks makes/made you successful as a substitute?**

I think my confidence and energetic attitude towards learning and the school day makes me a successful substitute. When students see that I am happy to be with them, it creates a respectful relationship between the students and me. I also make sure that I am prepared and know what I am teaching as much as possible. This helps me teach successful lessons.

**8. Is there a resource that you consistently used for help?**

One resource that I consistently use for help is other teachers and even substitutes. I find these are two of the most valuable resources I have. Through teachers, I have learned many new tricks of the trade in teaching lessons and transitional activities. Talking to other substitutes creates opportunities to share ideas and strategies. There are many online resources available for substitutes that are always useful!

**9. If you were to give future substitute teachers advice, what would it be?**

Always be prepared. Have a bag with you that contain a few picture books, markers, pencils, pens, activities and games. Keep a journal with you to write down ideas that you see in the classroom. You will see many strategies and ideas to use in your classroom someday, write down the ideas as you see them. The greatest resource you can have is fellow teachers, use the time you have substituting to feel out strategies that work for you and ideas you want to hold on to.

Mrs. Ann Elder

The Questions:

**1. What do you do when you arrive in the morning? Are there specific things you look for?**

The first thing I do when I arrive is greet my teammates to let them know I am the substitute for the day. I like to introduce myself and know who I am working with, especially if I have questions about the day before the children arrive. It's also

important that they know I have arrived and their teammate is covered for the day. As I walk into the classroom I quickly look for and observe the set up of the classroom such as location of the teacher's desk, schedule of the day chart, seating arrangement, children's name tags, board work, discipline plans, materials and computers. Noticing these things give me an idea of the teacher's routines projects the children are working on and what they are learning for that week. Next I locate and read the teacher's plans. As I study the plans, I make quick observations of the room set-up and how I can best carry out the lessons using the materials available. Teachers often leave names of children who have special needs, so I make sure I know exactly where they sit so I can be ready to help when needed. If I don't have time to finish studying the plans before the teacher's arrive, I quickly skim the pages to look for important notes and schedules. No matter what, I always make sure that when the bell rings and the children are arriving, I am ready to greet them. I have found giving them my full attention those first minutes of the day is so important and makes them feel comfortable with this new person in their classroom. It's amazing how much I can learn just by greeting and observing them as they unpack their bags, turn in work and prepare for the day.

## **2. How do you build relationships with other teachers in the building?**

I am fortunate to have taught and worked with many teachers in Worthington Schools for 20 years and have developed wonderful friendships. I build relationships by always introducing myself to new teachers whether it's in the hall or at lunch, sharing with them my experiences and letting them know that I am here to help. When I know assignments in advance, I make arrangements to meet with teachers and

possibly go over plans, or just to get to know them and learn their teaching style so I can be successful in their classroom. Teachers so appreciate any extra help they can get, so when I have free time during the day, I always volunteer to do anything I can to make their day easier, whether it's grading papers, working with individual students, or doing a bulletin board.

### **3. What is your classroom management plan for the day? Is there anything specific that you've found that works?**

I always stick with the discipline plan the teacher has laid out. I want children to have a normal day, so learning continues just as if their teacher were there. When I introduce myself, I tell them I may not do things exactly like their teacher but I'm depending on them to do their best and help me in every way they can. I tell them we will work as a team and I use "T.E.A.M." meaning, "Together Everyone Achieves More." In addition, I use a reward system, "Are you a STAR class?" In primary grades children earn stars when I see or hear good things happening and they are following the rules. The older children also love this, believe it or not, but they may earn tallies rather than stars. My goal is for them to earn 10 stars by the end of the day. This sometimes varies with classes and schedules. I remind them that their teacher is also depending on them to do their best and it's my job to report to her in a note at the end of the day. They always agree with me when I tell them that their teacher doesn't want to read their names in my note unless I am reporting really good things. And, of course, I tell them I will be sharing with him or her the number of stars or tallies they have earned. They all agree the more stars or tallies the better, because the truth is, no matter their age, they really want to please their teacher! If I have difficulty with students who aren't following the teacher's discipline plan, I work with them individually.

### **4. How do you deal with difficult students?**

I have found I learn so much about individual students by observing them as they arrive in the morning. Children that have special needs seem to stand out in those first few minutes, so I take mental notes of their names and where they sit. Teachers are so helpful and often leave detailed notes about children who need special attention. I also ask for help from teammates, office staff or depend on reliable students, the teacher has noted, for helpful suggestions on how their teacher works with these children. If in an emergency and I need immediate assistance, I send a reliable student for help or don't hesitate pushing the call button in the classroom. When a student is having difficulties, removing him or her from the situation, being a good listener, and helping them work through their problem is often the best strategy.

#### **5. If the teacher's plans are less than complete how do you handle the time?**

Substituting in Worthington Schools has been a wonderful experience and rarely have I gone into a classroom where the plans have been incomplete. However, there have been times when a teacher had an unexpected emergency, and I had to quickly create a lesson plan of my own using my own plans found in her plan book. In this case, I seek out teammates for help and even ask reliable students to help with the plans and schedule for the day. I sometimes grab a picture book from the library or ask the librarian for a book idea or video that relates to the units being studied. My goal is always to continue with the learning that the children have been doing on previous days and most importantly stick to their daily routine.



## **6. If you have a bag of tricks, what are they?**

Every day I carry a teacher bag full of markers, crayons, scissors, extra pencils, whistle, stickers, Worthington Schools badge as well as a large apple nametag (so staff and students can see my name at a distance) and a notebook that includes helpful pages of ideas, songs, websites, and games. My notebook includes staff and classroom rosters because it is very important to me to remember names of principals, teachers, substitutes and students I have worked with. In this notebook, I also keep a calendar of my substitute jobs, school calendar, a list of my schools' times, addresses and copies of my substitute teacher reports. This year I plan to add a packages of nametags to my bag...calling a student by his or her first name is important.

## **7. Is there something that you think makes or made you successful as a substitute?**

I feel my experience as a full-time teacher and many years as a substitute have helped make me successful. I approach every day as if these students are my own and do my best to help them feel safe and comfortable. I love to hear students say "you teach just like a real teacher" or ask, "why don't you have your own class?"

## **8. Is there a resource that you consistently use for help?**

There are many resources that I consistently use. The teachers I work with are my number one resource. They share a wealth of knowledge and materials with me every day I teach in their classrooms even if they are not present. I have files of ideas for units and teaching aids they have shared with me over the years that I refer to often. My other resources include the

books I have read that were suggested to me by teachers. Some of my favorites are:

Classroom Instruction That Works by Robert J. Marzano

The Power of Our Words *Teacher Language That Helps*

*Children Learn* by Paula Denton

Reading With Meaning by Debbie Miller

Strategies That Work by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis

Wondrous Words by Katie Wood Ray

**9. If you were to give future substitutes or teachers advice, what would it be?**

My advice for future substitutes is enjoy every day you are in a classroom, learn as much as you can, make it your own. Make new friends and get to know the teachers you are working with, they will be wonderful resources. Take notes, carry a camera and take photos, and ask for samples of successful ideas. Attend Worthington Schools' fall, winter and spring institutes or take advantage of classes offered by Worthington Schools to learn new educational strategies. Take on a long term position. Dress professionally, even on Fridays. Extend yourself to others when you find yourself in a classroom with little to do. At the end of your day, leave the classroom in better condition than you found it and write a detailed note to the teacher about your day. Be flexible! Make the most of every day!

## The Job Search

For some substitute teaching is a career. It can be rewarding, provide a flexible schedule and the opportunity to work in many different schools. For others substitute teaching is the first step towards a long career as a classroom teacher. If you are interested in finding a full-time teaching position please spend a few minutes reading this next section on the job search. If this does not interest you, skip this section and move to the interview's with actual substitute teachers who are doing a great job and making a positive difference.

### Completing Applications

Most school districts in the United States have gone totally paperless with their teacher application process. In some states it is possible to complete one application and have it go to all school districts. If you are interested in working in one of those states, you are extremely fortunate. In Ohio, each small school district requires their own application to be completed. It would be normal for a teaching candidate in our area to need to complete upwards of 30 different applications. The good news is that after you have completed a couple you have all the information you will need. The application process will not get you a teaching job. However, failure to complete the process will certainly disqualify you.

### Timing

Most school districts will hire a few people for the following fall school year beginning in March of the previous year. Therefore candidates who are serious about securing a teaching position should plan to have all of their potential

applications complete by March 1<sup>st</sup> of the year they are hoping to secure a position. Applications are almost always good for a full calendar year, so there is no reason to wait until after student teaching is complete to fill out applications. I would advise graduating seniors to begin completing applications in November of the fall before they graduate. This would allow for two applications a week, (4 hours of time) to be completed and a total of 24 applications completed and on file by March 1<sup>st</sup>. My advice is start early! You have to be in the system to have an opportunity for employment. Waiting only hurts you.

## Filling out the Application

The application needs to be filled out completely and accurately. Of great importance is:

- Spelling (most systems don't have spell check. Check your work.)
- Contact information (If I can't get a hold of you, I can't hire you. If your voicemail or answering machine message was developed for your college friends, please change this before you begin your job search. You need to be perceived as a professional person. I don't need to hear "Sexy back" by Justin Timberlake when I call you.)
- Email address (Create a professional Gmail account. Don't put studmuffin69@hotmail as an account I should contact you at. I will just move on to someone else.)
- Essay questions: Essay questions are just written interview questions. These are critical. Answer each question just like you would a verbal question. Use your unique vision statement and your three simple supporting statements as the foundation of each answer. I recommend writing your answers in Microsoft Word and spell checking them before copying them into your application.
- References: The administrators want you to list previous supervisors. Your application is suspicious if you leave them out. Principals, cooperating teachers and, professors from college, are all good references. Someone in the school district you are applying to is

an outstanding reference! Your Uncle Chris Adkison or friends are not professional references.

- **Online Screener:** In many school districts you will be directed to take an online screening test. Gallup's Teacher Insight or Venture's Teacher Style Profile are used by thousands of school districts nationwide. Take this test very seriously as it is critical to your success! You will be given a set amount of time to answer multiple choice questions regarding your teaching style. All answers will seem very similar and you are choosing the best one. These tests can't be manipulated, however if you answer every question with your unique vision statement you will do well enough to move forward in the process. Before you take this test I suggest that you write your vision statement and three simple supporting statements on a note card and post it on your computer screen so that you are totally focused. Make certain you are free from distractions before you begin this test. Usually this test can only be taken once in a two year period, so you need to get it right the first time. In the case of an emergency when something happens while you are taking this test, call the HR office of the school district where you were applying and explain the situation. (We had a candidate whose kitchen caught on fire while taking the test. She obviously did very poorly because she didn't complete half of the questions. When she explained the issue we were able to call the company and reset her ability to take the test. Without this she probably would not have been considered for a position.)
- Upload your cover letter, resume, and letters of recommendation to the application. Make certain they

are in a form that is readable by the school district administrators

- Letters of Recommendation should be written by people that have seen you teach or can speak of your work habits. The list of acceptable people is the same as it is for references on your application.
- Teaching License: Make sure you list your exact teaching license. If you are a graduating student, list the license you will have when you graduate. Never leave this section blank. If I cannot determine your license area I will move on to a candidate whose license I can determine. If you are in one state and applying for teaching positions in another state, contact to department of education in the state you would like to work. You may have to pass an additional Praxis exam before the state will issue a license to you. If you wait too long you will miss out on the job you want. In the era of No Child Left Behind and being Highly Qualified your license is critical.
- Previous legal convictions: All applicants will have to be able to pass a background check before the state you are in will issue you a teaching license. If you have previous convictions that are not disqualifiers from teaching in your state, they must be listed on the application if asked. Be honest and explain what happened. If you were arrested for underage consumption or public indecency while in college, explain the situation. Most people will understand some misplaced youthful exuberance. Don't skirt these issues, they will come up before you are hired officially and if you don't list them on the application it may disqualify you for the job.

Completing the application will not get you a teaching job, but not completing it or leaving out important details will cost you a teaching job.

## Resume

I view the resume as a disqualifier more than a qualifier. However, your resume should:

- Look professional
- Be free of spelling, grammar and punctuation errors
- Be on high quality paper
- Provide accurate information including:
  - Accurate contact information
  - Accurate teaching license information
  - Summary of all education experiences
  - Summary of all teaching experiences including student teaching
  - Any experience that shows you as unique and differentiates you from other candidates. (For example: I worked three jobs to get myself through college and to take care of my three younger siblings, while completing my degree.) That's compelling, but don't make anything up!



## **School administrators have been trained to read your resume:**

They will be looking for:

1. Dates or lack of dates. Some applicants may want to downplay a job-hopping tendency.
2. Titles, especially ones that sound nice but say nothing. Some companies hand out titles in lieu of more money and responsibility.
3. Responsibilities, especially when they don't match the individual's title or experience.
4. Reasons behind the reasons, such a switching jobs or being given the gate by a former employer.

## **Cover Letter**

Your resume needs to be accompanied by a cover letter explaining your interest in the position.

Your goal for the cover letter is to:

1. Explain your interest in the position
2. Explain why you are uniquely qualified for the position
3. Present your information in a clear, concise, manner
4. Pay attention to details. (I receive many cover letters with my name misspelled, my title as Mr. and not Dr., the incorrect school district name, etc. Many people use the same form letter and forget to change the name or the

position they are applying for on the letter. Don't be in a hurry. Get the details right. Otherwise, I'm throwing it away.)

Both your resume and your cover letter will be used to upload to the application. When you secure an interview for a specific position you will need to write a cover letter specific to that position and be prepared to bring ten copies of your cover letter and resume to the physical interview. You'll want to make certain everyone on the interview team has a hard-copy to look at during the interview. You don't want to be short. Most interview teams are not larger than six people, however I think 10 is a safe number to bring with you. Do not bring a form cover letter. Write a new one for the position that you are interviewing for!

### **Is it O.K. to Show Up in Person?**

My advice with everything job hunt related is to be proactive and to be aggressive. Many people get things in life because they ask for them, while others sit back and hope something will be given to them. You have to out-work everyone else on the job hunt. It's possible that you will show-up at 10 HR offices and 15 schools and be turned away every time. However, it just may be that 16<sup>th</sup> trip where you are in the right place at the right time and end up with the job you'll hold for your career. Don't sit back and hope good things will happen. Make them happen!

For a comprehensive look at finding a teaching job and preparing for a teaching interview the website [www.theteacherinterviewsystem.com](http://www.theteacherinterviewsystem.com) is worth your time.

## **You Make a Difference!**

As a substitute teacher you make a difference in the lives of students. You provide education, guidance, stability, caring and friendliness to the classroom and to our schools. Our school system can not operate without your dedicated service. Thanks for working with our students. Thanks for making a positive difference in the lives of children in this community!