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A handbook for substitute teachers

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**A HANDBOOK FOR
SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

MASTER'S PROJECT

Submitted to the School of Education
University of Dayton, in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education

by

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School of Education
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Dayton, Ohio

June 1995

Approved by:



Official Advisor

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This project would not have been possible without the help of many people. I am grateful to the many substitute teachers of Logan County, Ohio who responded to my survey.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many teachers often find themselves in a position where substitute teaching has become a viable alternative to full-time teaching. In the current job market, first-year teachers often find themselves incapable of finding that elusive full-time teaching position and opt to gain some experience and fortify their resumes by substitute teaching. In other cases, veteran teachers choose to combine a part-time career with parenting, and substitute teaching allows for the flexibility that they desire. Naturally, there are those retired teachers who decide to continue in their profession on a part-time basis while supplementing their retirement income.

The writer of this handbook has substitute taught in over twenty buildings including elementary, middle school, and rare occasions in the high school. Her experiences cover a variety of classes from typically structured classrooms to whole language classrooms, from self-contained rooms to open classrooms, and from kindergarten through twelfth grade. The writer has performed the duties of the one day substitute teacher on an hour's notice and the challenges of the long-term substitute teacher for thirteen weeks.

There are those moments when substitute teaching is greatly rewarding. Like the times when students greet you at the door with a warm smile and exclaim, "Are you going to be our teacher again? Will we get three stars on the board?" Then there are days like the time a student twisted staples together to make this awful barbed wire and placed it on the teacher's chair for the writer to sit upon. Substitute teaching is not merely a job, it is a sharing of yourself. Some days the substitute teacher goes home feeling really warm and glowing because the day went extremely well. Other days the substitute teacher just hopes he can find his home, because he can't remember which road to take from this school that he's never been to before, and how does he get around this detour that wasn't here this morning.

Despite the fact that teachers will work as substitutes, universities rarely prepare them for this challenging form of pedagogy. While researching this topic, the writer naturally went to teacher methods books and was disappointed to find that only a few contained a paragraph or two about substitute teaching. Through seven years experience in this field, this writer has gained a battery of ideas to assist the neophyte substitute in the classroom and to aid the regular classroom teacher in preparing for a substitute teacher.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to present a handbook of techniques that the writer believes will be useful to the beginning and veteran teachers functioning as substitute teachers and also to regular classroom teachers preparing for a substitute teacher's visit. A good substitute teacher not only maintains classroom discipline but also imparts knowledge and skills to the students. This handbook will be a valuable aid to that teacher.

More specifically, the handbook will consist of five sections. The first section will examine the advantages and disadvantages to substitute teaching. The second section will offer tried and true methods of effective classroom management techniques and a discipline plan that can be implemented in one day.

Thirdly, the handbook will offer a helpful list of items that are necessary to making the substitute teacher's day run more smoothly. These will be items that the regular classroom teacher takes for granted, but the substitute teacher frequently finds it difficult to locate in the classroom. One substitute teacher told me that she was once in a classroom where she could not even find a sheet of paper to leave the regular teacher a note as to how the day went.

The fourth section of the handbook will offer some tips to the substitute teacher who is fairly new to the whole

language movement and may be wary of substituting in a whole language classroom. With a little background, the substitute teacher can feel more comfortable in what may appear to be the less-structured environment of the whole language classroom.

The fifth section of the handbook is written to assist the regular classroom teacher in preparing for the substitute teacher. A teacher who has established discipline in his own classroom and has prepared the students to treat a substitute teacher with respect has opened his classroom door to the substitute teacher with a warm welcome.

Many regular classroom teachers have expressed to the writer a need for some guidance as to what lesson plans and directions would be most beneficial for the substitute teacher. This handbook contains information that the classroom teacher will find valuable in preparing for his/her absence and the subsequent needs of the substitute teacher.

This handbook can be used as a springboard for a district training seminar for potential substitute teachers and/or as an in-service workshop for current teachers. Reportedly some districts are now offering a retirement incentive plan that requires their early retirees to work a given number of days per year in the school system (Simmons, 1991). It would seem that there are many educators that would benefit from this handbook.

Definitions

A substitute teacher is one who takes the place of another teacher. Substitute teachers usually fill in for the regular classroom teacher a day or two at a time while the teacher is absent because of illness or attendance at a conference. The substitute teacher is usually called early that morning, although sometimes a substitute may be notified earlier in the week when a teacher is using a personal/professional day. The substitute teacher is responsible for the daily functions of the class, and most schools require the substitute teacher to perform any lunch, bus, or recess duties that the regular teacher may have scheduled for that day.

Long-term substitute teacher is a teacher who fills in for an extended period (two weeks or more). This may be to cover a maternity leave or an extended illness or surgery. The long-term substitute teacher is frequently responsible for the same duties as the regular classroom teacher including lesson plans, parent correspondence and conferences, grade cards, and teacher meetings.

Assumptions and Limitations

Although in the state of Ohio and possibly other states, one does not have to have a degree in education to be a substitute teacher, this handbook is written to benefit those that have achieved a bachelor's degree in education.

The writer, therefore, assumes that these people will come with at least a modicum of teaching experience and a desire to not merely supervise children but to teach.

The handbook is not meant to be a comprehensive presentation of substitute teaching, but merely to provide the teacher with some ideas to make the substitute teaching experience more effective and successful. The writer has not had measurable experience at the high school level, therefore, the high school substitute teacher may find many of these ideas to be too elementary for his/her use. Yet the writer believes that several ideas will also be valid in the secondary classroom, and others can be upgraded to be used with older students.

Significance of the Project

Schools are in dire need of substitute teachers. Yet universities do not prepare teachers to become substitutes. Nor do school systems train their substitutes before sending them into the classroom. Very little information is already out there to support the substitute teacher, and many regular classroom teachers do not really know how to assist them either.

The handbook will get you started on the right foot. It gives the substitute teacher helpful background information before entering the school, ways to discipline, motivational tips, teacher support, and encouragement. To dispel

the negative attitudes that others have about substitute teachers, then we must enter the field with a clear knowledge of what to expect and how to handle difficulties and be prepared, confident, and willing to give of ourselves to provide a necessary service and make an important addition to our educational system (Pronin, 1983). The information and advice in this handbook will help substitute teachers provide this valuable service.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In designing and developing the handbook, the writer conducted a review of literature on substitute teaching. Specifically, the review examined the following types of professional literature: teacher method textbooks and an E.R.I.C. search was performed. Following a review of the above literature, the writer decided to structure this chapter with the following sections: Background, Substitute Teacher Training, Advantages and Disadvantages of Substitute Teaching, the Contribution of the Substitute, and the Characteristics of a Successful Substitute.

Background

In conducting the review of the literature pertaining to substitute teaching, the writer found that there was limited information available. Most of the literature dealt with the fact that there needs to be better training methods developed for substitute teachers.

The commonly accepted notion that substitute teachers generally are ineffective is supported by research. Olson's (1971) study was the first to report a quantitative estimate of substitute effectiveness. Classroom observers were trained to use the Indicator-of-Quality scale. It lists

behaviors that engender: interpersonal regard, group activity, individualization, and creativity.

This study found that substitute teachers in the elementary schools achieved a mean rank of 1.98 whereas the assigned teacher achieved a mean rank of 6.12. In the secondary schools the substitute mean score was 0.27 and the assigned teacher mean score was 5.01. Willerman and McGuire (1986) respond to this finding by stating that, "the very poor performance of the substitutes in contrast with the assigned teachers would seem to necessitate developing a method for improving substitute performance or to discover less expensive strategies for handling teacher absences."

What is expected of the substitute teacher varies little from one district to another. "Some schools are concerned mainly that substitutes control students, others that they maintain some educational continuity" (Frosch, 1984). Increasingly, schools are seriously considering how to improve the effectiveness of substitute teachers and therefore, reinforce the idea that substitute teachers are hired to teach, not babysit (Tracy, 1988).

Substitute Teacher Training

"Substitutes need and desire professional training opportunities. They want to be successful in their substitute roles, but they are often grossly unprepared for the job--especially if they are new to the job" (Simmons, 1991).

In 1991, Betty Jo Simmons, a member of the Amelia County (Va.) School Board and an assistant professor of education at Longwood College, Farmville, Virginia, wrote *Planning to Improve the Quality of the Substitute Teacher Program*. In this article she states:

The substitute teachers' program constitutes a significant budgetary figure for most administrators. For this reason, if for no other, schools must begin to look at ways to enhance this essential, though often neglected, aspect of the school program...Few schools, however, have devoted the time, effort, and financial considerations that are actually needed to dramatically improve the program.

Although there are few districts offering workshops and seminars to better prepare their substitute teachers, there are many that don't provide substitute teachers with any training. While researching this topic, the writer found that seminars have been provided in the Greenbrier (Arkansas) School District which included instruction in classroom management, instructional techniques, legal implications, and teacher shadowing (Peterson, 1991). The substitute teachers from this district felt better prepared and more a part of the "school family".

McIntire and Hughes (1982) developed a program for substitutes sponsored by the University of Houston, Texas Southern University and The Houston Independent School District. During the twenty-two hours of instruction, a variety of special skills that are necessary for substitute teaching were taught. Among these essential skills were to:

set tasks at appropriate levels of difficulty, give prompts, vary presentations, and use behavior management techniques.

Simmons (1991) believes these professional development workshops should include:

suggestions for maintaining positive attitudes and positive relationships, planning lessons (an important factor for extended substitutes), taking care of procedural matters quickly and efficiently, giving clear and definite directions, and managing a classroom without hassle.

According to Susan Peterson, PhD (1991) many districts are developing handbooks for their substitutes which include a school map, emergency procedures, expectations of the substitute, school policies and procedures, and a school calendar. She remarks that ideally a back-to-school orientation meeting would include a program of general information, questions and answers and a tour of the building.

Simmons (1991) emphasizes that all substitutes should receive a copy of a manual carefully prepared to anticipate the needs and concerns of those who will be using it. She believes the following inclusions are especially important:

- * A brief statement of the philosophy of the school
- * A map giving the location of each school
- * A copy of the school calendar for the academic year
- * A list of the principals, central office personnel, and school board members
- * A facsimile of the substitute evaluation forms to be filled out by the substitute, regular teacher, and an administrator

- * A description of the district's policies and expectations regarding substitutes
- * A series of suggestions for effective classroom management and a guide for "whom to see" to have certain types of questions answered or to get help with emergency situations
- * A condensed version of essential school policies so substitutes know what is expected of students
- * A pay scale and an explanation of how and when substitutes will be paid.
- * A list of teachers with their grade and/or subject assignment, and where possible, room numbers
- * A layout of the school so classes, the office, library, lunchroom, etc., can be found easily
- * A copy of the cafeteria schedule
- * A diagram showing parking lots and other outside facilities
- * A description of policies specific to the given school, such as information about duplicating supplies, use of telephones, secretarial help, school keys, etc.

Yet there are many districts that are doing very little to prepare their substitute teachers to succeed; relying instead on the regular classroom teacher to leave adequate information to guide the substitute teacher through the day. Unfortunately, the substitute teacher is thought of as the "spare tire" of American education; that is, as an emergency resource that is forgotten as soon as the emergency is over (Drake, 1981).

Advantages and Disadvantages of Substitute Teaching

There will be innumerable times when the substitute will receive the early morning call asking him to report to an unfamiliar school to teach a subject or grade level for which he may be unprepared. Once arriving, he searches for obscure lesson plans and then the materials needed to fulfill those plans.

Not only is the pay low, but there are no fringe benefits, including insurance and sick days (Pronin, 1983). At least in the state of Ohio substituting does accumulate towards retirement.

The substitute has no regular place in the school faculty and the students know this. They are also "uncannily aware that your presence in the classroom for a day or two will not measurably affect their grades" (Pronin, 1983).

In fact, many people "regard subs as little more than glorified babysitters who lack initiative and authority" (Pronin, 1983). With all of these strikes against the substitute teacher, why would anyone want to be a substitute teacher?

Substitute teaching is never boring. It is also flexible--you can choose what days you will and will not work. You are always meeting new people and yet are never "stuck" for more than one day with the class that could drive a teacher to early retirement. You don't have to prepare lesson plans, assign grades, confer with parents,

fill out endless paperwork, or attend meetings. You don't have stacks of papers to take home every night (Pronin, 1983).

You will have the opportunity to network with other teachers and building principals, and you will have ample opportunities to learn from other classroom teachers their tried and true teaching tips while "testing" some of your own ideas on a group of students.

You won't bring home a king's ransom, but for a part-time job, the pay is not all that bad. Most importantly, there is still the hope and dream of nearly every teacher that she will make a significant positive difference in at least one child's life.

Contribution of Substitute Teachers

Miriam K. Freedman and Teri Perl (1974) have combined their substituting experience to publish a sourcebook of ideas for substitute teachers. They list how a substitute can make a significant contribution to the educational experience:

1. Provide Variety.
2. Provide Enrichment Materials.
3. Provide Learning for the Fun of It.
4. Establish an Environment for Student Success.
5. Be a Resource Person.
6. Benefit the Regular Teacher.

The substitute can provide variety by offering students a break from the routine. "Substitutes can provide students with an opportunity to explore subject areas that may be extremely interesting and important but that are excluded from the regular curriculum by time pressures" (Freedman and Perl, 1974).

By being prepared to provide learning for the fun of it a substitute must come equipped with materials that bring their own incentives and rewards. Students will be appreciative to the substitute who puts more into his work than just watching them.

One day with a substitute teacher may be just the break a child needs to improve her self-image. The substitute teacher may be able to motivate a particular student in a way that the regular classroom teacher has not yet been able to do, therefore, opening the door for that child's success.

The substitute teacher has her own particular strengths and talents that can be shared not only with the students but with the staff as well. Thus showing the administration what the substitute teacher can offer the school district.

There may even be times when the substitute teacher has provided certain activities or games which were so successful and popular that students will share them with the regular teacher.

Characteristics of a Successful Substitute

When students, faculty members, school administrators, and substitute teachers were asked, "What are the characteristics of a successful substitute teacher," Warren (1988) found the comments were quite diverse, but some responses were more prevalent than others. The basic consensus was that substitutes must be able to adapt to various classroom situations, have teaching experience and knowledge of the subject field, and manage classroom adversity.

Administrators stressed punctuality of substitute teachers. They preferred for substitutes to arrive 30 minutes prior to their first class to analyze lesson plans; become acquainted with neighboring teachers from whom assistance might be needed during the day; become familiar with campus grounds, fire exits, and emergency procedures; note school rules and regulations; and initiate student contact.

The faculty members were more interested in the academic background and teaching experience of the substitute teacher. Whereas the students were most concerned with the substitute teacher's personal skills such as the ability to initiate a solid student-teacher rapport, sense of humor, and general appearance.

Learning to manage the discipline of the class is of ultimate importance. "The ability to control the class

situation and maintain discipline was mentioned by all parties as being crucial to the longevity of the substitute" (Warren, 1988).

Summary

The substitute teacher is in great demand in schools across the United States. Even though schools need to make the most of these valuable days when the regular teacher is absent, very few are expending the time and effort to properly train their substitute teachers.

The substitute teacher can be a valuable asset to a school district. For those who enter the field with a clear knowledge of what to expect and how to handle difficulties and who are prepared, confident, and willing to give of themselves will provide a necessary service and an important addition to our educational system (Pronin, 1983).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The need for the quality of substitute teaching has become apparent to administrators. Yet the resources to properly train those substitute teachers has not noticeably increased. The average teacher misses eight school days a year (ERS, 1981) and will need a substitute teacher to cover his/her class on those days. A student is in school thirteen years and will, therefore, have a substitute teacher for approximately 104 of those days. Administrators are recognizing that these 104 days cannot be "lost" educational opportunities. To improve the quality of a child's education, we can make an immediate impact by addressing the need for staff development designed with the substitute teacher in mind.

This handbook addresses the unique problems and needs of the substitute teacher. When the writer did a review of the literature, she found that very little existed to actually assist the substitute teacher in doing a more effective job of substituting. Most articles addressed the need for improved training but did little to suggest how those seminars should be presented.

In speaking to other substitute teachers, this writer found that they were excited about the possibility of

learning some "tricks of the trade". Many substitute teachers leave the ranks within a couple of years, if not sooner, because they don't feel like they are really teaching. This handbook is offered to the substitute teacher who desires to do a better job of teaching.

Handbook Preparation

The writer is drawing on her own professional experience in substitute teaching for seven years in two counties in the state of Ohio including seven different school districts. Her experiences varied from teaching three to four year olds with developmental and environmental handicaps, to children with severe behavior handicaps, to typical children from kindergarten through the eighth grade in all major subject matters.

Along with the writer's own substitute teaching experiences, she interviewed other substitutes in the Logan County area. Included as Appendix A is the list of questions that these substitutes were asked. Their recommendations for pertinent information were used to assist in developing this handbook. Their professional experiences were also used to disseminate information in the handbook.

Next the writer informally interviewed elementary classroom teachers from five school districts in Logan and Champaign counties. These roundtable discussions were used to investigate what kind of performance the regular

classroom teacher desires of the substitute teacher. During the conversations, the teachers mentioned the need for input from substitute teachers as to what they needed from the regular classroom teacher to make their job easier.

Although not part of the original proposal of the writer, a chapter for the regular classroom teacher was therefore included in the substitute handbook format.

Finally, administrators were asked to comment on what they not only required, but also desired of substitute teachers in their buildings. Their portrayals of the ideal substitute teacher were used to formulate many of the ideas contained in the substitute teacher handbook.

Handbook Design

The handbook begins by comparing the pros and cons of substitute teaching. How to make the most of the pros and how to work on improving some of the cons within the power of the substitute teacher.

Next, the handbook suggests classroom management techniques and steps toward effective discipline. This is an always challenging area for the substitute teacher. The regular classroom teacher can earn the respect of the students after some time, but the substitute teacher is continually battling discipline problems. The handbook gives some important tips in setting up clear classroom rules, asserting authority, respecting students, handling

discipline problems, and encouraging positive behavior from students.

In Section III, the handbook suggests the materials a substitute teacher should always carry in the teacher bag. These items will be many of the same things that a regular classroom teacher stores in the desk. This portable survival bag will make the substitute teaching experience more personally pleasurable for the substitute teacher and will enhance the substitute teaching experience.

Because of the writer's interest and expertise in the field of whole language, there is a section devoted to helping the substitute teacher adapt to the unusual lesson planning of the whole language classroom. The substitute teacher can find success in the whole language classroom by learning some basic skills necessary to teach in this environment.

The whole language model is also very adaptable at those times when the substitute teacher finds it necessary to supplement with his/her own teaching ideas (i.e. when there are sparse plans left by the regular teacher or lessons the substitute feels unprepared to teach). There are times when the regular classroom teacher is too sick to prepare for the visit of a substitute teacher, and many teachers have expressed to the writer that they would find it very comforting to know that a substitute teacher could come in with his/her own lesson plans for the day and be

able to take over. This also gives the substitute teacher the opportunity to be prepared to teach the class confidently and to show the building principal his/her particular strengths and qualifications to teach.

The final section of the handbook is addressed to the regular classroom teacher who is looking for ways to improve his/her plan for the substitute teacher. The teachers polled expressed the need for some technical tips and constructive criticism as to what would be most beneficial for them to leave for the substitute teacher.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

HANDBOOK FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

by
SUE A. CHANEY

Indian Lake Local Schools

June 1995

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Introduction

This handbook for substitute teachers has been designed to equip the substitute teacher with a starting block to prepare her for the awesome task of managing 30 unfamiliar students in several different settings. It is not meant to encompass all that the substitute teacher may encounter while performing her duties.

The handbook will first look at the pros and cons of substituting so as to empower substitutes to cultivate the skills necessary to make them more successful in this role. The next section examines one of the most difficult skills to master--that of managing the discipline of a classroom full of students. The substitute will find many valuable hints from this section along with the section devoted to preparing the "substitute bag". To familiarize the substitute with the workings of a whole language classroom, an informative section has likewise been included in this handbook. The handbook then concludes with a section focusing on what information and materials is most beneficial for the regular teacher to leave the substitute.

Although not a comprehensive handbook of all that a substitute teacher may encounter in a variety of classrooms, this handbook should serve as a building block to which the substitute will add her own time-tested methods and recom-

mendations. The handbook may serve additionally as a spark to generate discussion of techniques used by other substitutes to promote their own achievements in the classroom. The hope of the writer is that substitutes will feel better prepared to meet the myriad challenges facing the substitute teacher.

Pros & Cons of Substituting

Although most people remember terrorizing a substitute teacher at one time or another from their past years in public schools, there really are several advantages to substitute teaching. For the first-time teacher, it is a fabulous way to gain experience. The substitute teacher can get his feet wet without being responsible for the myriad of necessary paper work required of the regular classroom teacher.

The substitute can gain much experience while collecting a portfolio of teaching ideas from veteran teachers. Jotting these ideas down in a notebook can serve as a valuable reference tool when the substitute becomes a regular classroom teacher.

By working as a substitute teacher, you can show administrators how talented of a teacher you are. Whenever the opportunity arises to let a principal see you at work, be sure you are at your best and ready to show how well you can teach.

Likewise, you have the chance to get to know the different administrators, staff, and students in many different school buildings. You will find places where you feel more comfortable teaching, and these are places that you will want to especially network with the teachers so that they

will know how interested you are in working at their building full-time (providing your goal is full-time employment).

Many college students get the opportunity to observe in different schools and at different grade-levels, but they usually only get to student teach one or two different grade levels within their anticipated teaching certification. Substitute teaching affords education graduates the chance to try their hand at teaching many different grade-levels. Sometimes substitute teachers find that they actually prefer a different grade-level than they ever imagined.

While substitute teaching, there will be times when the substitute can try out some of her own ideas. As a substitute teacher, you are employed for the day(s) to supervise a group of students and to teach. Even if you are left lesson plans at times that require little teaching, there will be times when you can add some of your own knowledge to a lesson. As long as you don't confuse students by doing a badly prepared lesson, most classroom teachers appreciate the substitute who will facilitate learning rather than merely supervise learners.

You have lots of flexibility as a substitute teacher. Some substitutes worry that they won't get called if they start saying, "No," to offers of substituting for the day. The writer's experience was that once she was established in a school district, she could decline substituting offers and

even set certain days of the week aside for other interests. The most important consideration here is that you are honest with the district. Don't tell a district that you can't sub that day because you are sick and then go shopping. Someone will most certainly see you and your integrity will be damaged. You can politely say, "No, thank you," when called and leave it at that. You don't have to give a reason for not wanting to substitute.

The pay for substitute teaching is higher than most part-time jobs. In the state of Ohio and possibly other states, your retirement will also build as you substitute teach. Retirement may not seem important when you first start out as a teacher, but it truly is an important consideration.

In fact, after retirement, many teachers decide to supplement their retirement income with substitute teaching. The schools are very fortunate to have these experienced veterans in the ranks of substitutes. They not only bring years of teaching experience with them, but also the invaluable asset of knowing the students and the building protocol at their former place of employment.

Other reasons substitutes have found that they like substitute teaching range from being on the same schedule as their own children and knowing firsthand what is going on in their children's school to fairly steady job security. Substitute teachers are becoming more and more in demand and

schools cry aloud for the lack of good dependable substitute teachers. Maybe this lack of substitute teachers is due in part to the lack of respect given the substitute teacher.

Substitute teachers may be faced with less than respect in the classroom, but they can learn to handle it if they are prepared with a discipline plan. This handbook will offer suggestions for establishing effective classroom discipline in the beginning and then following through with this plan the entire day.

On the other hand, substitute teaching does have its drawbacks. Although the pay is not bad for a part-time job, it comes nowhere close to what the regular classroom teacher will make. The minimum starting pay for a regular teacher in the state of Ohio in 1995 is approximately \$17,500 for a 184 day school year. This amounts to \$95.11 a day. The substitute teacher in Logan County, Ohio, makes from \$45.00 to \$50.00 a day. If a substitute were to work every school day and on teacher work days (It would be very rare for this to happen.), the earning potential of the substitute teacher is \$8,280 to \$9,200.

Couple this low monetary compensation with the fact that the substitute teacher will have no fringe benefits. If the substitute does not work a school day due to his own illness or that of family members that need attention, he will not be paid for the day. If the school district is shut down for the day due to inclement weather, the

substitute (even though he may have already been scheduled with that school system for that day) will not be paid for the day. If a substitute is called to jury duty or needs to attend to other business and is unable to work, he will sacrifice the pay for those days. In short, no work equals no pay.

This researcher found that many substitutes were doing one of two things or a combination of them to survive while teaching: either living with others whose income was used to provide the primary support of the home and/or working at least one other job to increase their earnings.

Sometimes a substitute is scheduled to teach several days in advance of an assignment, but more likely, the substitute will be called to teach that morning. There have been several times when the writer was even called after the school day had started when a regular teacher had become too ill to finish the day. Preparation, which is a key to effective substituting, has then become impossible. The substitute is thrust into the room of 25 - 30 eager students and expected to make the best of a less than perfect situation. Of course, the substitute can decline to accept these eleventh hour assignments, but from my experience, most substitutes find it difficult to say, "No."

Not only will the substitute teacher find herself rushing to meet the needs of a harried principal who often forgets to check on her later in the day, but there will be

all too many times when she will find herself teaching a subject and/or grade-level for which she has no training.

The 6:05 a.m. call may sound something like this, "Mrs. Chaney, this is Timbuktu School District. We need a shop teacher for the middle school and a music teacher today...I can understand why you would prefer the music since you once were an elementary music student. Well, you need to report to the middle school by 7:00 where you'll have some general music classes and the 60-member honor's choir, and then I think that teacher goes to the high school building and does choir and band. Thanks!"

Naturally, this is not what you were expecting, but now you are committed and you never back down from a commitment. Did I mention that the regular music teacher receives a mileage check to cover the expense of traveling between buildings across the widespread district? The substitute teacher, who is making less than half of the regular salary, will not receive this extra compensation.

Fortunately, there are those times when you will have advance notice to prepare yourself, and you will be called to teach a grade and subject that you have been trained to teach. You will have the disadvantage of not knowing the students to adapt your teaching to their learning style, and frequently the regular teacher does not give you much information as to what they have already covered. There will be

some helpful hints in this handbook which will help you work around these disadvantages and even turn them into an asset.

As a substitute teacher, you will find that discipline will be of paramount importance. Most of the time, the substitute teacher needs to be pretty strict until a group of students has had several experiences with that substitute and knows where they stand with her. There will be classes that try the patience of Saint Job, and the substitute will go home with a horrendous headache. The good news is that the regular teacher has to go back to that class daily, but the substitute teacher *never* has to return.

Not only do you have the option of declining to teach a particular class or to work on a particular day, but as a substitute teacher, you will leave the school building each day with no papers to grade or correct. The substitute does not need to attend staff meetings, act as an advisor to an after-school extracurricular activity, or coach a sport.

She will not need to spend her evenings making the project that she wants her students to try next week or go in early to call the parents of the four students who are missing several assignments. Her weekends will be free to perform other tasks than spending hours at the library researching the books that need to be included in the whole language unit on the ecosystems. Her summer schedule will not need to be cut short by the myriad of workshops attended by the regular teacher.

Though some may argue with the writer, the substitute teacher will likely still worry about the student that has no friends at recess and is unable to complete the daily assignments before the bell rings at the end of the day. In this researcher's experience and dialogue with many other substitute teachers, the substitute teacher teaches because he loves children and loves to teach. Just because he may not have a regular class with the same students for a school year, does not mean that he cares any less about what or whom he is teaching.

This advantage of caring deeply about the students far outweighs the disadvantages of substitute teaching. It is for this reason that the writer is offering this substitute handbook as an aid in increasing the performance of the substitute.

Classroom Management

When asked what they are looking for in a good substitute teacher, many administrators expressed the need for a teacher that could take control of the class. Realizing that students are usually not angels for the substitute, it is important that the substitute come prepared with her own plan to handle everyday problems that arise in the classroom.

The first few minutes in the classroom will set the tone for the entire day. As the roll is being called, the substitute should attempt to learn as many names as possible. The ability to call a student by name when there is a disruption in the class can squelch many a potential discipline problem. The regular teacher should leave the substitute an accurate seating chart, but this researcher discovered that many times this was not the case. By simply having the students fold a piece of paper in half lengthwise and write their first names largely in crayon or marker, then placing these on their desks as a name plate, the substitute can easily call on students during class discussions. Apparently students are less likely to "act up" when a substitute knows them by name.

During discussions with substitutes of discipline practices they felt were most helpful, this researcher dis-

covered that the substitutes found it beneficial to list a few basic rules on the board and to discuss them with the class at the beginning of the day. Although these rules are generally very common classroom rules that the regular teacher has already established, the substitutes who used this technique felt that it helped to assign their own parameters for the students.

These rules should be few in number and stated in a positive manner (List the "dos" instead of the "don'ts"). Rules that the writer has used to establish the guidelines of behavior for the class are:

1. Raise your hand to speak.
2. Be respectful of the teacher and others in the class. (This includes listening and keeping your hands and property to yourself.)
3. Follow directions and stay on task.

The substitute should post these rules on the board for all to see and then should verbalize them during the morning opening. The few minutes that this takes will save a lot of time later when the students see that the substitute is indeed a teacher capable of establishing effective guidelines and consistently following through with their implementation.

Many teachers use a form of assertive discipline to run their classes, and the substitute teacher might consider doing the same. If a student misbehaves, he writes his name

on the board as a warning. A second offense would constitute the addition of a checkmark and 10 minutes missed recess. A third offense would mean two checkmarks and a missed recess.

Principals like to see that a substitute can handle his own discipline, so it is advisable to avoid sending students to the principal's office. This should be reserved for a totally disrespectful student, or in the case of a severe offense such as physical harm towards another student.

The substitute should also be prepared to offer a reward to the class or individuals who have demonstrated admirable behavior. Before the students would arrive at school, this writer while substituting would draw three stars on the board. Students' curiosity was always piqued as to the nature of these stars. After explaining the classroom rules for the day, the writer would then reveal the meaning of the three stars in this way:

Each star represents five minutes of a bonus recess to be given to you, the class, by me, your teacher for the day. There are three stars so you have already earned fifteen minutes of extra recess at the end of the day! This is a gift from me to you.

I think that you are a three-star class, but you have to prove it to me by following the rules of good behavior today. You need to get quiet when I ask you, walk quietly down the hall, and treat everyone here today with respect.

If you don't do these things, then I will give you a warning. If you still don't follow my directions, then I will erase a star. Once a star is gone, it is gone forever.

If you keep all three stars on the board and get your work done, we will have fifteen minutes of extra recess at the end of the day. I will leave a note telling your teacher that you were an *excellent* class.

If you have two stars left at the end of the day, it will be a ten minute recess and I will tell your teacher that you were a *good* class.

If you have one star left, it will be a five minute recess inside the classroom and I'll tell your teacher that you were *pretty good*.

If there are NO STARS LEFT, I'll let your teacher know that you had trouble behaving today. She won't want to hear that, will she?

So you see, it's up to you what kind of a report I leave your teacher and how much extra recess you get today. Do your best and let's keep the stars up there!

The students have always responded to the three stars with great enthusiasm. After working in the same building a few times, the writer found that students from other classes would ask about the three star reward.

In observing and speaking with other substitute teachers, the writer found that many substitutes did give an extra recess reward to a well-behaved class. So why not tell them at the beginning of the day that they've already earned it if they can just keep it? This positive reinforcer works as a very motivational tool. Substitutes who tried the star method found amazing results.

One substitute teacher shared that she rewards an exceptionally well-behaved class with inexpensive treats, such as bubble gum. This immediate reward for one day of good behavior is possible for almost any student to attain; even

the "discipline problem" in the room can probably behave fairly well for one day thus giving him the opportunity to reap a behavior award that he might rarely see.

Substitutes need to find ways of immediately rewarding a class for good behavior. Students will enjoy their day with the substitute much more if they know their efforts are being appreciated. In return, this will also make for a much more enjoyable day for the substitute. It has the added bonus of paving the way for return visits to that classroom and possibly, by word of the student grapevine, to other classes in the building.

By establishing a solid discipline plan at the beginning of the day, it will free the substitute from battling frequent discipline problems because the students did not understand their boundaries. Therefore allowing the substitute teacher to spend more quality time teaching rather than dealing with problems. Substitute teachers expressed the dissatisfaction with substituting because they felt merely like "babysitters". Effective classroom management will permit the substitute to transcend the role of authoritarian and prevail as an educator.

Substitute Bag

The substitute teacher not only needs to come to school prepared with an effective discipline plan, but also mentally ready to meet the challenges that the day affords. The substitute can never be quite sure what the regular teacher has left for her to do with the students. Some teachers leave very explicit plans for the substitute to follow with materials marked and easy to find. This is a dream come true for a substitute. Unfortunately, all too many times the substitute will enter the classroom and find a brief sketch of the day's activities and little guidance. Materials may be impossible to locate, and the substitute teacher quickly becomes disheartened fearing a disastrous day.

The substitute can ward off these feelings of discouragement by arriving prepared with a *substitute bag*. The substitute bag contains items necessary to run a classroom for one day in the absence of any plans and/or materials. The substitute may find it useful to prepare more than one bag: a bag for the primary level, one for the middle grades and one for the junior high. Since many of the items will be the same, another method might be to assemble one bag with separate grade-level appropriate packets to be added that morning.

The substitute bag should include essentials such as paper, pencils, grading pens, stickers, and a teacher magazine or book to read in the event of a silent reading time. The writer also carried certificates with blank lines for the addition of a student's name and his extraordinary achievement for the day. It is a nice gesture to recognize a couple of students for their particular accomplishments on the day a substitute teacher is present. The substitute can even leave one for the regular teacher recognizing the commendable attitude of the entire class.

This can also act as a good networking tool. The commended students will fondly remember a substitute who has rewarded their efforts. Regular classroom teachers like to hear that their classes were so well-behaved that they earned a certificate of merit for their exceptional behavior. (Note: it is important that the substitute is sincere in giving these "awards" or it may very well backfire on her.) Likewise, parents will be appreciative to the substitute who put forth the extra effort to recognize their child.

Most substitutes found it very helpful to take along teaching ideas to use in the event that the regular teacher's plans are either not available or too vague to follow. These portable activities can range from hands-on cooperative group activities to quiet individual seat work. In this way the substitute is ready for a boisterous or

quiet group of students. The substitute can draw on her own teaching experience or preparatory college methods classes to develop these lessons.

Whole language activities are suitable for any grade and can be adapted to be used in most situations. The substitute will find it helpful to carry a picture book with a variety of pre-planned activities. These can be used when there is a half-hour to fill or longer. It is probably a good idea to keep track of what book activities were used with which class so that if the substitute is called back to the same class a few months later, he will have a record of previous use.

Another form that is beneficial to the substitute is the *This-Is-What-Happened-Today* form. This form should contain information that the regular teacher will want to know upon his return to the classroom: date, absences, the day's accomplishments and how the students did, student problems and student successes. A copy of such a form can be found as Appendix B.

The substitute who comes to a school prepared to face the challenges of the day will feel more confident with a well-stocked substitute bag. Some substitutes shared that they liked to carry a whistle in the likelihood of a recess duty. Others included a bell to use as a "get quiet" signal. Each substitute needs to experiment with the materials she finds necessary to include in the substitute

bag. These ideas are merely suggestions for some essentials the writer has found to be most beneficial.

Whole Language Guide

Because of the increase of teachers facilitating learning through the process-oriented methods cultivated in the whole language setting and the researcher's particular interest in the whole language movement, a section for managing a whole language classroom while substitute teaching is included in this handbook. Regie Routman, in her informative book *Transitions* (p. 26), defines whole language as "a philosophy which refers to meaningful, real, and relevant teaching and learning." One will find much activity in the whole language classroom; children will be engaged in writing, reading, listening, and speaking activities. Students are encouraged to take risks, and there is a feeling of success throughout the class as children are supported by the teacher and each other.

The substitute needs to know that because children are encouraged to take risks, he will certainly need to be in tune to the children so as not to discourage their efforts. Naturally, it would be nice if at all times in all classrooms the substitute was careful to guard a child's risk-taking capabilities, but especially so in the whole language learning environment. The substitute facilitates the learning community by providing the resources and oppor-

tunities for the children to engage in meaningful learning experiences.

By realizing the process oriented nature of whole language, the substitute can better understand the activities that will be taking place in the whole language classroom. Children will be reading and sharing literature of all types--big books, poems, and favorite stories. They will also be writing to each other, composing stories, journal writing, and working on literature projects. Collaborative learning will frequently be taking place as students will share the books that they have been reading and/or stories they are writing. As the substitute circulates throughout the room, she will need to offer words of encouragement, suggestions, and guidance. The respect of the substitute will allow the children to continue in the learning environment in which they have become accustomed.

Knowing what the substitute might expect to see in the whole language classroom helps to prepare him for a learning community that may be quite a bit different than the typical classroom with chairs in rows and students working individually. This does not mean though that the class will be total chaos as compared to the sedate setting of the traditional classroom. The substitute will need to make certain that students are engaged in meaningful learning activities and that the noise level keeps to a busy buzz rather than a screeching disaster.

The substitute will need to establish a "get quiet" signal, such as turning off the lights or raising a hand, so that students will know that they need to turn their attention to the substitute and listen for directions. There is probably a signal that the regular teacher already uses of which they are familiar. Adopting this signal should also work effectively for the substitute teacher.

There is much more behind teaching well in a whole language classroom than this brief synopsis can cover. The hope of this writer is that the substitute will not be reluctant to accept an assignment in a whole language classroom. The experience of substituting in a whole language classroom can indeed be very interesting and stimulating. If the substitute is interested in more information about a whole language approach to education, the writer suggests reading *Transitions* by Regie Routman (for primary grades) and *In the Middle* by Nancy Atwell (for middle grades).

What to Leave the Substitute

This last section is designed to assist the regular teacher in preparing for the inevitable visit of the substitute teacher. Regular classroom teachers expressed to the researcher that they agonized over what kind of plans and how much information to leave for the substitute. Substitutes likewise voiced their concerns over the times when there are seemingly no plans of much sustenance available. There are also those times at the other end of the spectrum when the plans are so lengthy and complicated that they are nearly impossible to follow. This section will aid the regular teacher in leaving sufficient plans and materials for the substitute.

If the district does not provide the substitute with a packet of information, it is a good idea to leave the substitute these items: a building map; the school schedule including teacher duties; names of the principal, secretaries, janitors, and other teachers; and directions for fire and tornado drills. In addition to these basic items, it is important to leave:

1. Daily schedule,
2. Names of a couple of helpful students,
3. Names of students with any special needs,
4. The name of a co-worker to call upon for assistance,

5. Clear, concise lesson plans,
6. Where to find teacher manuals and needed materials,
7. Seating chart,
8. Class roll,
9. Instructions for ordering a teacher lunch, and
10. Brief explanation of teacher duties (i.e. recess, lunch, bus, etc.).

The substitute's day will go much more smoothly if these materials are easy to find. It is a good idea to assemble a substitute folder and keep it readily accessible on the teacher's desk.

Most importantly, the regular teacher can "prepare his class for the visit of a substitute teacher by ensuring that classroom rules are taught, posted, and made a way of life for their pupils at the very beginning of the year" (Simmons, 1991). By establishing clear-cut rules for behavior early in the year, the regular teacher has smoothed the way for the substitute.

With a discipline plan established, an informative substitute pack available, explicit lesson plans prepared, and materials accessible, the substitute should be able to meet with great success in the classroom. Helping the substitute achieve success furthermore enhances the accomplishments of the students.

Summary

The hope of this writer is that the substitute will find the information contained in this handbook a valuable resource to help her perform her assignments in a worthy manner. Consequently, the substitute will be accomplishing more quality teaching and honing of teaching skills; thereby showcasing her teaching talents and improving potential net-working opportunities.

After reflecting on this handbook, the substitute will feel better prepared and more confident to tackle the challenges awaiting him. Schools will benefit likewise from the increased productivity of their students and will not feel like the absence of the regular teacher is a lost educational day.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

As the current job market for teachers remains saturated with quality applicants, first-year teachers discover themselves cast into the substituting arena with little to no preparation for this challenging form of pedagogy. Within these ranks the new teacher will be joined by veteran teachers opting for a part-time career and retired teachers supplementing their retirement income. They too will find that managing a classroom as a substitute is very different from that of teaching in one's own classroom.

On the average, students will spend from 91 to 104 days--more than an entire semester--with substitute teachers during their academic career. Schools will expend a rather significant amount of their annual budget on substitute teachers. For these reasons, if no other, schools must begin to look for ways to provide essential training for substitute teachers. Unfortunately, few schools are spending the time, money, and effort that is so desperately needed to provide this training.

A review of the literature showed that there is little guidance for the substitute teacher. Many writers expressed the need for increased attention to developing professional workshops geared to the substitute teacher. Along with the

advantages and disadvantages of substitute teaching, the literature revealed the contribution and characteristics of a successful substitute.

Information for the handbook was gleaned from the writer's seven years of personal experience as a substitute teacher in a variety of school districts and settings, and through surveying other substitute teachers. Discussions were conducted with other teachers and administrators to determine their requirements and suggestions for this handbook.

With these factors in mind, this writer developed a handbook to acquaint the substitute teacher with the pros and cons of substituting, the rudiments of classroom management, and the suggestions for a substitute survival kit. In addition, the handbook contained a skeleton description of a whole language classroom so as to familiarize the substitute with this growing trend in education. Lastly, the handbook addressed the essential information that the regular teacher can provide the substitute to make her day more pleasant and productive.

This handbook can be used as the springboard for a professional workshop focusing on the substitute teacher's role. Since the expressed need and desire is there for such a workshop, schools could certainly affect a positive change in the way that substitutes perform by fortifying their teaching skills with those necessary to substituting.

School districts could also provide substitutes with a copy of this handbook in addition to their own substitute information pack.

As the research showed, most problems substitutes encountered were in a classroom where the regular teacher had not prepared for the substitute's visit. Accordingly, administrators might make the handbook available to their regular teachers; especially the last section which examines their role in preparing for a substitute.

This handbook should make the substitute feel more confident in her role and more effective in the classroom. The days when a substitute is present would, therefore, become more productive; making for a more positive experience for the students, the substitute, the regular teacher, and the school system.

APPENDIX A

SUBSTITUTE SURVEY

1. What is the best thing about substitute teaching? Why?

2. What do you find to be the hardest part of substitute teaching?
Why?

3. What do you think would help you do better at #2?

4. Is there anything the school administration could do to make substitute teaching a more positive productive experience? If so, what? If not, what have you already found most helpful?

5. Is there anything the regular teacher could do to make your day in his classroom run more smoothly? If so, what? If not, what have you already found most helpful?

6. Would you recommend to other unemployed teachers that they should substitute teach? Why or why not?

7. Will you continue to substitute teach? Why or why not?

8. If you were to continue substitute teaching, would you attend a seminar geared to the substitute teacher?

9. What would you like to see such a seminar include?

APPENDIX B

SUBSTITUTE FORM

Today's Date _____

Absences: _____

Your Substitute today was: _____

This is what happened while you were away...

Accomplishments:

Helpful Students:

Notes:

Thanks for allowing me to be your substitute today. Please call if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX C

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