Dear Substitute Teachers,

Our focus over this school year is to provide you with classroom management techniques and effective instructional strategies through our Professional Development Sessions and The Subway monthly newsletter. Our Professional Development opportunities for Sessions 2 and 3 will include classroom management strategies for elementary, middle and high school. We will also provide a session on behavioral supports for students currently receiving services from our special education teams. Opportunities for attending these PD sessions will be sent out via email this month. It is our goal to support and show our appreciation to you as a valuable team member with Vista Unified School District.

The Human Relations Team

Setting the Tone: Plan for Blocks of Time

Good classroom management goes hand-in-hand with student discipline. To achieve good classroom management, educators must understand how social and emotional learning (SEL) influences classroom management design. Meeting both academic and SEL goals require less disciplinary action. Each month, we will focus on one tactic that makes effective use of your instructional time while supporting all students.

Our first tactic is Plan for Blocks of Time. In their book, The Key Elements of Classroom Management, Joyce McLeod, Jan Fisher and Ginny Hoover explain that good classroom management begins with planning the time available. Discipline problems generally occur when students become disengaged. To keep them focused, teachers need to plan different blocks of time in the classroom. Allocated time accounts for the total span of teacher instruction and student learning. Instructional time covers the time teachers spend actively teaching. During engaged time, students work on tasks on their own. And in academic learning time, teachers prove that students learned the content or mastered a particular skill.

Each block of time in the classroom, no matter how short, should be planned. Predictable routines help structure blocks of time in the classroom. Predictable teacher routines include opening activities, transitions, routine checks for understanding, and closing activities. Predictable student routines include partner, group, and independent work.

Reference
If you are a substitute teacher, chances are you bounce around from grade to grade, and sometimes even between different schools. While some teachers take the time to plan your day for you, or at least have lesson plans and materials ready in a folder for any time, there are times when you have to go it alone. Here are 10 quick lesson ideas that you might use for your next substitute teacher assignment. Just keep them in a tote bag and use them when necessary.

1. Create puzzles.
Word search, crossword, and other printable word games are great when you need something to use in the classroom. Simply print off a bunch of different puzzles and carry them with you when you are substituting.

2. Brick Brainstorm.
Come up with a lesson subject, such as electricity, technology, etc. Prepare bricks by using red construction paper. Give each student a brick. Now pose a question to the class, such as "What would you have done differently, if you invented the light bulb?" Let students write their responses on their brick. Then have students come up with their brick and explain their answer. Tape the brick to a wall, and as each child comes up, keep adding to make an entire brick wall.

3. Story Starters.
Tell the students what the lesson is about, and then write a story starter on the whiteboard such as for a rainforest theme, "One day I was walking through the forest in Savanna, when I heard..." Now let another volunteer come up and add a sentence to the story.

4. Create a Dictionary.
When presenting a lesson idea to the class, let the students come up with words that they think will be presented during the lesson. Write these words on the board with definitions, and have the students write down the words and definitions on paper. As the students learn about the lesson, let them check off any of the words that they did hear. See how many words they guessed correctly. Now have the students add more vocabulary words to their list, based on actual words used in the lesson, while you write them on the whiteboard.

5. Getting to Know You.
Have students write an essay about themselves. Ask them to write the answers to these questions (and come up with others): "If you won a million dollars, what would you do with it?" "If you could be anything in the world, what would you choose?" "What is the best vacation you ever had?"

6. Lead a group discussion.
Leading a discussion is a great way to talk about a lesson. Examples of discussion questions might include: "If there weren’t such things as rules, what would the world be like?" "What do you think is the best thing about school?" "Who are some of your heroes?" "What makes them so great?"

8. Riddles.
Use riddles that stretch the brain to think hard. Of course, make them grade-appropriate, but somewhat challenging. For instance ask them: “What gets wet the more you dry with it?” “The owner of a hotel wants the room doors numbered in order. There are 100 rooms. You must go out and buy the numbers to hang on all the doors. How many of each digit, 0 thru 9, will you need to buy?”

9. Create a Rebus.
Engage students in a story by reading a short tale. Aesop’s Fables work great with this idea. After reading the story, go back through the story and let children draw pictures in place of nouns. They can draw the pictures on the whiteboard. Now go back and read the story letting the students call out the nouns as you point to them on the whiteboard.

Reference
Story Chart Starter

You’ve probably learned how helpful it is to have a few activity ideas that you can pull out in a pinch. Here’s one idea that’s flexible and easy to adapt to different situations.

Draw the following chart on the board. Then, tell the students to select one item in each category and begin writing. They have ten minutes to complete their project. After, you can have students read their stories to each other. Students can also work collaboratively to write a group story.

For example, a student might choose to write a newspaper article about a silly bunny who wins a race. The story chart starter could also be adapted to align with seasons and holidays.

SUBSTITUTE PLACEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (SMARTFIND EXPRESS) - Reviewing Assignments

Follow these steps to review your assignments on SMART-FIND Express.

Choose the Review Assignments link to review past, present and future assignments or to cancel an assignment.

Follow these steps:

- Select format for Assignment display. List or Calendar view
- Search for assignments.
- Press the Search button to display the list of assigned jobs.
- Choose the Job Number link to view job details
- Select the Return to List button to review other jobs assigned to you.
- Select the Cancel Assignment button to cancel your assignment. Enter a reason for canceling from the pull down list. Wait for the “Job was cancelled successfully” notification. You cannot cancel an assignment within 1 hour of the start time.
- An assignment may contain file attachments. To view or download a file attachment, click on the file name.

If you have any questions on using the SmartFind Express, please contact Laura Lemly: lauralemly@vistausd.org (760)726-2170, ext. 92207

Professional Development

Our next Professional Development opportunity is scheduled for Monday, December 4th from 4:00—7:30 p.m. in the VUSD District Office Board Room. Participants will be compensated at the half-day substitute rate. Our second session will be “Classroom Management for All Ages”. There will be presenters from elementary, middle and high school. During the first week in November, we will send out a notification to register for Session #2. Space is limited to 30 participants. After the first 30 registered participants, we will create a waiting list. We hope to see you there!
VUSD Beliefs

We believe that...
All students have a unique capacity to learn.
Risk taking, effort and perseverance lead to excellence and innovation.
Individuals learn and work best in a safe, nurturing environment.

Important Dates

November 6—9  Grades K-5 Parent Teacher Conferences (Minimum Days)
November 7—9  Grades 6-8 Parent Teacher Conferences (Minimum Day)
November 10  Veteran’s Day (No School)
November 20—24  K-12 Non-Student Days
November 23  Thanksgiving Holiday

Principal’s Corner

Thank you to the following substitute teachers from our site Principals:

- Griselda Viscaino is an outstanding substitute teacher. She is always willing to lend a hand and is extremely patient and caring.

  Juan Ayala,
  Principal—Rancho Minerva Middle School

- Cheryl Hogue has served the children of California Avenue School and across the district for many years. She maintains excellent relationships with colleagues and parents. Cheryl is a servant leader who, time and time again, makes decisions that are student-centered.

  Rachel Schmidt,
  Principal—California Avenue School