

Top 6 Keys to Being a Successful Substitute

The most successful substitute teachers share some common characteristics. Here are six important keys to being a successful in substitute teaching.

1. Sense of Humor

A sense of humor can help you become successful. Your sense of humor can relieve tense classroom situations before they become disruptions. A sense of humor will also make class more enjoyable for your students and possibly make students more engaged in the learning. Most importantly, a sense of humor will allow you to see the joy in life and make you a happier person as you progress through this sometimes stressful career.

2. A Positive Attitude

A positive attitude is a great asset in life. You will be thrown many curve balls in life and especially in the world of education. A positive attitude will help you cope with these in the best way. For example, you may find out your first day to substitute that you are teaching Algebra 2 instead of Algebra 1. This may not be your ideal situation, but a substitute/guest teacher with the right attitude would try to focus on getting through the day without negatively impacting the students.

3. High Expectations

An effective substitute teacher must have high expectation. If you expect less effort you will receive less effort. You should work on an attitude that says that you know students can achieve to your level of expectations for the day or week, thereby giving them a sense of confidence too. Your expectations will be one of the key factors in helping students learn and achieve.

4. Consistency

In order to create a positive learning environment your students should know what to expect from you when they enter the classroom. You need to be consistent. This will create a safe learning environment for the students and they will be more likely to succeed. It is amazing that students can adapt to teachers throughout the day that range from strict to easy. However, most students dislike an environment in which the rules are constantly changing.

5. Fairness

Many people confuse fairness and consistency. A consistent substitute teacher is the same person from day to day. Substitutes should treat students equally regardless of the situation. For example, students complain of unfairness when one gender or group is handled differently. Students pick on this so quickly, so be careful of being labeled unfair.

6. Flexibility

One of the tenets of teaching should be that everything is in a constant state of change. Interruptions and disruptions are the norm and very few days are 'typical'. Therefore, a flexible attitude is important not only for your stress level but also for your students who expect you to be in charge and take control of any situation.