

Chapter 16

Technology and the Substitute Teacher

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A great deal goes into ensuring a smooth-running classroom when a teacher is absent. Mrs. Truman, a substitute teacher, highly recommends pre-regulated set-up and training in technology for substitute teachers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What follows is a true account experienced by substitute teachers facing unfamiliar technology. While names have been changed to protect the innocent, the facts remain the same. Sickness, injury, pregnancy, and conferences happen. Regular teachers have to be out of the classroom yet learning must continue. Although most teachers realize that a substitute teacher's knowledge varies, not all teachers think about this variance in terms of technology integration. And despite most substitutes teachers being able to turn on a computer and take roll, not every qualified substitute can handle much more than this. Even the most technologically savvy substitute teacher can encounter trouble with unfamiliar technology. Precious class time can be wasted trying to get these technologies to work. A whole class period, a whole day, can evaporate into inactivity if the machine(s) are never figured out.

It is true that most schools have at least one dedicated technical support person. But this person is not always available. Other teachers can sometimes be implored

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for help, but sometimes the most readily available teachers can be as technologically unfamiliar as the substitute. The notable confusion of the authority figure and resulting inactivity of students can lead to an atmosphere of chaos. This problem and possible fixes will be addressed in what follows.

THE CASE

Ms. Truman is aware that a great deal of planning goes into ensuring a smooth-running classroom when a teacher is absent. Substitute teachers like Ms. Truman take on a great deal of responsibility based on high-expectations; or at least the good ones do. The school is counting on these substitutes to succeed. The administrative staff do not need to be called into every substitute-run class everyday with complaints that the students are out of control. To keep the students under control, the substitute teacher must show a high degree of *withitness* and regulation. In order for this to happen the substitute must know what he or she is doing and how they will handle what the teacher expects of them.

From her substitute teaching experiences from school to school during the past two months, Mrs. Truman highly recommends some form of pre-regulated set-up or training in technology for substitute teachers. Here's why.

The following is a note left for Mrs. Truman by Mrs. Madison, the regular classroom teacher, who needs Mrs. Truman to cover a class for one day:

Mrs. Truman,

Thank you for sub'ing for me today. My students know the rules. Tell them I expect them to follow them or there will be consequences when I come back.

All I need you to do today is show them the video I left under this note. Take them to LGI 4220. It is down the hall on the right. To get the video started all you need do is turn on the computer; set the toggle switches on the computer stand to video not forgetting to adjust the sound on the computer, computer desk, and projector, set up the projector with the gray (not black) remote in the room, get the electrical screen pulled down (use the black remote for this), and don't put the video in the computer DVD player it does not work, the DVD will become stuck, put it in the DVD/VCR player below the computer in deck 2 (it should be marked) for the DVD to work you will need to make sure that the DVD/VCR is plugged into the computer and that it is set to computer mode. This last part should be preset, but we have been having meetings in the LGI all week, so settings could be off. This shouldn't be too hard.

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