

Substitute Teacher Training and Student Achievement

There are expectations for full time teachers. There are expectations for school nurses and athletic trainers. There are expectations for the principle, the superintendent, and all those who work in these offices. Some expectations are schooling for others certifications are required. But all are held to the appropriate expectation.

There is one teaching class that is different from the rest. The expectations for substitute teachers range from teaching certificates to none at all. (1) This raises multiple questions. How have substitute teacher expectations fallen so low? Why do we expect less out of at will teachers than full time teachers? How can the expectations for substitute teachers be raised to the appropriate level?

Teachers will continue to be absent, professional development will happen, sickness will befall teachers, and other functions will be required to attend to at no fault to the teacher. However, substitute teachers who step into the classroom need to counteract the negative effect of teachers being absent. This can be accomplished by utilizing substitute teachers who employ a high self efficacy.

Psychologist Albert Bandura stated, “what people think, believe, and feel affects how they behave.” (Bandura, 1986) Self-efficacy studies were developed to measure an “individual’s perception of their ability.” (Pajares, 1996) Bandura in 1986 and Cheryl Trull in 2004 both agree and conclude, “self-efficacy appears to be a good predictor of behavior.” (Trull, 2004)

Much research has been done in the area of self efficacy and teacher efficacy. This research shows how a person who has high self efficacy impacts positively the students they teach. In a list of research in this area compiled by Trull teachers who have high self-efficacy are:

- More fulfilled and dedicated in and to their profession
- They center teaching around the student
- Willing to meet the needs of their students through new methods
- Able to persist when things don’t go as planned
- Able to perceive their student’s learning levels
- More frequent in offering assistance to students with learning problems and to help them become more successful
- Less likely to submit students with learning problems for special services
- Able to set higher goals and expect more from students
- Work longer with students who are falling behind
- Able to teach students in such a way that the students outperform other classes
- A predictor of success for students on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, the Canadian Achievement Test, and the Ontario Assessment Instrument Pool (Trull, 2004)



When substitute teachers enter the classroom with high self-efficacy they have a positive impact on the students they teach. Therefore, the focus of improving the classroom when the teacher is away is on the substitute teacher. A positive way to influence a substitute teachers self-efficacy, and as a result a students performance, is to engage them in skills training.

STEDI.org developed The Substitute Teacher Self Efficacy Study (STSES) to measure the effect of skills training on a substitute teacher's self-efficacy. STSES was based off the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES) later called the Teachers Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) which, to quote Trull summarizing Tschannen-Moran, speaking of TSES "the instrument was demonstrated to be superior to previous measures of teacher efficacy by assessing a broad range of capabilities considered important by teachers, yet not so specific to deny comparisons of teachers in context, levels, and subjects." (Trull, 2004)

STSES was utilized to measure the impact of the skills taught in The Substitute Teacher Handbook and in the SubSkills Online Training. Measuring those substitute teachers who passed training with an 85% (standard passing score) STSES found in the areas of Classroom Management and Teaching Strategies construct a substitute teachers self-efficacy increased. In addition, it was found that after training was complete and the substitute teacher entered the classroom their self-efficacy remained higher then pre training scores.

These results show that a trained substitute teacher in classroom management and teaching strategies can have a great impact on student achievement. Skills' training is therefore necessary for substitute teachers who have not received skills training previously, such as certified teachers. Through training, non-certified substitute teachers can meet expectations and improve student achievement.

STEDI.org developed its overall training courses with all these points in mind. Following this scheduled shows, most importantly, to improve student performance by raising a substitute teacher's level of self-efficacy. Additional benefits of this method include:

1. Reduced the liability and exposure of a school district
2. Reduced hiring costs by eliminating excess applications
3. Reduced time managing substitute teachers by reducing complaints
4. Reduced turnover by having a more satisfied substitute teaching pool

The STEDI Model

1. Establish high expectations for highly trained substitute teachers.
2. Utilize **SubSkills Online Training** to raise the skill level of non-certified substitute teachers. Also as initial screening and training prior to hire and paid for by the applicant.
3. Hold a live training using the **Substitute Teacher Handbook** allowing time for orientation of new substitute teachers, discussion, observations, and role-play of key skills.



4. Enroll all substitute teachers in **SubWise eMentoring** course for ongoing training throughout the year paid for by the district.
5. Use **Advanced Online Training** courses for substitute teachers who are looking to excel and to provide additional training.

1. <http://stedi.org/subs/resources/how-to-become-a-substitute-teacher/requirements-for-substitute-teachers-by-state/>

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Pajares, F. (1996). Role of self-efficacy beliefs in the mathematical problem-solving of gifted students. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 21*, 325-344.

Trull, C. (2004). *The Effects of Substitute Teacher Training on the Teaching Efficacy of Prospective Substitute Teachers in the State of West Virginia*. Blacksburg, VA

