

# SUBstantial News

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With support from the Substitute Teaching Division of STEDI.

## News and Information Just for Substitute Teachers from

### I Understand

“That’s not how our teacher does it.”

“You can’t make me.”

“This assignment is stupid.”

“I hate this class!”

These are just a few of the many student complaints and comments you’ve probably heard as a substitute teacher. So how should you deal with angry, frustrated, or emotional student outbursts?

“I understand” are perhaps the two most powerful words in a substitute teacher’s vocabulary when it comes to dealing with verbal protests. They enable you to acknowledge what students are saying without giving up any of your authority or getting emotionally involved.

If a student says, “That’s not how we usually do it,” you can say, “I understand, but the instructions for today say to do it this way instead.”

If a student says, “You are the worst teacher ever!” you can say, “I understand, however I am your teacher for the day, now please sit down and begin working on your assignment.”

If a student says, “I’m not going to do it!” you can say, “I understand you don’t want to do this assignment, however you are expected to have it completed by the beginning of class tomorrow and not distract other students while they are working.”

From “This assignment is stupid,” to “I hate you!” your best response to student outbursts is to remain calm, say “I understand,” and then redirect student behavior. These two little words can stop protests, prevent heated debates and allow you to remain in control of the classroom. So you think it seems too simple to be effective? I understand, give it a try anyway and you’ll be pleasantly surprised with the results.

Additional classroom management strategies can be found in the *Substitute Teacher Handbooks* and *Classroom Management* audio CD. Both are available online at [stedi.org](http://stedi.org) or by calling 800-922-4693.

### Raise the Level of Questioning

How much and what kind of thought is required to answer the questions you ask students? To answer your questions, do students just need to recall basic facts or do they require higher levels of thinking such as application, analysis, and evaluation? The higher the level of student thinking the more learning that will occur during a question and answer exchange.

The following are some ideas for taking basic questions and revamping them or using follow up questions to raise the level of student thinking.

#### Basic/Recall Questions:

- Name the characters in the story.
- List the numbers between 65 and 87.
- Define the word brash.

Name three traffic laws.

Did you like this book?

#### Higher Level Questions:

Who do you think is the most important character in the story and why?

How many odd numbers are there between 65 and 87?

What are five words that are the opposite of brash?

Predict how driving would be different if the following three laws were abolished.

Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?

While there are times for asking questions to get specific and concise answers, at other times using verbs

such as summarize, predict, classify, rate, explain, and evaluate will help make sure students are getting more out of questions than just memorizing facts and figures. An added bonus is that effective questions keep students involved in the learning activity and they will be less likely to engage in inappropriate behaviors.

#### Quote of the Month

**“Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it. Autograph your work with excellence”.**

**– Author Unknown**



## Reporting Suspected Abuse

Most states have laws that require adults who work with children to report suspected child abuse. The purpose of child abuse reporting legislation is to protect the best interests of children, offer protective services to prevent harm to children, stabilize the home environment, and preserve family life whenever possible. In most situations persons acting in good faith while making reports or participating in an investigation of alleged abuse or neglect are immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise arise from those actions. Not reporting suspected abuse might make you guilty of a class B misdemeanor.

Any school employee (including a substitute teacher) who knows or reasonably believes that a student has been neglected, or physically or sexually abused, should immediately notify the building principal, the nearest peace officer, law enforcement agency, or office of the State Division of Human Services. It is not the responsibility of the school employee to prove that the student has been abused or neglected, or to determine if the student is in need of protection. Investigations are the responsibility of the Division of Human Services.

Learn about the child abuse reporting laws and requirements of your state and find out the specific policies and procedures for reporting suspected abuse in the schools where you teach. Additional information about child abuse, including physical and behavioral red flags to be aware of, is available from various organizations including the Child Welfare Information Gateway, <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/signs.cfm> and Childhelp <http://www.childhelp.org/signs-of-child-abuse>.

## Things you need to know!

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