

# SUBstantial News

April 2009

With support from the Substitute Teaching Institute at Utah State University

News and Information Just for Substitute Teachers From Federal Way Public Schools

## Teaching English Language Learners

According to the U.S. Department of Education, in the last two decades, the population of students who are limited English proficient has grown by 169%, while the general population has grown by 12%. Of the school-age population in the United States 10.5% have been classified as English Language Learners. Because of this change in our classrooms, substitute teachers need to work to increase their ability to teach English Language Learners.

A unique challenge in public education today is the wide variety of language abilities that are found in the classrooms across America. Imagine how difficult it would be to learn a new language, then attend school and try to learn the new language as well as the new material. As teachers, we need to be as accommodating as possible for all of the students we meet. Following is a list of strategies to help the students who are learning English as a second language.

### Proximity

Have you ever been driving down the road and all of a sudden everyone slows way down, then you look over and see the police car parked at the side of the road. As substitute teachers we can learn a valuable lesson from patrol officers in the importance of proximity.

Proximity can be defined as the physical distance between the teacher and student; there is a direct relationship between how close a teacher is to students and how well students behave. By constantly moving about the room, a teacher can observe the progress of students, acknowledge and reinforce appropriate behavior, and manage off task behavior with proximity.

Do not underestimate the power of this strategy; you will be amazed at how many

Suggested Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners:

- Use dramatic facial expressions to get your message across.
- Always try to communicate meaning to your student.
- Do not raise your volume when speaking. Loudness does not compensate for lack of understanding, and may be interpreted as anger towards the student.
- Do not force your student to speak, especially in front of other children or adults.
- Do not assume that the child understands what you are saying. Accompany your words with pictures, gestures, and movements that will help to convey your meaning.

negative behavior problems will be taken care of just by placing yourself nearer to a student. In most cases, talking to the poorly behaving student will not be required. What will be required is constantly reinforcing on-task behavior with verbal praise.

Plan on wearing comfortable, professional shoes and being on your feet all day monitoring, assisting, providing positive reinforcement, and using proximity to keep students on task. Find a way to encourage yourself to be continually on your feet monitoring students and using proximity to your advantage. One permanent teacher, to remind herself to continually walk around, would wear a pedometer each teaching day and challenge herself to increase her number of steps each class period.

- Simplify your language by using short and simple sentences when speaking to a student for whom English is a new language.
- Your interest in the child's culture and language should be infused in each of your sessions. For example, ask your student to make connections between your activities and the student's prior activities.

By adding these simple strategies while teaching, you will better assist those students who don't feel as confident speaking English.

*\*Information adapted from the U.S. Department of Education and Bank Street College.*

Coupling proximity and positive verbal reinforcement is a powerful strategy for keeping students on task. By walking around the room and acknowledging appropriate behavior, instead of reading a book at the permanent teacher's desk, you are showing students the importance of being on task instead of just telling them.

#### Quote of the Month

**"We are all faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations."**

**- Charles R. Swindoll**

## Teaching a Foreign Language Class

As a substitute teacher you never know what a day is going to bring. For some, the variety of experiences is what they enjoy most about substitute teaching. Being in a variety of classes, it is important to have a wide knowledge base of activities effective for the classroom. Here are a few ideas for time fillers that you can use in a foreign language class:

**Crossword Puzzles** - have students make a crossword puzzle of the vocabulary. The clues may be given in English or the foreign language depending on ability.

**Floor Plan** – Have students draw out the floor plan of their house labeling furniture in the language.

**Telephone** – Have one student select a phrase and whisper it to the next person. Send the message all around the room, when it gets to the last student, he will need to translate the phrase into English.

By entering a foreign language class prepared with activities and adaptable ideas you can use to enhance the permanent teacher’s lesson plan, it will make the day smoother for the students as well as yourself. For more ideas on activities you can use while teaching in a foreign language class, refer to the *Substitute Teacher Handbook*.

## Things you need to know!

SPRING SUBSTITUTE CELEBRATION - Our Substitute Celebration will be on May 28, 2009. This is a great opportunity to celebrate your success and network with other substitutes in our district. Please mark your calendar and plan to join us in honoring our outstanding substitute colleagues. We'll provide plenty of refreshments and door prizes. We look forward to seeing you there:

What: Spring Substitute Celebration  
Where: ESC Board Room  
When: May 28, 2009  
Time: 4:00 - 5:30 PM

RSVP to CJ at 253-945-2027 by May 11, 2009 to let her know you are attending.

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You Are Invited to Participate in a Substitute Teacher Survey 09 -

Substitute teachers who choose to participate may enter a drawing to win one of eight \$35 gas cards.

The Substitute Teaching Division of STEDI.org is conducting the "Substitute Teacher Survey 09" to document the current status of substitute teaching in the country and to determine how to help substitute teachers succeed in the classroom.

This survey consists of 25 questions, takes approximately 15 minutes and includes such questions as frequency of assignments taken, substitute pay, training and support needs, expectations and satisfaction. The survey needs to be completed by April 15, 2009.

For more information on this survey please go to <http://stedi.org/subm/survey/>.

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Emergency Guest Teachers are At-Will substitutes and are not to accept any pre-arranged teaching assignments. You are able to search for teaching assignments the evening before and the morning of the day you are available to teach. You are able to accept teaching assignments for 1 - 3 days in length, in the current work week. You may also contact CJ at 253-945-2027 for assistance.

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Training Classes: Register for classes at [www.peopleware.net/2686](http://www.peopleware.net/2686)

<p>Substitute Teaching Division <b>STEDI</b>.org</p>	<p>Licensed by: <b>Utah State University</b> SUBSTITUTE TEACHING INSTITUTE</p>	<p>(800) 922-4693 <a href="http://www.stedi.org">www.stedi.org</a></p>
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