

# SUBstantial News

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With support from the Substitute Teaching Institute at Utah State University

News and Information Just for Substitute Teachers From

## Whose Behavior Are We Trying to Control?

When an airplane is about to take flight, the flight attendants give a demonstration on appropriate procedures in the event of an emergency. Those who have flown are familiar with the warning that if there is a decline in cabin pressure, masks will drop from the ceiling that will supply the necessary oxygen. The point is stressed during the presentation that a person must put on his own mask before she can turn and assist someone else.

One might ask what does this have to do with the classroom. The lesson we can learn is that in order to influence someone else's behavior we must first have control of our own. This is a powerful concept and one that educators should take to heart.

### Dressed for Success

The hit 80's rock band from Sweden, **Roxette**, said it best when they sang, "I'm gonna get dressed for success, shaping me up for the big time... Look sharp!" Dressing professionally is a notable part of being an authority in the classroom. Students like to see a professional in the classroom when their permanent teacher is gone for the day.

A major complaint against substitute teachers is that they are not dressing professionally, they will show up in jeans and flip flops to their teaching assignments. When approached about casual dress, often the substitute teacher's response is that the permanent teacher's dress isn't very nice either. As stated in the **Substitute Teacher Handbook**, the only behavior we are

By securing his own mask first and taking control of his own actions, a substitute teacher can then create an environment where students can behave well. Substitute teachers should worry less about students' misbehavior and focus on their own misbehavior. That misbehavior might include:

- Not setting expectations
- Responding only to inappropriate behavior
- Using sarcasm
- Using coercion to make students comply

If a substitute teacher can learn to behave appropriately, it will increase the likelihood of appropriate student behavior. But it is important to note that the teacher must **first** gain

control of his own behavior before he can expect appropriate behavior in someone else. Eleanor Roosevelt put it beautifully when she said, "It is not fair to ask of others what you are unwilling to do yourself."

To answer the question posed in the title: whose behavior are we trying to control? The answer is, we are trying to control our own behavior. By controlling our own behavior, we can create an environment where students can, in turn, behave well.

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#### Quote of the Month

**"Prove that you can control yourself and you are an educated man; and without this all other education is good for nothing."**  
- Roswell Dwight Hitchcock

trying to control is our own. Substitute teachers need to dress and act like professionals so the likelihood of being treated like a professional is increased. Dressing professionally for **women** may include the following: outfits in which she could bend down, stoop over, and write on the whiteboard with ease. A teacher should plan on wearing comfortable dress shoes, for she will be walking around all day.

Dressing professionally for **men** will include: a dress shirt, tie, and slacks. They can always remove the tie, undo the neck button, and roll up the sleeves if he finds himself over dressed for the assignment.

As a general rule for **all** substitute teachers: jeans, t-shirts, sandals,

and other casual clothing are not considered professional or appropriate for the classroom setting. A substitute teacher should always dress at least as professionally as the other teachers in the building. Remember that it takes the same amount of time to put on jeans than it does to put on slacks, especially if it has already been ironed and laid out the night before.

Substitute teachers who dress professionally are not only regarded more as a professional amongst colleagues; it also increases a student's respect for the substitute teacher. By taking the few extra minutes to iron a dress shirt or put on dress shoes, a substitute teacher will be regarded as more qualified to be in the classroom.

## Ask, Pause, Call

Questioning students is always a challenging aspect of teaching. A teacher can follow Bloom's Taxonomy and come up with wonderful questions, but they might still be ineffective because those questions are not coupled with the *Ask, Pause, Call* method.

The *Ask, Pause, Call* method allows time for students to think of intelligent

answers; teachers will pause three times after asking a question. The first pause will give the entire class time to formulate an answer. The teacher will then call on a student, and then will pause again. The second pause provides the student time to verbalize a response. After the response, the teacher will pause again. The third pause will encourage the student to add more to their answer, or will encourage

other students in the class to add another response.

By using the *Ask, Pause, Call* method, teachers will enhance the quality of answers that students give. Pausing will provide time for students to reflect on the question asked and give time to formulate a sophisticated answer.

## Things you need to know!

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