

A CASE STUDY OF PEER-DRIVEN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE  
INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS DURING TEACHER ABSENCES:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS IN AN ERA OF  
ACCOUNTABILITY

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctorate of Education

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by

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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined  
the dissertation entitled

A CASE STUDY OF PEER-DRIVEN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE  
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IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS IN AN ERA OF  
ACCOUNTABILITY

Presented by Kevin Elliott  
A candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education  
And hereby certify that in their opinion it is worth acceptance.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In the current educational climate, there are demands placed on districts to meet high standards of student achievement. Having highly qualified teachers is paramount. But, at times, this highly qualified teacher is unable to be in the classroom. Personal or family illness, funerals, school-related professional development, and personal days contribute to teacher absences.

To maintain a positive learning environment in the absence of regular classroom teachers, districts typically hire substitute teachers. Some states require a college degree, and others require some college hours. There are states that only require a high school diploma or a GED, while some states allow districts to establish their own requirements for substitute teacher eligibility ([www.Stedi.org](http://www.Stedi.org)). Substitute teachers range in qualifications and experience from former classroom teachers to high school graduates with some college credits but no training in educational pedagogy or classroom management (Welsch, 2011).

Glatfelter (2006), found that the average student would be taught by a substitute teacher for the equivalent of one year of K-12 education. In the likelihood some substitute teachers were not highly qualified, these students were receiving nearly ten percent of their education from someone not formally trained to be an effective leader of learning. A training deficit of this magnitude impedes student development

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012) found a direct correlation between level of education and mean weekly income. Additionally, the unemployment rate is lower for groups with higher levels of education. When considering the impact poor instruction

may have on earning and employment potential, high school graduates are at a disadvantage before they begin to pursue a post-secondary education (United States Department of Labor, 2013). Therefore, it is imperative that districts provide effective learning opportunities at all times.

Effective teachers work diligently from the first day of school to establish guidelines and behaviors while holding students accountable for their actions (Wong & Wong, 2001). In an ideal circumstance, student and substitute teacher interactions would resemble those exhibited between regular classroom teachers and their students. However, this is not the norm in many cases. The presence of a substitute teacher often results in incomplete assignments, disciplinary issues, and disruptions to teacher's timeline for addressing the planned curriculum (Damle, 2009).

The problem, then, is to identify the sources of poor performance by substitute teachers and develop practical solutions that will benefit students. There is evidence in the literature indicating the importance of the regular classroom teacher's responsibility for providing quality lesson plans ("Preparing a substitute teacher," 2011). When a teacher does not effectively prepare, the learning opportunities suffer. However, when lesson plans are appropriate, but learning is below expectations, there is a possibility the substitute teacher is at fault. It could be the substitute teacher does not follow the plans left by the regular classroom teacher or is not competent to lead the classroom (Zubriniski, 2012). It is the hope of the researcher for this study to reveal strategies which will make substitute teacher-led days effective in the absence of the regular classroom teacher while identifying the strategies the leader, for this study the principal, uses to assure this effectiveness is sustained.

In the following sections of this research paper, the problem statement will be presented. The research purpose and research questions will be clarified. Additionally, the conceptual framework and research design and methods will be described. A list of key terms will be provided with the proper definitions. Finally, the significance of this study will be thoroughly described. It is the intention of this research to have each of these elements combine to create a clearer picture of the role principals play in ensuring students receive a quality education regardless of who is in the classroom.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The primary conceptual framework for this study was a "model for improving instructional effectiveness." The framework was derived from research-based criteria and has some of the same tenets as appreciative inquiry. Appreciative inquiry believes in valuing what is best, envisioning what could be, discussing what should be, and focuses on the positives in all cases. The model for improving instructional effectiveness utilizes similar concepts and reflects appreciative inquiry's core fundamentals, especially the use of surveys and the idea of culture change (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

Leaders (school administrators), teachers, and substitute teachers were evaluated to determine how effectively each provided meaningful learning opportunities for students. Areas of focus were the preparation and evaluation of substitute teachers.

A performance evaluation was designed to determine how effectively a classroom teacher prepares for a substitute teacher. The performance of substitute teachers was evaluated following their specific teaching assignment. Finally, the role of the school administrator was evaluated to insure the effectiveness of both the teacher and

substitute teacher has been examined to determine which practices positively impact student learning when the classroom teacher is not present.

A second conceptual framework for this study focuses on the concept of double-loop learning. According to Argyris and Schon (1974), double-loop theory involves comparing the difference between espoused theory and what is actually taking place. In double-loop learning, individuals make adjustments and try to make the intervention (action) more appropriate to the problem. If it doesn't work, more adjustments are made until the problem is addressed effectively (Calatta, 2013).

A key aspect of this action theory was how those involved continued to learn from substitute teacher training in an effort to make the initiative effective. For this study, emphasis was placed on developing actions which allow school administrators, teachers, and substitute teachers to change their behavior based on feedback from one another. It was the intention of the study to create a method which school administrators may utilize to ensure the best possible learning opportunity for students on the days when regular classroom teachers were absent.

Specifically this study incorporated double-loop theory with the following guidelines which addressed the basic conceptual framework:

- What factors, developed and continuously evaluated by leadership, determine the effectiveness of substitute teachers (Becker, 1998)
- The variables of this concept include, but are not limited to: students, teachers, school administrators, substitutes, expectations, qualifications, and the desire of these individuals to be successful.
- Feedback and input from all variables (Becker, 1998).

- Adjustments made by school administrators, teachers, and substitute teachers to increase effectiveness of student learning (Becker, 1998).
- Review of previous literature is an integral part of this process and helps develop background knowledge and guide further research (Ravitch & Riggin, 2012).
- Examples of previous research regarding substitute teacher effectiveness, if an example exists. If roadblocks arise here, it might require redirection of the study as mentioned by Becker (1998).
- Test and refine individual concepts and allow the research to guide the study. Sometimes themes emerge unexpectedly (Becker, 1998).

The *Model for improving instructional effectiveness* created a conceptual framework from which the elements involved in providing effective learning during the absence of a teacher could be analyzed. By breaking these elements into substitute teacher selection, preparation, and evaluation, the research focused on the processes of each which led to the development of a systematic process for providing better learning opportunities for students regardless of who was in the classroom.

Double-loop learning theory helped develop strategies which school administrators could utilize to create effective learning opportunities when regular classroom teachers were absent. The goal was to create a research-based design which allows flexible interventions which meet the needs of diverse staffs. There is likely not a "one size fits all" plan. However, basing the plan on double-loop concepts allowed solutions to evolve with the participants.

The intention of the study was to utilize the data gleaned from the two conceptual frameworks. By applying both frameworks it was possible to develop strategies which

address the selection, preparation, and evaluation of substitute teachers. In the interest of adding to the profession of education, creating ways to improve the effectiveness of instruction would be beneficial to the district being studied. It also created a larger research initiative to develop as an educational school administrators.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem addressed in this research is the effect the absence of the regular classroom teacher, who is the primary person directly responsible for sharing information and guiding learning, has on student learning opportunities and how the principal ensures what is happening in the classroom is directed towards the goal of quality learning. In the event the regular classroom teacher is not able to be at school, then this responsibility is placed on the substitute. At times the substitute is ineffective as well. The challenge is to find ways to insure no matter who provides instruction, students are given every opportunity to learn. Looking at examples of programs, which are in place in some districts, provided insight into how substitute, regular classroom teacher, and administrator roles are evaluated following days where the teacher was absent.

It seems what works for one district, does not work in others. Some districts train their substitutes prior to their employment. Others formally evaluate the teacher, the substitute teacher, and the school administrator following the covered day or days (True, Butler, & Sefton, 2011). The goal with this method is to receive immediate feedback and try to identify problems quickly. This might seem like an easy solution, but taking time to do the evaluation does add another responsibility to teachers and school administrators. If a school administrator had multiple substitute teachers in the building during one day, he would need to fill out multiple evaluations.

Gaps in the research exist. There is also insufficient information to determine the long-term effects of individual substitute teachers. Current research, which is limited, focuses on the impact of teacher absences on student achievement and behavior. It also focuses on how some schools address substitute teacher training and the design of substitute teacher preparation programs. What it does not address is how to insure the entire process of utilizing substitutes is monitored for quality from training, early in the school year, to the evaluation and follow-up after a substitute teacher covers for the regular classroom teacher. Fluctuation in substitute teacher assignments and substitute teacher availability hinder the reliability and validity aspects of any potential research in this area.

One significant challenge to substitute acquisition is matching the subject a substitute is covering to the knowledge he or she possesses in that curricular area. More often than not common practice leads districts to assign a person in the classroom who will do the best he or she can to follow the directions left by the regular classroom teacher while keeping students on task and out of the principal's office (Gray, 2004). However, this person might have received little or no experience in the subject area (Damle, 2009). For instance, having a first semester college sophomore covering in a trigonometry class likely does not have the same impact as if the district could find a veteran math teacher who could also substitute teach.

Furthermore, quantifying the variables would be an enormous task and to truly achieve, there would need to be a significant number of respondents. If there were research available examining classroom teaching styles and subjects, substitute qualifications, substitute training and accountability, school administrator accountability,

and student cooperation, it might provide more conclusive data identifying deficiencies. At this time, there is no such research.

It was necessary to pursue this study because there was so little information on substitute effectiveness. The problem this research intended to address was how the absence of the regular classroom teacher affected student achievement and the possible interventions which could make these days more productive for students. Eliminating some of the discrepancies of substitute teaching protocol would help students experience more effective classroom instruction. Additionally, there was a need to determine which practices were used by effective school administrators to assure quality learning takes place.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Leadership is described as the methods used by an individual to influence others in the pursuit of a common goal (Northouse, 2010). The purpose of this research was to conduct a case study of the role leadership, in this case the school administrator, plays in ensuring the quality of learning opportunities provided to students when the regular classroom teacher is absent. The regular classroom teacher, the substitute teacher, and the students are all factors which determine whether a day of school covered by a substitute teacher is effective. However, this study chose to look at what methods the school administrators utilized to develop positive learning opportunities in the classroom. Additionally, this study looked to identify instances where school administrators were effective in conveying high expectations to teachers and substitute teachers.

The primary method for identifying the effectiveness of substitute improvement was the implementation of a substitute teacher academy and the associated instruments,

both archival and non-archival. Fortunately, for the purpose of this study, the school administrators at Kansas School District A allowed the researcher to develop many of the instruments and initiatives which supported the purpose of improving substitute teacher effectiveness. The purpose of this study remained constant from the beginning.

It was the belief prior to conducting research that when there is poor communication of the expectations placed on the regular classroom teacher, the substitute teacher, and the students, the results will be poor as well. Conversely, if the teacher and the substitute teacher clearly understand their responsibilities prior to beginning of the school day when the regular classroom teacher is gone, then this study looked to identify those situations which promote quality learning. The key element of this study were characteristics of the school administrator and was the focus of the research.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions were intended to identify strengths and weaknesses of the district examined during this case study. The following questions were designed to evaluate current practices conducted by district leadership when selecting, preparing, and evaluating substitutes:

1. What are the perceptions of school administrators on the performance of substitute teachers after the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy?
2. What are the perceptions of regular classroom teachers on the performance of substitute teachers after the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy?

3. What are the perceptions of the substitute teachers in regards to School District A's policies regarding substitute teaching following the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy?

### **Limitations, Assumptions, and Design Controls**

With this study it was assumed there were multiple components which were not easily categorized for statistical analysis. The study presented aspects which, by nature, fluctuate and therefore were not able to be replicated under identical conditions. Substitutes change frequently and some substitute are more effective than others. Students react differently to some substitutes. All teachers do not plan the same way for days they will be absent. This creates inconsistency.

According to Creswell (2009) when this occurs there is concern for a lack of validity. To help increase the validity, the researcher can triangulate data which causes him or her to look at the connections between multiple data sources. Member checking can be used to insure the data obtained is accurate. In order to member check, the researcher returns to one of the individuals studied and share the findings with him or her and receives feedback on the precision of the reported data (Hatch, 2002).

Another method implemented was the use of peer debriefing. Peer debriefing occurs when the researcher shares the findings with a person who asks clarifying questions. These questions cause the researcher to explain and justify the findings (Creswell, 2009). This was the protocol for this study as well.

In regards to this study, prior to collecting data, the researcher assumed the school administrator did not utilize a formal evaluation tool for assuring the quality of learning taking place during the absence of the substitute teacher. Having worked in the district

for 14 years, and witnessing the substitute performance in my own classroom, I had previous knowledge of what many of the substitute teacher practices were prior to the study. It was my assumption all substitute teaching experiences were similar to mine. Therefore it was important as the study got under way to remain as objective as possible when observing, interviewing, and developing surveys so as not to lead the data in the wrong direction.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

In this study there are terms which are specific to the profession of teaching and need to be defined for clarification. Some of them have multiple meanings and, for consistency, they needed to be accurately described. These terms were included in the research and are defined as follows:

- **Absenteeism.** Absenteeism occurs when the regular classroom teacher is not working in his or her classroom. When teacher is absent for illness, professional leave, death in the family, or personal leave, most districts employ a substitute teacher (Merriam-Webster, 2014).
- **Evaluation.** An evaluation is a formal instrument designed to determine the quality of the work completed by certain individuals. In this study, discussions of evaluations will focus on the efforts of teachers, substitutes, and school administrators (Merriam-Webster, 2014).
- **Licensure.** Teachers and substitutes in the state of Kansas are required to meet guidelines set forth by the State Board of Education. In this study, licensure refers to whether substitutes have completed the requirements to receive a certificate, or license (Kansas Department of Education, 2013).

- **Permanent Substitute.** A permanent substitute is an individual, or group of individuals, employed by a school district who provide instruction in the absence of the regular classroom teacher. These individuals are considered part of the staff and more familiar with the school policies, personnel, and culture (Olson & Jensen, 2003).
- **Professional Development.** Professional development is the process which school districts utilize to train teachers in new pedagogical or classroom management strategies. Professional development opportunities are convenient ways to involve substitutes in the district culture and expose them to professional teaching concepts which not all of them have received training in (Education Week, 2004).
- **Recruitment.** Recruitment is the act of seeking individuals who are candidates for substitute teaching. Recruiting can occur in the media, on school websites, through job fairs, or staffing services (Ferguson, 2001).
- **School Administrator.** A leader is someone who is charged with guiding others (Northouse, 2010). In education this can be the superintendent, principal, assistant principal, or curriculum coordinator. In this study a school administrator refers to the building-level principal.
- **School Culture.** For the purposes of this study, school culture refers to the unique characteristics of the staff, students, and community expectations associated with a specific school (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013).
- **Substitute teachers.** In this study a substitute teacher is an individual who is teaching students in the absence of the regular classroom teacher. In the state of Kansas, this is a person who has completed a minimum of 60 hours of college

credit from an accredited college. The substitute is also required to hold a current Kansas substitute teacher's license and pass a background check (Kansas State Department of Education, 2014).

- **Substitute Training.** Training for substitutes has a variety of descriptions and levels depending on individual districts. The goal of training is to prepare substitutes to fulfill responsibilities of the regular classroom teacher. Some districts choose to train and others do not.

### **Significance of the Research for Leadership Practice**

For classroom teachers who have been absent it can be frustrating to return to school to learn the lesson, which had been planned, is not finished to the expected level. This is a common problem which causes teachers to get behind in their lesson timeline. In some cases the lesson has to be re-taught partially or in its entirety. Other times the student work which was turned in was of such low quality, it has to be resubmitted. In any case, the time lost is not replaceable.

Why is this important? If this happens multiple times it creates a void in the education received by students. When reconsidering the fact some students are taught by substitutes for one year of their K-12 education (Glatfelter, 2006), does this mean it takes another year to make up for the lack of quality instruction provided during the absence of the regular classroom teacher?

School administrators hold a significant role in eliminating this wasted time. By using evaluations, creating high expectations for student achievement (proper behavior, following directions, completing assignments), and holding teachers, substitutes, and themselves accountable for ensuring quality educational opportunities, the school

administrator can be a powerful agent for positive change. A teacher absence does not have to mean a wasted learning day (Gray, 2004). If a proper program is developed it can fill the gap and create positive results for students. In the bigger picture, an effective method for creating this change can have significant impacts on the educational profession and the achievement levels of students beyond one school district.

### **Summary**

The intent of this research was to study practices which occurred when the regular classroom teacher is absent and how the role of the school administrator affected whether the students were provided a quality learning experience. The study focused on the school administrator's role in selection, preparation, and evaluation of utilizing substitutes. The substitute academy utilized in this study was a peer-driven effort developed under the direction of Kansas District A school administrators. The school administrators were ultimately responsible for approving the content of training and subsequent evaluations.

Through the lens of a mixed-methods study, one K-12 district was examined to determine possible shortcomings and any interventions which are, and could be, used to strengthen the process of teaching with substitutes. A "model for improving instructional effectiveness" and double-loop theories were utilized as conceptual frameworks to shape the study. The instructional time lost due to teacher absences is significant (Glatfelter, 2006). It is believed this study provides practical evidence and solutions which support a change in policy which school administrators in the educational profession can incorporate to assure effective learning opportunities.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, the researcher was focused on developing valid arguments for providing effective substitute teachers when regular classroom teachers are absent. There are many studies describing substitute training and associated teaching methodology. The researcher was also able to find a variety of resources addressing challenges districts face when acquiring, training, and evaluating substitute teachers. The one thing difficult to find was substantial information regarding the role school administrators possess in the process.

The following information in chapter two focuses lost time for students, teacher shortcomings, the acquisition of high-quality substitute teachers, substitute preparation, and the responsibilities of school administrators. It is the intent of this literature review to clarify what is known about substitute teacher preparation, training, and evaluation in order to shape the study and determine how effective school administrators provide support to this integral part of the educational process.

#### **Lost Time for Students**

As previously mentioned, the average student in the United States will experience a substitute teacher leading his learning for approximately one year of their K-12 education (Glatfelter, 2006). Because of this, the need for high quality instruction is paramount. Too often the substitute teacher leading the learning is not qualified, is poorly prepared, or simply does not care whether students are actively learning under their direction (Miller, Murname, & Willett, 2008).

The ones who suffer under these circumstances are the students. It is evident through research the negative effect teacher absences can have on student performance. One study showed how ten additional days of teacher absences led to reduced achievement in standardized math testing scores for a group of fourth graders. Much of the drop-off in performance can be attributed to the change in routine, poor instructional strategies, and lower expectations placed on students by the substitute teacher (Miller et al., 2008).

In a normal school day, when an effective regular classroom teacher is present, students arrive in class and understand the expectations for proper behavior. These have been established from the beginning of the school year. Knowing where to sit and what supplies to bring to class are not considerations for students in the presences of the teacher. On the other hand, substitute teachers may not know the routines and often a significant amount of time is lost trying to get students equipped and situated so learning has a chance to occur. Sometimes there is so much confusion and insubordination it just becomes a battle to keep kids from hurting one another (Elizabeth, 2001).

There are times when substitute teachers are good classroom managers and have the ability to get students working on the right assignment with the right materials and supplies. However, this does not insure learning is taking place. When students do not understand the assignment and need to ask questions, many substitute teachers are not adequately trained to answer them, especially in subjects that require a higher level of education or specific training, such as Calculus, Science, or even elective classes like instrumental music or a foreign language. When the substitute teacher is not able to help,

it typically means students have to wait until the regular classroom teacher returns. This results in another lost opportunity for student learning (Elizabeth, 2001).

The third possible cause of a wasted day, as noted above, is the lowering of expectations by the substitute teacher. There are times the substitute teacher chooses to not enforce the policies or even require students to complete the assignments left in the substitute teacher lesson plans. It becomes a "play day" and the more days there are where nothing gets accomplished, the farther behind students fall (Miller et al., 2008).

In considering the effect of lost days and the possible ramifications, a Duke University study puts teacher absences into perspective. Not only was there evidence of lower math testing scores, but it is believed the students would be better off to change schools than to have a substitute teacher for an additional ten days. Socioeconomic factors come into play for student achievement as well. In schools which are more affluent, the effect on students is less than those schools which have a greater number of poor families. It is inferred that students who have more money and support at home are less likely to struggle with the effect of teacher absences (Kronholz, 2013).

It is also supposed student achievement is greatly affected by having a substitute teacher just one day. In fact, according to two researchers from Columbia University, replacing a teacher with a substitute teacher is worse than having students in a classroom with an average teacher, firing that teacher, and placing a below average teacher in the same classroom (Kronholz, 2013). If this is truly the case, the need for quality substitute teachers is of vital importance and should be a priority of school administrators.

Substitute teacher ineffectiveness can occur in a variety of ways. Regardless of the reasons for the poor quality instruction, it is the students who suffer. The role of a

substitute teacher is to teach students in the absence of the regular classroom teacher, not read while students work, or start and stop a movie (Bletzer, 2010). These are just some of the poor quality instruction students endure in the place of actual educational opportunities. If districts desire to make all school days count, there needs to be some basic guidelines in place to help insure quality learning opportunities can exist even with a substitute teacher (Mikesell, 2003).

In May of 2011, the United States Department of Education sent a letter to all U.S. school districts reminding them students are entitled to a quality education ("Feds", 2011). If the Department of Education expects students to receive a quality education, then it makes sense the school districts should make an attempt to make each day valuable for student learning. Placing poorly prepared substitute teachers in a classroom creates a considerable amount of lost educational time which begins to impact the district as a whole.

Public school districts are partially funded by the money raised from taxation of the district patrons. These patrons typically express a great deal of interest into where the money is spent. Allowing students to take days off is not conducive to smart spending. Additionally, when student performance begins to drop, word travels fast. Before long, support for the district and the personnel who work with students begins to waiver.

When a school district finds itself losing support, the implications range far and wide. Examining poorly performing schools through the political frame of Bolman and Deal (2008) can help explain how public perception of real or imagined deficiencies can quickly bring change to school districts. Within communities allegiances are formed between patrons and school staff as well as between influential people who have a voice

to whom people are willing to listen. It only takes a small group of individuals who are driven by a cause to create change within a district.

If substitute teachers are not doing their jobs effectively and community members, parents, staff, or students choose to blame them for poor test scores or classroom performance, a few well timed comments can get a movement underway to make changes. Whether through coercion or compromise, the right people with the right agenda and connections can get individuals fired or hired. Therefore, creating an effective substitute teacher program which maximizes learning time not only benefits student achievement, but it eliminates the possible political maneuvering from parents who feel their students are being cheated of a quality education (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

### **Teacher Shortcomings**

In a study about substitute teacher effectiveness, it would seem logical the responsibility of leading student learning would fall solely on the person who is in the classroom. However, a successful day for a substitute teacher is greatly influenced by the teacher who is absent. The regular classroom teacher creates the culture of his or her classroom. This culture should prevail even if he or she is absent.

Preparing for the substitute teacher involves a great deal of time and planning if student learning is going to be effective. Teachers who are conscientious of how valuable instruction time is will create lesson plans and expectations which engage students and promote learning. The teacher will assume the substitute teacher can handle the students and complete meaningful assignments (Gray, 2004). A conscientious teacher will also consider how to best utilize technology and other resources to insure students can complete the assigned work. Teachers who do not feel as if missing a day is

important, will not prepare quality lessons which challenge students. Over time, the effects of both strategies are relative to the level of effort a teacher expends.

On a basic level the issue with substitute teacher success begins with the need for the substitute teacher in the first place. Teacher absences are costly to districts financially and to students academically (Smith, 2001). There are few districts who want teachers present when they are ill or have real emergencies. However, if the absentee policy is loosely enforced, teacher absences become more frequent and even discretionary. According to Damle (2009), a Harvard study conducted in 2007 on 2,500 teachers absences showed 50% of the absences were less about illness and more about needing time off. Additionally, many of these discretionary absences occurred on Monday or Friday, giving the teachers a three day weekend.

As mentioned in the previous section, there is a definite correlation between teacher attendance and student achievement. It is not always sick days, or falsely sick days, which take teachers out of the building, but many teachers are gone for professional development. This is not always an issue but if several teachers are gone on the same day, staffing becomes a challenge for the district. In some districts, professional development opportunities are limited or required to take place on non-teaching days. Even though professional development is intended to strengthen the teacher's ability, it can create negative consequences. In this case, excessive absences have negative impact on student learning (Russo, 2001).

Marquardt (2011) discusses many of the aspects of developing learning organizations. A school is essentially a learning organization which also happens to be a teaching organization. The key points for discussion are how teachers and principals can

work together to create an environment where teachers take more ownership of what they do each day, even on the days they are absent. By looking at teacher shortcomings through this lens, a comparison of what is occurring in classrooms and what could be initiated to create a more effective learning environment, will be conducted.

The key to what teachers are encouraged to do begins with the principal and the power bestowed upon staff members to take responsibility, pride, and ownership of their role as the learning leaders. Teachers like to be recognized for achievements, whether their own or student achievements. They also appreciate being valued as employees and respected for their expertise and knowledge (Marquardt, 2011).

When teachers are gone and no one seems to mind, then the value of what they do is diminished. Likewise, if principals, students, and community members do not acknowledge what they accomplish when they are working, the urge to miss a day here and there, because who is going to notice anyway, becomes greater. The possibility of taking days off now and then to recharge fits into the category of discretionary and often takes another day away from student learning (Damle, 2009).

The opposite teacher behavior creates student learning opportunities even if the teacher is leaving plans for a substitute teacher. The teacher who works hard every day and feels valued will take the initiative to develop high quality lessons. The enthusiasm, energy, and creativity will permeate the learning organization as teachers look to inspire and thrive off of the positive results and recognition. In turn, the students reap the benefits of a happier teaching staff who fights through the urge to take a day off. Instead looking forward to the opportunity to affect the lives of students (Marquardt, 2011).

In districts where teacher absences and poor lesson planning are common, a look at strategies for improvement could boost the level of academic achievement. However, it requires some planning and follow-through on behalf of the principal and teachers. Principals need to identify the shortcomings of staff members and rather than making rules and demands, include them in the solutions. It might be something as simple as developing recognition systems or incentives for teachers who reach identified goals. It could also include the elimination of policies or procedures which make teachers feel devalued (Marquardt, 2011).

Another way to examine teacher shortcomings is through the structural, political, and human resource frames presented by Bolman and Deal (2008). The frames allow researchers to look at situations through different lenses. Teacher absenteeism and poor planning certainly warrant consideration in an era where districts struggle financially and strive to meet state and federal requirements for academic achievement.

The following table describes the frames as presented by Bolman and Deal (2008). Teacher shortcomings will be analyzed in each of the frames, except the symbolic frame.

**Overview of the Four-Frame Model (Bolman & Deal, 2008)**

	FRAME			
	STRUCTURAL	HUMAN RESOURCE	POLITICAL	SYMBOLIC
<b>Metaphor for organization</b>	Factory or machine	Family	Jungle	Carnival, temple, theater
<b>Central Concepts</b>	Rules, roles, goals, policies, technology, environment	Needs, skills, relationships	Power, conflict, competition, organizational politics	Culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, heroes
<b>Image of Leadership</b>	social architecture	Empowerment	Advocacy and political savvy	Inspiration
<b>Basic leadership challenge</b>	Attune structure to task, technology, environment	Align organizational and human needs	develop agenda and power base	Create faith, beauty, meaning

*Figure 1.* The four organizational frames as described by Bolman and Deal (2008)

When a teacher is unable to perform his or her duties and requires a substitute teacher it affects students and other staff members in the district (Glatfelter, 2006). From a structural standpoint it requires a shift of classroom leadership to an individual who might not be trained in pedagogy or classroom management, but the substitute teacher is still in charge of getting assignments to students and creating a positive learning environment. The teacher is supposed to relay expectations, rules, and policies to the substitute teacher through the lesson plans he prepared. However, if the teacher leaves unexpectedly, and does not have a substitute teacher folder with key structural components clearly outlined, the substitute teacher might arrive and have no guidelines for simple routines and procedures (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

The structural issue at this point is a little deeper than just a one day absence. It is not just a situation where the teacher failed to share important information with the substitute teacher; it can be a shortcoming of the structure in the district which allowed

the teacher to be delinquent in basic policy to begin with. If a teacher does not hold themselves accountable to the expectations which describe an effective teacher (Wong & Wong, 2001), then it is difficult for the substitute teacher to perform routine tasks which leads to less structure between substitute teachers and students (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Overall, failing to consider and support the structural aspects of teacher performance in the event of an absence, diminishes the ability of substitute teachers to perform effectively. This has a direct effect on student performance as well.

From a human resources perspective, teachers need to consider how the information and expectations they convey to substitute teachers aligns with the mission of the school district. Failure to plan well for potential absences creates a roadblock for principals, substitute teachers, and students. Students and substitute teachers will struggle to create meaningful work based on the poorly developed lessons. The lack of attention to details by the teacher can also create tension with school administrators which leads to issues of trust. It also can create negative ramifications with the substitute teacher pool who can grow tired of substituting for poorly-prepare, or indifferent teachers. In the end, it is imperative all staff in the district have an effective working relationship for the benefit of students (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

The final lens focused on teacher shortcomings is the political frame lens. Poorly prepared teachers put a hardship on districts, but that hardship is augmented when the teacher is absent. Students who come home complaining about coursework and the substitute teacher create an image in the minds of parents. According to Longhurst (2000), if you were to ask a student what they did at school during a day with a substitute teacher, 10% would say, "oh nothing, we had a sub" (p. 40).

This lack of attention to detail places a spotlight on the district which could have been avoided if the teacher were cognizant of the ramifications of poor preparation. Although to some it might seem like parents are over reacting, this type of teacher behavior hinders growth and diminishes community support for districts. Patrons begin wondering where their tax dollars are going and remember the bad experiences when it comes time to vote on school renovations and bond issues. Political implications of poor teacher behaviors, no matter how small in the eyes of the teacher, can have a lasting effect on school relations. Therefore, it is important teachers plan and prepare effectively so each day is a positive learning experience for students (Preparing for a Substitute, 2007).

In summary, the amount of time teachers spend preparing has a direct impact on student learning. If teachers understand the value of their craft, and take it seriously, they can create a positive learning organization which is student focused. Teachers who are empowered and valued are more likely to create a positive learning environment. Being aware of the ramifications of poor preparation from a structural, human resource, and political perspective can impact how teachers prepare daily and on days they are absent. Teacher shortcomings have the potential to greatly impact student learning but through careful planning and high expectations, many of the shortcomings can be eliminated.

### **Acquiring High Quality Substitute Teachers**

In conjunction with high expectations for student achievement it seems logical districts would strive to always have effective teachers in the classrooms. Acquiring individuals who are regarded as "high quality" is a challenge many districts face. There are numerous programs promoting methods to insure substitute teacher quality, but when

it comes down to having an adult in the classroom, sometimes districts are willing to settle for whomever is available. Many times the substitute teacher who is placed in a classroom is the person who is easy to reach and will arrive on time (Coverdill & Oulevey, 2007).

As mentioned in chapter one, there are a variety of requirements for each state when it comes to hiring substitute teachers. There are states which only require a high school diploma while other states require some sort of college education. Districts may choose to create standards which exceed those of the state departments. The effort to raise the bar can lead to a more qualified substitute teacher pool. However, working to build a good substitute teacher pool comes with a price tag which some schools are unable to afford. Therefore, selective recruitment does not occur in all districts. The results are often less than ideal when students do not perform well on standardized tests or fall behind grade level in core subject areas. Some schools are just getting a warm body in the room (Elizabeth, 2001).

Research shows multiple strategies to eliminate some of the less effective substitute teacher candidates or attract and keep individuals who perform exceptionally well in the absence of the regular classroom teacher. Sometimes this is done through training. There are districts who require candidates to apply and sit through interviews (True et al, 2011). Other times it can occur through a system of incentives or other policies which districts utilize to develop a quality pool of substitute teachers (Mikesell, 2003).

There are districts who believe being proactive, and looking for candidates instead of hoping they show up and want to be paid, can produce a stronger substitute teacher

pool. In areas where there are districts in close proximity, the substitute teachers are often able to work where they are most comfortable. Comfort may be based on a variety of factors such as the amount of pay per day, how they are treated by the staff and students, the method of notification, and the support shown to them by staff during their assignment (Cardon, 2001).

Most individuals who substitute teach do so for financial reasons. Many of them enjoy working with kids, but in the end want to earn some money or other form of compensation. Money does not always buy the most qualified applicants. If the amount a district pays is competitive to surrounding schools, substitute teachers are more likely to work in the district with the better culture, training, and support (Mikesell, 2003; Russo, 2001).

### **Importance of Substitute Training**

Furthermore, Cardon (2001) discussed the importance of substitute teacher training. Training itself is a powerful recruitment tool, but based on his research there are significant gains in student engagement and achievement when districts take the time to properly train substitute teachers. Substitute teachers who are involved with teaching to benefit students and have a sincere desire to conduct themselves as a professional who may be looking for future employment are willing to take the necessary steps to improve their teaching abilities. The dedication these individuals show to the craft of teaching pays dividends with students. Their willingness to be trained in teaching methods and classroom management helps make them an integral part of the school community (Mikesell, 2003).

When the substitute teachers feel welcomed and respected by the rest of the school community it creates an environment which grows positive energy. This energy brings a sense of pride to the district substitute teacher pool and acts as a recruitment tool for other substitute teacher candidates who desire to work in a district which supports and prepares them for the classroom. Students are able to build rapport with the substitute teachers and come to know them as teachers who have expectations and the best interest of students in mind. All of these positive attributes of substitute teacher training provide evidence of the importance of taking time to invest in the people who take over for the regular classroom teacher when he or she is absent (Cardon, 2001).

### **Recruitment of Substitute Teachers**

Some districts choose to focus on methods of recruitment intended to attract candidates. These include increases in pay, employee benefits for substitute teachers, permanent substitute teachers, and lowering the standards for employment. Permanent substitute teachers are hired by districts to be available every day wherever he or she might be needed. Some districts lower standards to increase the pool of available substitute teachers. Effectively, these districts are saying we need people who may not have lower qualifications than what was required in the past (Ferguson, 2001). As with most initiatives, there are positives and negatives. Additionally, what works in one district does not work well in others. There are districts that spend money advertising in movie theaters, on the Internet, in local newspapers and on district websites. Still others look for potential employees at job fairs and through staffing agencies (Ferguson, 2001).

Increases in pay can be accomplished in more than just raising salaries for all substitute teachers. There are districts who pay more for substitute teachers who work in

tougher environments or drive long distances. Others will offer incentives for individuals who provide service to a district for extended periods of time (Ferguson, 2001).

Additionally, some districts have utilized a tiered system which rewards substitute teachers for consecutive days of service. For instance, if an individual substitutes ten consecutive days, they will receive a \$15 raise for each day they substitute after ten.

Other districts pay a bonus check for extended service and there are some schools who begin providing compensation at a rate matching permanent teachers (Cardon, 2001).

Employee benefits for substitute teachers can come in various forms as well. Some districts provide health insurance. Many districts include substitute teachers in professional development and there are even others who offer tuition reimbursement for individuals who choose to further their education (Ferguson, 2001). One district offered to pay for substitute teachers to receive their degrees in exchange for working in their district for a certain number of years (Tannenbaum, 2000).

Russo (2001), outlined strategies which districts can consider when attempting to acquire quality substitute teachers. Each of the points has merit based on the potential value it can create when recruiting, or by pointing out the disadvantages of the tactics some districts use to get people in the classroom. The strategies are described as follows:

- *Make the Job More Attractive* - offer increases in pay or health insurance for retired teachers who choose to return to the classroom as substitute teachers. A non-monetary approach provides the substitute teachers a feeling of comfort and of being welcomed by the school community (Russo, 2001). Taking time to show appreciation can achieve more than money. Providing passes to school activities

and initiatives to include the substitute teacher candidates in the school culture are meaningful to many substitute teacher candidates (Mikesell, 2003).

- *Increase the Substitute Teacher Pool* - there are advantages and disadvantages to this strategy. If increasing the pool means lowering the district standards for quality teaching, then it might be diminishing returns by going this route. A district also has to be aware of the individual state requirements for substitute teacher eligibility and not recruit using standards which do not meet the minimum. The second initiative some districts use to increase the substitute teacher pool is to aggressively advertise the need for quality substitute teachers. Presenting at civic club meetings and advertising through flyers, mailings, and media are all ways to bring in more candidates (Russo, 2001).
- *Collaborate Rather Than Compete*- as an alternative to fighting for the same substitute teachers with neighboring school districts, some districts have joined forces to create a more qualified and available pool. A few of the strategies include using one application form for multiple districts and combining training efforts. The districts collaboratively develop training and rotate it. Districts are also using creative methods to locate candidates. This can include working with neighboring districts and sharing information about effective substitute teacher candidates or utilizing staffing agencies who specialize in substitute teacher acquisition. Both have advantages and disadvantages for districts and for the substitute teacher. The advantage of a pool for the substitute teacher is the increased likelihood of being called on a regular basis. For schools it is an advantage to have a deeper pool of candidates and be able to share information

about substitute teacher abilities or shortcomings. However, if it ever gets to the point one district is always short because the other district makes the calls first, then the system is not meeting the needs of all schools (Russo, 2001).

- *Bring in Outside Expertise*- some districts are utilizing automated scheduling programs, e-mail, and other technologies to increase awareness of the need for qualified substitute teachers. Other districts are using staffing agencies, such as Kelly Educational Staffing, to fill the need for substitute teachers. There is an increase in cost when a district uses outside agencies, but the advantages include higher quality substitute teachers who can be better placed in curricular areas which match their abilities and the staffing agency places and fires them as needed. Typically the district's need for a substitute teacher are filled more quickly. Additionally, districts can tell the agency if they no longer want a certain person working for them, thus eliminating them from the pool without having to discuss it with them personally. However, using an agency can also increase the cost of employing substitute teachers for districts (Ferguson, 2001; Russo, 2001).
- *Look at Systemic Issues*- rather than spend money on outside resources or attempt to be excessively creative in obtaining substitute teachers, some districts choose to reevaluate the processes they use to hire, train, and retain substitute teachers. Many districts have chosen to redesign the substitute teacher training methods. The results have been promising. School districts are finding ways to better prepare the substitute teachers they already use. The retention is up due to the increase in quality and the substitute teacher's feeling of satisfaction and competence. There are even some schools that have created systems where

substitute teachers can cover for teachers part of the time and work on teacher focused college coursework when he or she is not substituting, paid for by the district, which will result in the substitute teacher graduating with a teaching degree (Russo, 2001).

### **Alternative Methods for Acquiring Substitute Teachers**

As mentioned from other resources, some districts are willing to raise the pay per day for substitute teachers. This can be helpful in recruitment but districts must be cognizant of the return on their investment. Districts are already strapped for cash and the ability to increase pay comes at a cost to some other service such as field trips, student recognition, or teacher training. Also, just because substitute teachers make more money does not mean they will do a better job (Ferguson, 2001; Russo, 2001).

Another tactic used by some districts is to lower the requirements for substitute teacher eligibility. Some states and districts require candidates to have a college degree or a minimum number of college credit hours. Other districts are willing to get individuals in the classroom with little or no formal training and often with just a high school diploma. In one Florida high school the substitute teacher was 18 years old and substituting in the fall following her graduation from the same school the previous May (Elizabeth, 2001).

With this scenario comes some possible political implications. How many parents expect their students to be taught by someone who just graduated high school? The willingness to lower standards implies a lack of high expectations for student achievement across the board. How long will it be before someone addresses a school administrator or school board member with questions about the level of professionalism

at the school? If there is discord between the written goals of the school and the current practice of hiring poorly qualified staff, even if they are not full time, then there will likely be conflict within the community which could lead to problems within the organization. Research repeatedly says having lower standards is not the answer to staffing issues (Elizabeth, 2001; Russo, 2001).

Another strategy for acquiring quality substitute teachers is to be creative in looking for candidates. Not only creative, but be the one going out and trying to hire new people. Some good possibilities include policemen and firemen. These public service employees often work shifts which allow days off in the week and might be looking for extra work. College students also have somewhat flexible schedules and are interested in making some money to help with expenses (Russo, 2001).

One of the best resources for substitute teacher pools are retired teachers. Most of them know how effective classrooms should function. Many of them are familiar with state standards, standardized testing, and other initiatives. In the right circumstances, the retired teacher can also provide expertise and experiential knowledge from which younger teachers can benefit (Coverdill, 2007; Russo, 2001).

One other consideration is the use of automated scheduling services. These systems are designed to match the district need to the qualifications of the substitute teacher. For instance, if the math teacher calls in sick, he or she calls the school administrator or other appropriate school personnel who then calls the scheduling service. The service identifies individuals qualified for math and contacts them first with the details of the request such as the specific district, level, and time of arrival. At this point the substitute teacher can choose to accept or decline the request without ever talking to a

person. The system then goes on to the next best match, repeating the process until someone accepts. Acceptance is indicated by automated response from the substitute teacher. This process works well if all of the right people push all of the right buttons. It does not account for the elements of human error or human indifference (Cardon, 2001).

Up to this point discussion has focused on how to obtain quality substitute teachers. There are other considerations when trying to cover a regular classroom teacher absence with someone who will be effective. This is the process of gleaning the less effective substitute teachers from the pool before they ever enter the classroom.

When districts desire to eliminate poor candidates before investing time in them, they may use a pre-service evaluation such as the Gallup/Automated Teacher Screener (Ayling, 2003). This tool is used to eliminate candidates who respond poorly to a short automated phone test. Candidates are asked to call an 800 number and respond with the phone keypad. The short test can save the district time and energy which can be used for more attractive candidates (Troy University, 2013). Other organizations, including Boston Public Schools, have utilized similar resources to improve pool of substitute teacher candidates (Smith, 2005).

Many of the resources available have originated at Utah State University and the Substitute teacher Training Institute, or STI. Additionally STI has resources available from their website, STEDI.org, which are utilized by districts to eliminate poor substituting candidates. Throughout the research multiple sources credit STI with providing useful screening and training materials.

One of the tools initially developed was the *SubStrength Finder*. This tool was a pretest for another STI creation called the *SubInstructor*, which focuses on the trainings

available in STI's *Substitute Teacher Handbook*. Individuals who complete these materials successfully were able to receive a SubDiploma from STI (Smith, 2005). No research indicates the validity level or credibility of STI just that it exists and is prevalent in substitute teacher-related literature.

In summary, the process of acquiring reputable, reliable, trustworthy individuals to come into a classroom full of students is not as simple as picking up a phone and calling just anyone. Effective substitute teachers are ones who are able to engage students and make the day meaningful when the regular classroom teacher is not present. It is important to develop a system for obtaining substitute teachers which includes incorporating the goals of the district and considering factors associated with acquisition such as cost to the district, legal issues, training issues, and the methods which attract candidates who fit the culture of the school (Mikesell, 2003).

### **Preparing Substitute Teachers**

Training substitute teachers is one of the most crucial aspects of having an effective substitute teacher pool (Sanstead, n.d.), although not all districts agree on the length and depth of the training. In 2001, 53% of districts provided some type of substitute teacher professional development. The examples ranged from half of a day to over 10 days (Lamarque, 2005; Longhurst, 2000). The challenge in developing a substitute teacher training program is meeting the needs of as many individuals as possible working in a particular district. There are substitute teachers with significant experience who attend the same events with those who have never substituted so a one size fits all approach is unrealistic. Although different individuals would have different

training needs, a well-planned training program is essential if they are truly going to become teacher learners (True et al., 2011).

The first step for a school district to consider when developing a quality training program is to set a goal for what should be accomplished in the absence of the regular classroom teacher. There are different goals for different districts and even individuals within districts have different priorities for what they would like to see substitute teachers accomplish. Principals, teachers, substitute teachers, and students each have a unique perspective regarding effective substitute teachers. When developing a training program, it is important to consider as many factors as possible in hopes of creating a quality pool of substitute teachers (Tannenbaum, 2000).

The following paragraphs discuss the importance of what each individual group feels would make substitute teacher-covered days more effective. The input from each group is an important part of an effective substitute teacher training program. The ideas should be considered when districts set goals for how they prepare their substitute teacher pool.

### **School Administrator Roles in Substitute Teacher Preparation**

School administrators would like to see individuals in the classroom who are able to closely accomplish what the regular classroom teacher would with as few disruptions as possible. Principals also look for individuals who are willing to learn effective classroom management skills and instructional strategies. Finding a group of people who are willing to learn is essential and it makes the process of preparing substitute teachers run more efficiently and allows training programs to cover more material (Tannebaum, 2000).

In order to get the substitute teachers to this point the training required consists of a few basic elements. First of all, they must determine the proper length of training based on factors such as the cost for the district and if there are other regional schools which employ some of the same substitute teachers. Too many new requirements by one district in the region might turn off some of the substitute teachers who would rather just work for the districts who require less training and relatively equal pay (Tannenbaum, 2000). If districts consider the fact some substitute teacher candidates would rather work in a district with fewer requirements, then it is possible those candidates do not meet the high expectations and should not be utilized in the first place (Cardon, 2001).

Another important factor a principal should consider when planning the training is the best way to clearly convey the district's expectations to each substitute teacher candidate. This can include simple things like how to dress or describing the way students are treated in the school. Some schools have unique beliefs for discipline and teaching strategies. It is important to let each candidate know what the district expects. Those candidates who are unable to adhere to the expectations will not be employed there long, either by their choice or the districts (Mikesell, 2003)

It is also necessary to continue to emphasize expectations beyond the initial training. Only covering the handbook once and never reinforcing the initial training will allow the substitute teachers, and the district leadership, to become apathetic towards following the standards expressed when the substitute teachers began working in the district. Monitoring substitute teacher and teacher performance on days the regular classroom teacher is gone is key to knowing what happens in the classroom. If the school administrator continues to give substitute teachers feedback, either as praise or

constructive criticism, the process of training substitute teachers to be effective becomes a part of the culture. Effective lines of communication between the principal and the substitute teacher will insure they are working towards the same goal and all staff members realize the expectations do not change just because the school year is progressing (Mikesell, 2003).

### **Teacher Input for Substitute Teacher Training**

Teachers also have a perspective on what substitute teachers need to know to be prepared to meet the challenges of working with students. Teachers want substitute teachers to know the value of following the lesson plans as they are written. Teachers expect students to have the same routine as if there was not a substitute teacher. They also want substitute teachers to be active and not sit and visit with students or treat cliques differently than other students in the classroom. Regular classroom teachers find it helpful to have continuity in the substitute teachers who cover for them (which is a challenge for the person who acquires the substitute teachers). One of the most important things a teacher looks for is quality, detailed notes about the day. These should include names of students who did well or caused problems as well as any information which would help clarify incomplete assignments (Tannebaum, 2000).

When a substitute teacher receives a call to come to work, it sets off a string of events which often occur in a short amount of time. Even if they receive the call the night before there is not much planning which can be done prior to arriving at the assignment. It helps the day begin more smoothly if the district has adequately trained the substitute teacher (Preparing for a Substitute, 2007).

If school districts are taking the time to prepare quality substitute teachers, they hopefully are taking time to train their teachers on the proper method for preparing for both planned and unplanned absences. Substitute teachers who have been properly trained look for good lesson plans, helpful tips, seating charts, emergency procedures, and a list of clearly explained rules and routines upon arriving. Having these items clearly identified eliminates wasted time. Additionally, it is nice to leave substitute teachers a list of helpful students in each classroom as well as names of teachers who are helpful. There should also be plenty of extra work in the event students get done early (Simmons, 1991; Tannenbaum, 2000).

The final group of individuals who have an interest in substitute teacher training is students. Students are going to be influenced by the ability of the substitute teacher and the moment they walk through the door they will know if the person filling in for the regular classroom teacher has the tools to help effective learning occur on this particular day. Students appreciate an engaging substitute teacher who shows respect and is pleasant (Miller et al., 2008). If the substitute teacher struggles, it is likely less learning will take place and there will be a need for more training or choosing not to use this ineffective substitute teacher in the future. Especially if the district has already spent significant time on training (Tannebaum, 2000).

### **Designing Substitute Teacher Training**

Once the goals are set the district must look for ways to implement training and acquire the necessary materials to allow substitute teachers to meet the goals. As mentioned, taking time to figure out what principals, teachers, substitute teachers, and students are looking for in an effective substitute teacher will help guide the district in its

planning. Training does not look the same everywhere and there are multiple elements. The goal of a good training program is to make days count when the regular classroom teacher is absent (True et al., 2011).

One of the most basic types of training offered in districts is to provide the substitute teachers with a handbook. This handbook would cover basic policies for professional behavior as well as outlines for student expectations. It might also provide a protocol for accidents and emergencies (tornado, fire, and intruder) and emergency contact information. Other districts take time to include some activities substitute teachers can use if the regular teacher did not leave sufficient work (Gresham, Donihoo, & Cox, 2007).

In other cases, districts develop more detailed training. Often this begins with one or more days of substitute teacher in-service prior to the beginning of school. Common activities include time spent reviewing policies, sharing expectations and district goals, familiarizing them with state standards, and some basic classroom management techniques (Sanstead, NA; True et al., 2011).

School districts that choose to make investing in substitute teachers a priority take the training much deeper. Some of them spend up to 10 days conducting activities but also create scenarios and provide time for role playing, or develop resources which substitute teachers can use on short notice (Mikesell, 2003). The substitute teacher is challenged with a variety of disruptions to see how he or she handles the situation. The intent is not to run them off, but to add to their tool kit so they are more prepared to deal with students who present similar challenges during the school year (Lamarque, 2005). Additionally, some districts anticipate the possibility the teacher will leave little or no

work and create a sponge activities substitute teachers can utilize, such as reading, curricular-related puzzles, and graphic organizers (Gresham et al., 2007).

One more example of the value of properly training substitute teachers comes from a school district in Hillsborough County, Florida. The district had a tiered system for substitute teacher training in which candidates with at least 60 college credit hours were asked to attend three days of substitute teacher training while those individuals with a high school diploma and no college attended a ten day training course. The group with no college experience received fewer complaints from teachers than those with college credits. The study cited the value of the training as the reason for the difference (Cardon, 2001).

Training candidates in theory and pedagogy is not the only way to create quality substitute teachers who want to work in a particular district. Another common theme among those districts who value substitute teachers is making them feel part of the culture. Including substitute teachers in professional development is one way (Welsch, 2001). But it can also include having substitute teachers shadow veteran teachers or come and visit the school to meet the staff, tour the building, and learn more about the policies once school gets underway. In some cases, districts arrange for substitute teachers to have a mentor or include them in professional learning communities, or PLCs (True et al., 2011). Lamarque (2005) stated, "the effort to make substitutes feel professional, confident, and valued can raise the level of respect shown by other teachers and students" (p. 11).

## **Continual Improvement of Substitute Teacher Training**

Furthermore, training should not be a one-time event. In addition to the initial training and attendance at professional development activities, some districts utilize other training opportunities throughout the school year. This is available for anyone but the intention is to provide training or retraining for skills the district feels substitute teachers are exhibiting low performance. The training topics could be classroom management, teaching techniques, or professionalism (Mikesell, 2003).

The Jefferson County School District in Colorado developed training sessions which were offered in the evenings after school. The training sessions were often set up to provide multiple opportunities for attendees to rotate several sessions in hopes of reaching as many substitute teachers as possible. The sessions were typically taught by highly qualified teachers, or even strong substitute teachers, who excelled in the areas which some individuals struggled (Mikesell, 2003).

Interestingly, not only were the sessions intended to improve substitute teacher effectiveness, they were also utilized as a method for eliminating poor substitute teachers. Poor performing substitute teachers were given a warning by human resources regarding any negative evaluations. A second complaint placed the substitute teacher on notice and it was required he attend one of the evening training sessions before he would be allowed to return to the classroom in the district. In these cases the substitute teacher was provided with techniques to strengthen areas of weakness. If the substitute teacher did not attend, he was not used in this district again. If he completed the training, it was common they performed well enough, and continued to improve, after being placed back into the substitute teacher pool (Mikesell, 2003).

It is evident the preparation for substitute teachers comes in a variety of forms. Almost half of the districts in the United States do not take the time to train their substitute teacher candidates (Longhurst, 2000). For those that, there is a wide range of activities intended to make the days meaningful in the absence of the regular classroom teacher. Many believe the time spent developing a quality group of substitute teachers pays big dividends and allows school to continue with as little interruption as possible (Gray, 2004).

### **Responsibilities of Regular Classroom Teachers**

It should also be noted the importance of considering the goals of the district, and the staff of the district, when planning substitute teacher preparation training. The success of the substitute teacher is not solely a product of the ability of the person who is substituting. It cannot be overstated the importance the teacher has in making the day count. The best prepared substitute teacher will struggle without the help of some basic groundwork by the teacher. This includes the proper paperwork and meaningful lessons, but it also means teachers have to know the limits of others who do not have the expertise they do. Without some common sense and responsibility meaningful days will continue to be lost to teacher absences (Preparing for a Substitute, 2007).

Substitute teachers are not without the ability to compensate for poorly planned lessons or indifferent districts. For those who want to substitute teach and do an effective job, they can familiarize themselves with non-subject specific activities. Word searches, graphic organizers such as Venn diagrams and K-W-L (what do you **K**now before you read, **W**hat do you hope to learn when you read, what did you **L**earn after reading the passage, K-W-L), and a wide array of grade level appropriate reading materials can get a

substitute teacher through the day with some meaningful learning taking place at the same time (Simmons, 1991).

### **An Example of an Effective Substitute Teacher Training Program**

Based on research, the following guidelines exhibit what an effective preparation might look like. To begin, this study looks at a training program from a school district in Louisiana in hopes of giving some insight to how other districts might train substitute teacher candidates. The training was broken down into four major areas, with some extra sessions which were added later. The original sessions covered introductions and objectives, classroom management, and district policies. The sessions were well received and the district added sessions on special education and additional teaching strategies with scenarios (Lamarque, 2005).

The following outline shows how the first sessions were broken down:

1. Introductions with emphasis on why substitute teachers are so important to the district
  - A. Including expectations for:
    1. dress code
    2. work attitude
    3. confidentiality
    4. appropriate language
    5. arriving and departing
    6. school map

2. Session on classroom management
  - A. Use of scenarios to develop protocol for teaching techniques and disruptions
  - B. Used role playing to simulate possible situations and how to handle them
  - C. Discussed the Five Skills of Classroom Management from the *Substitute Teacher Handbook* (Stedi.org, 2009)
    1. Getting and keeping students on task
    2. Positive interactions
    3. Teaching expectations
    4. Responding non-coercively
    5. Avoiding Traps
3. Session on teaching strategies
  - A. Discussion of learning styles
    1. Visual learners
    2. Auditory learners
    3. Tactile learners
    4. Kinesthetic learners
  - B. Small group brainstorming
  - C. Cooperative learning activity
  - D. Concept maps
  - E. KWL

4. District policies
  - A. Emergency codes
  - B. Student check-out procedures
  - C. Additional duties
  - D. Accident and medical emergency procedures
  - E. Medication policies
  - F. Substitute teacher workday description
  - G. Technology usage policies

Substitute teacher candidates who went through this training noted how they appreciated the topics and methods used to demonstrate proper implementation. The activities allowed them to get a feel for how the district wanted them to work with kids while giving them a little insight into the culture and expectations. The training was so popular, the district designed a longer session on teaching strategies and classroom management which incorporated more role playing and scenarios, a favorite of those in attendance. The other course covered special education acronyms, definitions, and procedures unique to special education (Lamarque, 2005).

One key aspect which often falls through the cracks is recognition of substitute teachers. Finding ways to reward effective substitute teachers can be critical to obtaining and retaining quality candidates. Some ideas are simple and cost effective. Frequently using the same substitute teacher is a reward. It provides them with some stability and a feeling of belonging to the school community. It also costs little to include them in the yearbook or select one of them for "Substitute Teacher of the Year" (Ramsey, 1996).

There are other recognition activities which can cost little but pay big dividends. Sending cards of appreciation from staff and students or holding an end of the year luncheon are both relatively inexpensive (Ramsey, 1996). Other small gestures such as providing donuts or bottled water on days they are in the building can be effective ways to express gratitude. Other districts offer free passes to sporting events, coffee mugs, thermos cups, or lanyards with the school mascot or logo. Regardless of the effort or cost, when a district recognizes substitute teachers for quality teaching, it helps build a pool of confident and effective substitute teachers (Mikesell, 2003).

### **Responsibilities of School Administrators**

Teacher absenteeism is a challenge which faces every school. When the teacher is gone, the school day looks different for students. The expectations change, and many times, so does the productivity. Teachers are absent for a variety of reasons. Some of them are ill and other times they are attending professional development (Miller et al, 2008). Regardless of the reason, the school has to have someone in the classroom and in most cases it hires a substitute teacher. The substitute teacher becomes the primary distributor of information, but the school administrator, in most cases the principal, is the person who has the responsibility to make sure each day provides an opportunity for students to learn (Tannenbaum, 2000).

An effective principal makes decisions based on what is good for all students (Whitaker, 2012). The following sections look at some of the primary roles of how the principal sets the tone for what occurs each day in the classroom. These expectations affect the efforts of support staff, teachers, and students. The expectations affect the substitute teacher who is covering for an absent teacher. The second section also looks at

challenges the principal encounters with teacher absences, as well as, an analysis of how substitute teachers are acquired, trained, and evaluated and the particular responsibilities of the school administrator. The last part of this section discusses how different types of school administrators would address issues involving staff and substitute teacher effectiveness.

### **Expectations**

Expectations for the particular learning day are just a part of the principal's vision for his staff. Each day should reflect the significance the building principal places on the creation of effective learning opportunities (Whitaker, 2012). It is imperative the principal has considered how well students were engaged in learning during the regular teacher's absence. As the learning leader he is being counted on to know what strategies and activities were used by teachers to aid students in achieving proficiency and skills in the variety of coursework offered at the appropriate educational level. These strategies should have started when the teachers established the expectations for student learning, regardless of who was in the classroom. These expectations should have been communicated prior to the beginning of the school year, restated throughout the year, and evaluated for effectiveness (Henderson, 2002).

One of the considerations of principals is striving to have the most qualified professional in the classroom. This begins with hiring the right people, or in the case of working with existing staff, leading them to become more effective teachers. According to Whitaker (2012), there are some expectations effective principals share. When a principal communicates these expectations, provides support and time for

implementation, and insures the practices are implemented on a consistent basis, great things can occur for staff and students. Some of Whitaker's (2012) beliefs are:

- people, not programs, are responsible for the quality of the school
- make decisions based on your best teachers
- allow teachers to visit one another's classrooms
- use effective teachers as role models
- hire teachers who make the school great
- do not hire teachers just because they fit the existing culture
- education is a business of improvement and good principals always try to improve

The beliefs are applicable to the substitute teacher pool a district develops. If a district is serious about having the most qualified person in the classroom as often as possible, then the substitute teacher's presence is not a reason for lowering expectations. Although consideration must be given to the training discrepancy between qualified teachers and substitute teachers, the desire to provide meaningful learning opportunities must not waiver (Welsch, 2001).

To reinforce the concepts, comparisons can be drawn between Whitaker's beliefs for teachers and those which can be established for substitute teachers. The first concept, realizing people not programs, are responsible for the quality of the school means the importance of choosing quality substitute teachers is paramount. Based on this belief, the most effective substitute teachers should be placed in the classroom. If effective substitute teachers are not available, create them through training (Whitaker, 2012).

Effective school administrators have considered multiple factors when making important decisions. It is important to have looked at the effects, both positive and

negative which can come from a decision. There are a few school administrators who did not make decisions because of the negative repercussions it could have with some of the staff and therefore few things got done because of the complainers. Just as an effective school administrator makes decisions based on the best teachers, he or she should always consider what strategies will work most effectively with the best substitute teachers from the pool (Whitaker, 2012).

A 2005 study by Marzano, Waters, and McNulty would statistically support the claims by Whitaker. In this study, it was determined there were 21 responsibilities of effective leaders. In all 21 areas there were a studies and schools analyzed to determine the effect of principal expectations. In each one, students who had a principal who encouraged the students and staff to be more focused noted a statistical gain in student performance.

Coincidentally, some of the areas correspond to other literature associated with this study. Specifically affirmation, communication, culture, monitoring/evaluation, order, and visibility. An effective school administrator has expectations for the staff, and this includes the substitute teacher. The administrator should affirm whether the substitute teacher is doing a good job, or needs to improve. He should also communicate effectively so there are no questions about the expectations (Marzano et al, 2005).

A principal with high expectations can make an effort to include the substitute teacher in the existing school culture. Taking time to regularly monitor and evaluate the substitute teacher can reinforce good behaviors and quickly put an end to negative, or disruptive actions. The principal can take time to establish order through a clear description of operating procedures and routines. Finally, the principal can impact the

effectiveness of the substitute by being visible to the substitute teacher and students on days when the regular classroom teacher is absent (Marzano et al., 2005).

Each school district has teachers considered strong in different skill areas. Some are good classroom managers, some are excellent in pedagogy, and others are knowledgeable in specific subjects or techniques. In many cases, the principal will recommend, and facilitate, that their staff members take time to visit one another's classrooms. This process fosters learning through a different method than a college classroom, principal led training, or other forms of professional development provide. Allowing substitute teachers to observe quality teachers in action is an effective way for them to become better (Whitaker, 2012).

Whitaker (2012) recommended using effective teachers as role models and hiring teachers who are great. The same practice can exist for substitute teachers. School districts can hire those individuals who are popular in the school community or fit the existing culture. School districts can also discontinue employing the substitute teachers who are willing to show up but do little. Another recommendation from the literature is to recognize individual substitute teachers who have done a great job by publicly acknowledging and rewarding them for their efforts. Cards of thanks and other forms of praise go a long way. It is believed if you begin with good people, and continue to add good people, the substitute teacher pool will be much more effective (Ramsey, 1996).

A final comparison involves how principals can continuously make efforts to improve the substitute teacher pool as part of the mission to keep improving the entire school. Self-reflection and input from others will provide insight regarding how well the school is functioning. Making an effort to add more substitute teacher training, including

substitute teachers in the culture, and improving the relationships between the school staff and quality substitute teachers will allow each day to be more meaningful for students. Substitute teachers are an important part of the schools ability to function and should also be an area where improvement is a focus (Whitaker, 2012).

### **Challenges Principals Face**

When teacher absences become too frequent, the principal has often had to be the first person who must address the teacher, or teachers, in hopes of eliminating lost academic time and excessive costs for districts that have to employ substitute teachers. This can be tricky. Principals must be able to have such a conversation without overstepping contractual language and creating disharmony between staff and administration (Smith, 2001).

Furthermore, the principal might have found himself needing to not only address the absences, but the cause of them. The teaching profession has a great deal of burnout and with the demands of standardized testing, the expectations are on the rise. In this case, the principal might have to creatively improve teacher morale through rewards and recognition. Simple messages to let the teachers know the principal appreciates their efforts are valued can create a staff that looks forward to coming to work each day (Smith, 2001).

Regardless of the reason for the absence, teachers are still unable to fulfill their duties from time to time and will call in sick, or perhaps know in advance he or she will have professional development, a personal leave day, or bereavement leave. Once the teacher knows he is going to be gone, a string of events is set in motion which can lead to a class environment which may not be consistent with what students consider normal.

Students will enter their classroom to find a substitute teacher. The substitute teacher may not know the rules, routines, and expectations of the classroom teacher. The students are often not willing to provide a great deal of information and therefore there is a good possibility students will not meet the learning expectations of the classroom teacher.

Since students are not the decision makers, the teacher was not present, and the substitute teacher may not have known what he was doing, the principal is often the person who has the responsibility of making substitute teacher-led days an effective learning days. There are several strategies principals can utilize to help insure students get an opportunity to learn. Some of these happen on the day of the absence, but an effective principal will have provided the foundation for success prior to the teacher picking up the phone and calling in sick (Smith, 2001).

A successful day of teaching conducted by a substitute teacher is one where students continued to learn (Welsch, 2001). This day should not be just a babysitting engagement. In order to insure kids are in the best possible environment no matter who is in the classroom, principals must establish routines and clarify protocol at the beginning of the year. This is a process which takes time, resources, and mutual respect between the principal and teachers for the benefit of the students (Mikesell, 2003).

### **Choosing the Right Substitute Teachers**

What types of individuals are principals looking to hire as substitute teachers? What does an effective substitute teacher training program look like from the perspective of the principal? What types of responsibilities does the principal hold while insuring the individuals who substitute teach are effective? According to research, the principal is

crucial to many of the steps involved in substitute teacher acquisition, training, retention, and effectiveness.

Principals have a vested interest in bringing part time staff into the building to work with students. The individuals need to be trustworthy and capable of leading students in a variety of learning activities. The principal should have been an active part in the hiring of substitute teachers. It is a valuable use of time to interview candidates and see how they conducted themselves. Did they talk professionally? Were they able to make and maintain eye contact? Are they enthusiastic and engaging in conversation? How did they dress in a professional setting? What did the references the candidates provided have to say about their effectiveness? Each of these items provide valuable information about the individual and their potential as a substitute teacher. This is an opportune time to eliminate those candidates who fall short of the districts expectations for staff (Simmons, 1991).

An effective substitute teacher training program has many characteristics, as previously described. It is crucial the principal be a part of the planning and implementation of a substitute training program. The principal's attendance at substitute teacher training, however brief, lets substitute teachers know the principal values their service. It is also an ideal time for the principal to share his or her vision, goals, and expectations with the candidates (Simmons, 1991).

In the section about preparing quality substitute teachers, there is mention of taking time to train substitute teachers and include them in the school culture. Mikesell (2003) believes the principal is the school administrator who should strive to make substitute teachers feel welcome, introduce them to the staff and students, and include

them in subsequent training. It is her belief the principal is the key player in the coordination of events and procedures which makes days taught by a substitute teacher meaningful.

Another responsibility of the principal is to express appreciation and support to the substitute teacher in hopes of keeping quality individuals in the substitute teacher pool. Taking time to check on them during the day is helpful, but should not just be an obligatory process. An effective principal should ask if the substitute teacher found everything necessary for an effective learning day upon arrival and make sure they do not have other needs which require help from someone more familiar with the district. Taking time to provide substitute teachers with feedback upon completion of the assignment is an effective way to improve their ability for the future (Tannenbaum, 2000).

However, evaluation and feedback is not solely for the substitute teacher. Taking time to develop an effective substitute teacher program also involves the teachers. Research indicates classroom teachers do not have a great deal of confidence in most substitute teacher's ability to teach effectively (Minthorn, 2000). Research also suggests this problem is not always the result of inept substitute teachers. This can be caused by the lack of teacher preparation as well as the inability of the principal to insure the proper foundational steps were in place prior to the teacher absence. It is vital principals clearly communicate their expectations to teachers regarding substitute teacher lessons and materials. The guidelines can include recommendations of where to leave plans, what to include in each set of plans (seating charts, emergency procedures), and demanding

teachers leave meaningful lessons with the expectation the substitute teacher can teach the material effectively (Tannenbaum, 2000).

Additionally, Mikesell (2003) feels the principal is the person who evaluates the process while in progress. The principal needs to ask: Are teachers leaving lesson plans? Are substitute teachers following the lesson plans? Are the students learning? What steps need to change in order to get more effective substitute teachers in the building? An effective way to monitor these integral parts of the substitute teacher program is through the utilization of evaluations (Simmons, 1991; Tannenbaum, 2000).

Research recommends frequent and thorough evaluations of the substitute teacher and the teacher (Mikesell, 2007). This can include the teacher evaluating the substitute teacher and the substitute teachers evaluating the teacher. Also included should be an evaluation by the principal for each day the classroom teacher is absent. The data gleaned from these evaluations allow the principals to answer the above questions. Information might become available which indicates teachers are not leaving meaningful lessons. If this is the case, it is not a product of substitute teachers failing to teach effectively, but a result of inadequate planning by the regular classroom teacher. The principal then has to address this with the hope of improving the plans in the future (Tannenbaum, 2000).

If the evaluations point to inadequate implementation by the substitute teacher, then the principal has to address this issue with the particular substitute teacher. Sometimes a few tips along the way can make a positive impact. If the substitute teacher is included in the professional development activities there is opportunity for growth here

as well. A classroom management plan might be beneficial, especially for a substitute teacher who shows promise (Gresham, Donihoo & Cox, 2007).

On occasion, things do not work out for certain substitute teachers and the principal is the person who has to make some tough decisions. If there is a day when a substitute teacher is present and they are inappropriate, or fail to act responsibly, the principal is the first in line to try and decipher what happened and who is at fault. It is vital the principal make time to deal with substitute teacher issues. This could be as easy as a small suggestion for next time, or as difficult as going through a process that eliminates the ineffective substitute teacher from district's substitute teacher pool. A recommendation is principals keep accurate records of all interaction with substitute teachers in the event a dismissal requires legal attention (Mikesell, 2003).

### **The Effect of Leadership Styles on Substitute Teacher Training and Development**

To develop a deeper understanding of the leadership role in creating effective learning opportunities for students in the presence of a substitute teacher, this research intends to look at how different leadership styles would facilitate substitute teacher programs. It is the intention of the analyses to create clarity for the overall framework of the study, which is a "Model for improving instructional effectiveness", which has similarities to appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

Leadership is defined by Northouse (2010) as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 3). Individuals, in this case principals, can lead district substitute teacher programs using a variety of styles. The following lenses intend to represent how the individual theories of the trait approach,

leadership-member exchange (LMX), and authentic leadership approach might appear in substitute teacher programs, as well as teacher interactions, with these respective theories.

The trait approach theory focuses on the leader and how he influences the school environment. Trait leaders are responsible for the actions of the individuals they supervise. In comparison to other theories, an opportunity for subordinates to provide input does not exist. A trait leader develops the guidelines for implementation of policy. The subordinates, in this case the teachers and substitute teachers, must comply with the policies or be subject to consequences laid out in the trait leader's hierarchy of discipline (Northouse, 2010).

A trait leader exhibits a specific set of tendencies which govern his or her leading methods. For example, a trait leader with organization as a strength might create a substitute teacher program which had many quality attributes. Most likely, the entire process would be neatly written and each aspect would be planned with a great amount of detail. Each action by a teacher or substitute teacher would have a corresponding reaction which followed a predetermined protocol. Each person involved, primarily the principal, teacher, and substitute teacher, would be able to reference a document and see how individual situations would be handled and because of the organizational traits, flexibility would likely not be an option (Northouse, 2010).

Trait leaders who focus on organization may have little consideration for the "unplanned" events which take place on a daily basis. Family deaths, car trouble, loss of electrical power, and inclement weather are possible events causing a teacher absence or a substitute teacher to arrive late. In this situation a trait leader looks at the protocol and determines the consequence based on what is written. If the organized document calls for

a teacher to lose a day's salary for not notifying the district by 6 am if the teacher was going to miss because of a death, then the employee will likely have one day's wage garnished, even if up all night by the bedside of a dying family member. Because the trait of strength is organization, the principal does not factor in the human element and sticks to the rules no matter what (Northouse, 2010).

In contrast to the trait approach, LMX leaders would include input from subordinates to create the guidelines which govern how each school day functions. An LMX leader would allow teachers to be part of the development of district goals and plans for teaching activities, student interaction, and professional development. An effective LMX leader includes policies for teacher absences which would allow teachers to help the leader consider different scenarios and how they might affect teachers, substitute teachers, and students (Northouse, 2010).

Using the previous example of a staff absence due to a family death, an LMX leader would have conducted a conversation with other staff members about contingencies to the original set of guidelines. It would not be a "my-way-or-the-highway" approach. If a family member was dying and the teacher failed to call by the required time, there may have been a consequence but it would emanate from a conversation between the teacher and the principal at a later date. The two individuals would sit down, identify the problem, and reach a compromise which did not jeopardize the integrity of the written rules but also did not create the level of potential animosity caused by the trait leader's unwillingness to waiver (Northouse, 2010).

Authentic leaders are inclined to treat others in the organization with sincerity and exhibit a concern for the well-being of the organization and those who make up the

workforce. An authentic leader would consider all of the elements which lead to teacher absences, the effect on the students, staff, and school culture and then make decisions about policy. These decisions would be guided by input from others but also by an inner compass which tells the principal to treat others as he would want to be treated in regards to teacher attendance policies (Northouse, 2010).

Again, looking at the example of the staff member who has the dying relative and fails to call by 6 a.m., a truly authentic leader would evaluate the situation and consider how he would have dealt with the same situation. If breaking the rule meant being with family at an obvious time of need, then likely the lack of communication would go unmentioned. Any questions by other staff members might be met with a caring response about the delicate nature of the event and how the principal would have done the same thing while stressing the value he or she places on meaningful relationships. Additionally, the authentic leader would take full responsibility for the decision to move on and focus on being compassionate and accommodating to the staff member upon their return from bereavement leave (Northouse, 2010).

It is evident from the literature the value an effective principal can have on the creation of a quality substitute teacher program. Principals should be involved in establishing the goals of the substitute teacher program and the selection process. It is also important the principal has input on the substitute teacher training. When the regular classroom teacher is absent, and substitute teachers are being utilized, an effective principal takes the time to interact with the substitute teacher during their assignment and give them support along the way. Documentation through evaluations and feedback are responsible ways to record good and bad substitute teacher characteristics and can be

helpful if the need arises to discontinue the utilization of a particular substitute teacher or substitute teachers.

If the principal does not become involved in the substitute teacher program, they may endure such consequences as angry staff, students, and parents who do not approve of the substitute teacher's behavior or ineptitude. The repercussions of lost learning days include re-teaching and losing more days to undo damage caused by poor quality teaching. Therefore, if a principal considers the time it takes to proactively guide substitute teacher programs as more valuable than being reactive to the problems of ineffectiveness, it can free up time for other tasks.

### **Utilizing Best Teaching Practices**

School administrators, teachers, and substitute teachers have direct impact on students whenever they interact with one another. There are situations regarding delivery of information, and the abilities of the person who delivers the information, which greatly influence the effectiveness of the learning opportunity. Licensed educators are trained in pedagogy and learn to hone the ability to deliver information in a variety of ways. School administrators are trained to work with teachers to develop more effective teaching skills. Substitute teachers come from a variety of backgrounds and many do not receive formal pedagogical training (Coverdill & Oulevey, 2007).

The positive effects of training substitute teachers has been documented in other studies (Cardon, 2001). It is evident through research how important making connections with students can raise their level of achievement. The decision to create meaningful and relevant learning opportunities can be described as using "best practices." The fundamental goals of best practices include the following: creating a climate conducive

to learning, using a variety of teaching strategies, connecting current learning to past learning, incorporating high-level thinking skills, the use of collaboration as a teaching tool, utilizing a variety of assessment strategies, and the incorporation of technology in instruction (Tileston, 2005). An integral part of the evaluation of substitute teachers in this study is how well best practices are incorporated into teaching strategies.

### **Summary**

According to Creswell (2009), "the literature review shares with the reader the results of other studies that are closely related to the one being undertaken" (p. 25). This study provided challenges in regards to finding similar studies. The amount of information describing the responsibilities of school administrators when working with substitute teachers is limited. Therefore, the researcher referenced sources which described substitute teacher training *and* best practices of effective school administrators who strive to develop highly effective educators.

Chapter two of this study looked at the effects of lost time for students, teacher shortcomings, acquisition of high-quality substitute teachers, substitute preparation, and the responsibilities of school administrators in relation to designing a substitute teacher training program. The literature sources provided information on the state of substitute-led instruction across the U.S. For the purpose of this study it would have been more beneficial to have more succinct literature about school administrator roles. The shortage of information does allow the researcher to pursue the topic of substitute teacher training at a deeper level at a later time.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The value of a quality education is relative to the level of motivation an individual possesses. Statistics exist which show the more education one receives, the greater the impact on earning potential. When comparing two extremes, the value of learning is clear. In 2012, U.S. students who did not receive a high school diploma were experiencing a 12.4% unemployment rate. However, U.S. students who had received a doctoral degree were only experiencing an unemployment rate of only 2.5%. Consequently the higher the education the larger the earnings (United States Department of Labor, 2013).

According to a study by Glatfelter (2006), students will spend approximately one year being taught by a substitute teacher. This is almost ten percent of the students' K-12 career. This fact, combined with the employment statistics, means the year of substitute teacher-led education is an important one. In light of this, there is a significant need for strategies which allow those days to be effective learning experiences. During the research, roles of the teachers, substitute teachers, and school administrators were examined in an effort to determine the responsibilities of each for ensuring the quality learning expected when the regular classroom teacher is present.

The study used a quantitative approach to investigate the practices of the regular classroom teacher and the effectiveness of substitute teachers during a regular classroom teacher's absence. However, the primary focus was on the role of leadership in assuring days covered by substitute teachers provided quality learning opportunities. This paper will describe the methods used to gather the data and analyze and report the findings.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this research was to conduct a case study of the role a school administrator, in this case the principal, plays in assuring the quality of learning opportunities provided to students when the regular classroom teacher is absent. The regular classroom teacher, the substitute teacher, and the students are all factors which determine whether a day of school covered by a substitute teacher is effective. However, this study chose to look at what school administrators do to develop positive learning opportunities. Specifically the study looked at how school administrators evaluate the preparation of substitute teachers, support substitute teachers through the utilization of best practices, and how school administrators evaluate the level of quality teaching provided by substitute teachers.

A belief exists prior to conducting research that when there is poor communication of the expectations placed on the regular classroom teacher, the substitute teacher, and the students, the results will be poor as well. Conversely, if the teacher and the substitute teacher clearly understand their responsibilities prior to beginning of the school day, it places the focus on providing effective instruction when the regular classroom teacher is gone. This study looked to identify those situations which promote quality learning. The key elements of this study were the characteristics of the school administrator and the methods to improve the effectiveness of substitute teachers.

In this study, the researcher wanted to know if the school administrator evaluates the preparation of the substitute teacher. The researcher also wanted to determine if the school administrator took steps to insure substitute teachers were prepared using best practices for classroom teachers as outline by the district. Finally, the researcher focused

on the methods used for the evaluation of the substitute, the regular classroom teacher, and the school administrator to determine a broader picture of the process of utilizing substitute teachers as effective instructional leaders. Throughout this research, finding adequate resources which provided scholarly data from past research was difficult. There is a significant lack of research in this area.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions were intended to identify strengths and weaknesses of the district examined during this case study. The following questions were designed to evaluate current practices conducted by district leadership when selecting, preparing, and evaluating substitutes:

1. What are the perceptions of school administrators on the performance of substitute teachers after the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy?
2. What are the perceptions of regular classroom teachers on the performance of substitute teachers after the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy?
3. What are the perceptions of the substitute teachers in regards to School District A's policies regarding substitute teaching following the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy?

### **Design for the Study**

This research was designed to be a mixed-methods case study of a particular rural K-12 school district, or District A. Research was conducted quantitatively and qualitatively through action research methods. According to Hatch, "action research is

concerned with action and change" (p. 31). Surveys were utilized to obtain the data for the study. The resulting data from surveys was analyzed to develop an action plan for improvement of teaching practice (Hatch, 2002).

In conjunction, the study utilized double-loop learning. Multiple attempts were made to develop an effective substitute teacher training program, i.e., improve teaching practice. The results from the first surveys were used to adjust strategies for substitute teacher improvement. Subsequent attempts utilized new survey results in a continuing effort to reach the goal of providing quality substitute teachers who could deliver effective instruction in the absence of the regular classroom teacher (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

### **Participants and Sampling Procedures**

The population being studied were the school administrators, teachers, and qualified substitute teachers who are employed by one school district in Kansas which will be identified as Kansas School District A. Kansas School District A is a rural school district located in an unincorporated town in the southeast corner of Kansas. There are currently approximately 800 students enrolled in grades K-12. Kansas School District A employs six school administrators, approximately 70 certified teachers, and roughly 25 substitute teachers are utilized in the average school year.

For this study, school administrators, teachers, and substitute teachers were surveyed. In School District A all grade levels are under one roof. Grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade are considered elementary. There is one assistant principal and a principal for the elementary. Grades six through eight make up the

middle school, which has one principal. Grades 9-12 comprise the high school. There is an assistant principal and a principal at this level.

Sampling for the study was conducted using multiple surveys. All participants were selected based on convenience sampling. Although Creswell (2009) recommends random sampling, the nature of the case study prompted the use of Kansas School District A employees. It would not provide reliability to include respondents outside this district just to accommodate randomization and the district population is too small to provide sufficient random data for the study. Students were not involved in the surveys due to the concern over difficulty receiving IRB approval for each student.

According to Hatch (2002), triangulation increases the confidence of the reported findings. In this study, the researcher focused on getting input on the same absence date, or triangulating data, from the school administrator, the teacher, and the substitute teacher. The questions were designed with similar wording to provide feedback targeting the same objectives.

Prior to soliciting responses from any of the participants the researcher received permission to conduct research from the superintendent of School District A. In addition, the principal at each building level was contacted and allowed to review the survey instruments. The principals provided input for the design of some of the survey items and expressed interest in the survey results. From the beginning, it was the intention of the study for the data to guide future practice in obtaining, training, and evaluating substitute teachers. This aspect provides the opportunity for double-loop learning, as mentioned before.

## **Data Collection**

Data collection for this study used a mixed-methods approach. Creswell (2009) stated, "quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationships among variables" (p. 4). The researcher created the survey in a manner which allowed the participants to answer items which addressed similar objectives about substitute effectiveness, regardless of the role of the participant. These questions focused on the professionalism, teaching ability, and organization of the substitute teacher. The instrument which evaluated the regular classroom teacher, focused on how effectively he or she prepared for a substitute teacher. Were there clear plans? Where all the materials available for successful implementation of the lesson? When comparing the responses to the two documents, the school administrator would be able to determine the level of effectiveness of each individual, the regular classroom teacher, the substitute teacher, or both.

Data were also collected qualitatively through open ended responses on surveys. This type of data collection is consistent with action research. As mentioned before, Hatch (2002) discusses the focus of action research is about what is happening and the change that can take place. In this study, the data collected helped guide school administrators in developing new strategies for future substitute training.

## **Procedures**

To insure the study had merit, the researcher took time to examine the validity of the instruments. According to Creswell (2009), the primary question the researcher wants to know is, "do the instruments truly measure what they were intended to measure"

(p. 149)? For this study, each instrument was peer reviewed by licensed secondary language arts teachers and college professors for validity.

Instrument reliability was also a priority. Reliability is focused on getting results in a consistent manner over time. The instruments used in this study were analyzed to determine if they remained reliable in scoring and how they were administered (Creswell, 2009).

Focusing the survey items toward the research questions created variables between the three instruments which the researcher could examine. Collecting multiple surveys helped the researcher accumulate more data to analyze and look for trends in the abilities of the teacher, substitute teacher, and the school administrator. Furthermore, every effort was made to get all three evaluations on the same dates for each event. It was also a priority to get multiple data sets on each teacher, substitute teacher, and school administrator in an effort to make informed decisions for future training and policy.

### **Substitute Teacher Data Collection**

The substitute teachers were studied in hopes of determining the level of effectiveness which they were able to teach in the regular classroom teacher's absence. The substitute teacher instruments, one completed by the regular classroom teacher and the other by the school administrator, focused on the abilities of the substitute teachers in the areas of how well they were prepared, how well they adhere to best practices, and whether they exhibit quality classroom teaching skills. The substitute teacher also evaluated the district and the regular classroom teacher. All three instruments were completed for each absence.

The instrument completed by the regular classroom teacher, titled *Kansas District A Substitute Teacher Survey* (Appendix A), focused on how well the substitute teacher performed during the day. The survey items looked to address the effectiveness of instruction, ability to help students, the interaction with students, and whether the substitute teacher left adequate notes informing the regular classroom teacher of the day's events. By collecting multiple surveys on each substitute teacher, the researcher was able to acquire more data for analysis.

A second instrument for the same day and same substitute teacher was completed by the school administrator. The survey instrument, *Substitute Teacher Satisfaction Survey* (Appendix B), focused on teaching and professional abilities. Such things as professional dress and punctuality are part of this instrument. There were also survey items addressing the how effectively the substitute teacher conducted lessons and communicated with students.

The third instrument used was completed by school administrators, regular classroom teachers, substitute teachers, and support staff of Kansas School District A. The focus of this instrument was to determine the effectiveness of the substitute academy training by posing before and after questions. The survey, titled *Evaluation of Kansas School District A Substitute Academy* (Appendix C), was designed to provide feedback to the researcher which could guide future trainings, thus the double-loop aspect of this study.

It was the goal of the researcher to gain a minimum number of three evaluations of each substitute teacher. In most cases, each substitute teacher would be evaluated by more than one classroom teacher. However, the school administrator feedback typically

came from one or two individuals, depending on the level in which the substitute teacher was utilized. The feedback from multiple sources allows the researcher to collect added insight and eliminate as much bias as possible. Excessive responses from one teacher would distort the data and raise questions about its validity (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009).

The following sections discuss in more detail the methods of data collection. The sections also describe the subjects' characteristics and the subjects' respective roles in the study. The second section discusses the manner in which the study followed guidelines for the protection of human subjects including the proper steps of obtaining IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval through the University of Missouri.

### **Substitute Academy Data Collection Procedures**

Prior to the 2013-14 school year the researcher conducted a substitute teacher academy. This was the first such training utilized by the district. Potential substitute teachers were invited to the academy where each one was given a *Substitute Teacher Handbook* (Appendix D). The handbook included district expectations, policies, and procedures. Also included was a section containing pedagogical tips to increase the effectiveness of the substitute teacher.

The second academy, conducted in January, 2014, provided the same information as the first, but also included several different activities intended to familiarize the substitute teacher candidates with teaching strategies. This was accomplished through discussion and the use of scenarios. The participants were grouped and allowed time to find solutions to the scenarios. It was the hope of the researcher the substitute teacher academy would provide a difference between the initial surveys, which are archival, and

subsequent surveys and quantitative data through the increased preparation and expectations placed on substitute teachers.

During the training, feedback was solicited from substitute teacher candidates using the *Kansas School District A Anonymous Survey from Substitute Candidates* (Appendix E). It was this input which helped guide some of the training and changes implemented as the school year progressed. The collection of this data prior to implementation of the current survey instrument helped provide baseline data for comparison which added more depth to the study and data collection. It is the intent of the researcher to continue Substitute Academy training and add to the collection of data for continuous improvement.

### **Human Subjects Protection**

All non-archival interactions with participants were not initiated until approval was received from the IRB of the University of Missouri. Once IRB approval was granted, the researcher began gathering data. Participants were provided a letter informing them of the possible risks associated with the study and were given the option to participate in the study. Archival data, which was gathered before approval was acquired, has been reviewed and approved by the dissertation committee

School administrators, regular classroom teachers, substitute teachers, and support staff/human resources staff were asked to participate in a survey which contains questions related to the effectiveness of substitute teachers in the absence of the regular classroom teacher. The main focus of the study was to determine if the substitute teacher academies are improving the effectiveness of classroom instruction in the absence of the regular

classroom teacher. A secondary focus is the role of school administrators in supporting this initiative.

The source of data collection was through a collection of survey instruments developed by the researcher, with guidance from peers, school administrators, and college faculty. Identification of respondents was necessary to create the duplicity of events for archival data. However, the identity of the school district has been protected. All data collected will be kept in a safe place to protect the identity of respondents.

Participation was voluntary. There were no penalties for not responding to any or all of the questions. Individuals had the right to terminate participation at any time during the surveys.

### **Data Analysis**

Teacher researchers identify problems within their environment and design methods to analyze the problem in hopes of finding a resolution (Gay et al., 2009). Using the research questions for this study as a guide, the researcher utilized the use of surveys completed after a substitute teacher covered for a regular classroom teacher. The surveys provided valuable feedback, in the form of ratings, which could be analyzed and lead to informed decisions about improving substitute teacher effectiveness. As with all aspects of the study, the researcher continued to be in communication with school administrators and regular classroom teachers.

In this study, the data was analyzed using Pearson's Chi-square test within the subgroups having the minimum amount of necessary respondents. Respondents were not identified in the study based on the conditions of IRB approval. Due to the fact there were 39 respondents, the regular classroom teacher surveys were compared using

Pearson's Chi-square test in an effort to look for relationships between the actions of the school administrator, the effects of the substitute academy, and how effectively substitute teachers execute their responsibilities after interventions (Field, 2009). The substitute teachers and administrators level of participation was below the required number to conduct a Chi-square analysis. These two groups were analyzed for shifts in their perceptions of behavior prior to, and following, the Substitute Teacher Academy.

At this point double-loop theory was utilized. The results indicated where changes in procedures were needed. Archival survey responses guided the second substitute academy training and led to changes in information and procedure. Once the changes were made, Chi-square tests were again conducted to continue the effort of making policy improvements in hopes of increasing effectiveness. It was the intention to continue this process of continuous modification and improvement.

### **Role of Researcher**

The researcher was a full time high school teacher in this K-12 organization. The researcher had daily interactions with the subjects in the organization. Care was taken to develop instruments for surveys and interviews which eliminated as much bias as possible. Each set of field notes were coded to protect anonymity and promote neutrality during data analysis. The researcher did not discuss findings with others in the organization while accumulating data, in an effort to avoid swaying other respondents in future interviews or observations (Creswell, 2009).

### **Trustworthiness**

Measures were taken to insure the study was conducted with quality in mind. Efforts were made to design instruments with high levels of validity and reliability.

According to Fink (2009), "a reliable survey results in consistent information. A valid survey produces accurate information" (p. 8). In the case of the multiple surveys utilized in this study, care was taken to develop quality questions which exhibited both reliability and validity. The instrument design created an instrument which was easy to use and offered response choices which did not lead respondents or result in neutral responses (Fink, 2009).

### **Limitations and Assumptions**

This case study was not without limitations. Additionally, there were some aspects which were clearly evident prior to the beginning of the data collection. Since the researcher worked in the school district being studied, there were some experiences which, while not creating bias, did provide some background knowledge to the district and personnel. There were also some challenges to accumulating data on a topic which is not static. Teachers and substitute teachers do not encounter the same set of circumstances on multiple days so replication of the events studied was not possible. Effort was made to overcome the limitations and assumptions to create study based on valid, reliable, and unbiased research.

### **Limitations**

This study was limited by the following issues. The size of the sample was limited to substitute teachers utilized by one school district. The inability to generalize the study to other similar organizations was a significant limitation. The lack of previous study data, which could be used for comparison, was also a factor.

There were components which were not replicable in this study, and are therefore hard to quantify. These include the reason for the teacher absence and the reason a

particular substitute teacher was placed in a particular classroom. Aspects that, by nature, fluctuate and therefore were not able to be replicated under the exact same conditions. Substitute teachers change frequently. Different individuals who substitute teach were more effective than others. Students reacted differently to different substitute teachers. Teachers planned differently for days they were absent and this created a great deal of inconsistency.

Due to the nature of substituting, there was not a practical way to always have the same substitute teacher cover for the same teacher every time. Furthermore, the substitute teacher pool changes frequently which eliminated a particular substitute teacher from being studied longitudinally. Finally, there are times when a teacher was not in attendance due to an emergency. During these times, many teachers were not able to create detailed lesson plans. Comparing emergency lessons to lessons designed for planned absences was not equitable and could have skewed the results.

### **Assumptions**

A number of things can be assumed about the effectiveness of substitute teachers and the importance of the role of principals in ensuring quality educational opportunities for students. One of the most logical assumptions, the failure to provide effective instruction when a substitute teacher is present, can be attributed to a lack of communication, poor planning on the part of school personnel, and failure to enforce district policy. Each of these elements are vital to having a quality substitute teacher program, and each requires attention to detail at a basic level.

Poor communication can be a result of a substitute teacher not knowing what his role is prior to arrival. Another communication breakdown occurred when the substitute

teacher left no notes about student performance. The real issue was when, and if, someone realized the day was not effective and because there was not a clearly articulated communication plan, the leader was unable to identify the problems. At this point it can be assumed poor communication was a major factor.

A lack of planning was likely another big issue when discussing substitute teacher programs. If students do not receive an effective day of instruction, it can be assumed the teacher did not leave work of adequate length or rigor, or the substitute teacher did not engage the students as requested. In both cases, there was a good chance better planning methods would have made the day more successful for students.

A final assumption was based on the possibility the principal is not performing his duties in compliance with district policy regarding substitute teachers. It can be assumed there are two causes for this lack of diligence. One, the principal is unwilling to enforce the policy due to choice or lack of time or resources. The other issue was a lack of district policy regarding substitute teachers and each principal in the district leads by his own philosophy.

### **Summary**

The main objective was to use a mixed-method approach to determine if the school administrators of the Kansas School District A were making sure days covered by substitute teachers were as effective as possible in the absence of the regular classroom teacher. The two methods used to gather data were quantitative surveys and a qualitative case study. The researcher used interviews and field notes to obtain qualitative data. All participants were given informed consent prior to participation. All necessary study

criteria was correctly submitted to the University of Missouri and granted IRB approval prior to interaction with the participants.

Measures were taken to insure the data collection methods were reliable and valid. The intent of the instruments was to decipher if the educational opportunities provided by substitute teachers met the expectations of the regular classroom teacher and the leader. The criteria for effectiveness were created by compilation of research of recommended and tested teaching practices. Data results were analyzed with current acceptable practices in order to insure quality of the study. Overall, the methods used for research followed current guidelines for both collection and analysis.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND FINDINGS

School districts are continuously striving to find quality substitute teachers to place in classrooms when the regular classroom teacher is absent. As reported by Zubrzycki (2012), substitute teachers report to school districts with a variety of characteristics and skill levels. To help alleviate this problem, this mixed methods study was used to aid in determining the effectiveness of substitute teacher training in a rural Kansas school district, known as School District A.

For the purposes of this study, a substitute teacher academy was developed to provide training to substitute teachers. Two academies were offered during the 2013-2014 school year. Substitute teacher attendance at each academy was optional. There were some substitute teacher candidates who attended both of the academies, some who attended one, and other substitute teacher candidates who did not attend either. Due to the different levels of participation by substitute teachers, not all participants in the study were functioning under the same level of training. This provided the researcher with some challenges in uniformly assessing the effectiveness of the study, especially the impact of the academies on improved substitute effectiveness.

In addition to the training academies, the substitute teachers were evaluated by the teachers and administrators. Instruments were developed during the 2013-14 school year with the intent of identifying strengths and weaknesses of individual substitute teachers and providing guidance to rectify those weaknesses through a support and accountability system. The results of these surveys were analyzed and shared with administrators in an effort to provide additional and more meaningful instruction to the students when a

substitute teacher was present. Within this study, several facets of substitute teaching were discovered which may aid in the development of future substitute teachers.

The purpose of this chapter will be to describe the study results, both quantitative and qualitative, that were collected when a substitute teacher was present. This chapter will focus on how the study developed a summative overview of School District A and the substitute teacher policies incorporated on a regular basis. The emerging themes discovered will be aligned to the conceptual frameworks of *the model for improving instructional effectiveness*, which is closely related to the tenets of appreciative inquiry as proposed by Cooperrider and Whitney (2005). The concepts of double-loop theory, developed by Argyris and Schon (1974), will be incorporated as well.

A new component to the substitute teacher acquisition process was adopted during the 2013-2014 school year. In February, the district implemented the substitute teacher scheduling program known as Automated Educational Substitute Operator (AESOP), and all substitute teacher acquisition was handled with this method the remainder of the school year. The same challenges which faced the previous system were evident with the AESOP program. Despite the fact automation streamlined scheduling of substitute teachers, the data reveal substitute teachers' performance did not improve with the use of an automated scheduling system. Some substitute teachers who were utilized by School District A continued to struggle with such basic skills as classroom management and keeping students focused on the assignments. These deficiencies went unaddressed by administration, even though feedback from regular classroom teachers and the researcher were available for them to review.

## Overview of Study

This study was conducted during the 2013-2014 school year in School District A, a rural school district in southeast Kansas. The staff consists of approximately 90 licensed teachers. For purposes of this study, the superintendent, paraprofessional educators, and other support staff were not included in the accumulated data.

Two Substitute Teacher Academies were implemented in the study to improve the effectiveness of substitute teachers. Following each academy, three instruments were utilized in an effort to evaluate the impact the academy training had on substitute teacher effectiveness. Each instrument was to be used for one specific day of substitute teacher coverage in a regular classroom setting. One instrument was for regular classroom teachers to evaluate substitute teachers. Another instrument was for substitute teachers to evaluate regular classroom teachers. The third instrument was for administrators to evaluate classroom teachers and substitute teachers.

The implementation of these three instruments was intended to utilize *the model for substitute teacher effectiveness* and double-loop theory. The researcher was collecting and disaggregating survey results, which were both qualitative and quantitative, and then providing the summarized information to administrators. It was the intention of the researcher that the information would guide continued training for substitute teachers on an as-needed basis. This type of system would adhere to *the model for substitute teacher effectiveness* and the practice of double-loop theory.

This first set of instruments yielded archival data and, as mentioned, was intended to foster a system of continuous substitute teacher improvement. Due to the fact the data could only be used in an archival form, another instrument was developed toward the end

of the study. This new instrument was used to collect data that focused on overall teacher and administrator satisfaction with substitute teachers and substitute teacher satisfaction with district staff and policies. The primary intent of this part of the study was to determine if the Substitute Teacher Academy training, which was peer-led, and the subsequent evaluations, also peer-led, created any change in perceived substitute teacher effectiveness in School District A.

This instrument was designed to be usable by all three groups, therefore improving anonymity of respondents. Each respondent was required to submit a separate, signed consent form, but the actual survey instrument did not have any identifying features. The IRB approved survey was administered in May and contained both Likert scale response items and open-ended response opportunities.

### **Research Questions**

Within this study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the perceptions of school administrators on the performance of substitute teachers after the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy?
2. What are the perceptions of regular classroom teachers on the performance of substitute teachers after the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy?
3. What are the perceptions of the substitute teachers in regards to School District A's policies regarding substitute teaching following the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy?

## **Participants**

Within School District A there are three levels, which include high school, middle school, and elementary. Each house the necessary administrators and support staff who have regular interaction with substitute teachers. In this section, each individual building level will be the level of participation in this study.

Both the elementary and high school offices are comprised of an administrative assistant, a vice-principal, and a principal. The middle school office has an administrative assistant and a head principal. At the beginning of the school year, each office was responsible for obtaining the substitute teachers needed at their levels. This task fell to each of the vice-principals in the elementary and high school. At the middle school level, the principal was in charge of obtaining substitute teachers.

Table 1 shows the participation of all roles within each building level. The table includes the number of possible participants, of which there were 66, and the number of actual participants, which totaled 43. There were 28 possible participants from the elementary, 13 from the middle school, and 25 at the high school levels, respectively. The number of actual participants was 16 high school, seven middle school, and 20 elementary staff members. The substitute teacher availability fluctuates, therefore that subgroup is not included in the table.

Table 2 includes the number of participants by individual role. There were five substitute teachers, 39 regular classroom teachers, and four administrators who responded. In Table 2, the number of possible substitute teacher participants fluctuates and cannot be expressed with accuracy. Therefore, only the number of substitute teachers who participated will be included. This will not allow for the percentage of

participation to be calculated for substitute teachers. Based on archival data, an accurate minimum number of candidates would be 20, but that is not a static number and would not prove to be reliable statistical analysis.

### **Data Collection**

Once the researcher received IRB approval for collection of new data, contact was made with all building level personnel to insure their cooperation and support for data collection. The researcher made efforts to achieve buy-in from all staff members by clearly communicating the purpose of the survey and the potential improvement in the practice of utilizing substitute teachers. Therefore, the researcher attempted to provide all the necessary materials and instructions, with the proper identification, prior to data collection.

A manila envelope was placed in each school's main office for teachers. Teachers were asked to place their responses in this envelope. This process allowed the researcher to determine the level of participation at each grade level, yet still provide anonymity. The collection method was intended to insure equal distribution of input by staff at each level. Table 1 includes the participation at each level and frequency and percentages are reported.

Table 1

*School District A Participation Percentages by Building Level*

Building Level	N Possible Participants	N Actual Participants	Percentage
Elementary	26	16	53.8
Middle School	13	7	53.8
High School	23	20	78.2

*Note.* N= 43.

Table 2 describes the number of administrators, regular classroom teachers, and substitute teachers who participated in the study. It does not reflect the number of substitute teachers who are employed within the district. Table 2 also shows the percentage of participation for the subgroups of teachers and administrators, respectively.

Table 2

*School District A Participation Percentages by Role*

Role	N Possible Participants	N Actual Participants	Percentage
Teachers	61	39	63.9
Middle School	NA*	5	NA*
High School	5	4	80.0

*Note.* N= 66. \*There is not a way to determine the number of possible substitute teacher participants due to fluctuation

## Findings

One IRB approved instrument was designed to collect data for this study. It was administered to administrators, regular classroom teachers, and substitute teachers at the end of the 2013-14 school year in an effort to determine the effectiveness of the

Substitute Teacher Academy. The following findings analyze each subgroups' responses and are broken down into three separate tables, one for each group. Table 3 is the survey response data for administrators. Table 4 is the survey response data for regular classroom teachers. Table 5 is the survey response data for substitute teachers. The survey utilized a Likert scale and the tables show the number of responses for each indicator on the selected scale.

### **Research Question One**

The first research question stated, "what are the perceptions of school administrators on the performance of substitute teachers after the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy?" For items one, two and five, administrators rated the performance of the substitute teachers utilized by School District A, and the preparation for substitute teachers by regular classroom teachers was rated in items three and four. All items were rated using a Likert scale of 1 being *strongly disagree* and 6 being *strongly agree*. In the column on the left, are the descriptors of the survey questions. The numbers on the right are the total number of responses from the Likert scale as indicated by administrators.

Additionally, administrators were given an opportunity to provide qualitative feedback. In this study, only one administrator, out of five, provided comments. These are included in the qualitative analysis.

Table 3

*School District A Administrator Responses Regarding Substitute Teacher Improvement*

Survey Question	1	2	3	4	5	6
Prior to the STA, substitute teachers arrived to their assignments dressed professionally.	0	0	0	1	2	1
Following the STA, substitute teachers arrived at their assignments dressed professionally	0	0	0	0	2	2
Prior to the STA, substitute teachers effectively followed the regular classroom teacher's lesson plans as described.	0	0	2	1	1	0
Following the STA, substitute teachers effectively followed the regular classroom teacher's lesson plans as described.	0	0	0	2	1	1
Prior to the STA, regular classroom teachers provided adequate amounts of work to keep students on task and learning	0	0	1	2	1	0
Following the STA, regular classroom teachers provided adequate amounts of work to keep students on task and learning	0	0	1	1	1	1
Prior to the STA, regular classroom teachers left clear directions which were easy to locate	0	0	1	1	1	1
Following the STA, regular classroom teachers left clear directions which were easy to locate	0	0	0	0	2	2
Prior to the STA, substitute teachers left detailed notes describing student effort and accomplishment	0	0	2	1	0	1
Following the STA, substitute teachers left detailed notes describing student effort and accomplishment	0	0	0	0	3	1

*Note.* N=4. Six-point Likert (Strongly Disagree = 1, Strongly Agree = 6). STA= Substitute Teacher Academy.

**Quantitative Analysis.** The data in Table 3 reveals the combined perceptions of all participating administrators regarding substitute teacher performance, and the preparation by regular classroom teachers in advance of an absence, prior to, and following the Substitute Teacher Academy. The significance of the perceptions of administrators is difficult to analyze considering there were only four respondents. Therefore the table intends to demonstrate shifts in substitute teacher perception.

Item one deals with the perception of administrators in School District A as to whether substitute teachers dressed professionally. There were responses of disagreement for before and after the training. The shift indicates administrators perceived substitute teachers were more professionally dressed as a result of the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy.

The second item in the survey focused on whether substitute teachers were more adept at following the lesson plans which were left by the regular classroom teacher. There were responses of disagreement for before and after the training. The shift indicates administrators perceived substitute teachers more effectively followed the classroom teacher's lesson plans as a result of the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy.

The third item in the survey related to the efforts of the regular classroom teacher as they prepared lessons for their own absence. The focus was on how much work was left for students to complete in the presence of a substitute teacher. There were responses of disagreement for before and after the training. The shift indicates administrators perceived a minor improvement in regular classroom teachers'

practice of leaving adequate amounts of work to keep students on task and learning in their absences as a result of the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy.

Item four focused on whether the regular classroom teacher left lesson plans, emergency routines, daily schedules, and other necessary information in a place where it was easy for the substitute teacher to locate. There were responses of disagreement for before and after the training. The shift indicates the administrators perceived regular classroom teachers more effectively provided clear directions, which were easy for substitute teachers to locate, as a result of the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy.

Item five received the largest improvement of all of the items. There were responses of disagreement for before and after the training. The shift indicates administrators perceived substitute teachers more effectively left detailed notes describing student effort and accomplishment as a result of the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy.

In the perception of the administrators who participated, substitute teacher effectiveness improved in all five areas. Table 3 portrays administrators as actively involved in the process of monitoring substitute teacher effectiveness, or at least perceiving there was a change in practice occurring in the classrooms.

**Qualitative Analysis.** Each survey provided an opportunity for individuals to share comments, concerns, or suggestions regarding substitute teachers utilized within School District A. It was the stated intention that these comments would be used to guide subsequent training opportunities. Only one administrator left remarks

for the open ended comments portion of the survey. The administrator noted the substitute teachers made improvements in their abilities to more effectively communicate with office personnel using phones and intercoms. The administrator also believed substitute teachers were more effective at showing up on time, finding the right location for their assignment, and following procedures correctly.

**Integrated Research Question One Findings.** Research question one asked about the perceptions of school administrators of the performance of substitute teachers after the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy. The research indicates an overall shift in perception of administrators in the effectiveness of substitute teacher performance. The research also indicates that regular classroom teachers have improved their planning practices in preparation for having a substitute teacher. The qualitative comments of the one administrator support the shift in ratings found in the survey instrument.

### **Research Question Two**

The second research question stated, “what are the perceptions of regular classroom teachers of the performance of substitute teachers after the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy?” Table 4 contains the reported perceptions of substitute effectiveness prior to the academy, following the academy, and the difference between the two as indicated by regular classroom teachers. Items one, two, and five focus on the behaviors of substitute teachers. In items three and four regular classroom teachers’ focus on their own practices. The column on the left are the descriptors of the survey questions. The numbers on the right are the total number of responses from the

Likert scale as indicated by regular classroom teachers. The Likert scale values were, 1 being *strongly disagree* and 6 being *strongly agree*.

Additionally, regular classroom teachers were given an opportunity to provide qualitative feedback. In this study, multiple classroom teachers provided comments. These are included in the qualitative analysis.

**Quantitative Analysis.** The data in Table 4 reveals the combined opinions of all participating regular classroom teachers in regards to substitute teacher performance, and their own preparation, prior to, and following the Substitute Teacher Academy. The number of respondents in the subgroup of regular classroom teachers was 39, allowing more detailed data analysis. It should be noted that not all rows will equal the number of participants as some did not respond to particular items within the survey. Chi-square analysis was utilized enabling a more statistically accurate comparison of significance between responses. The table intends to show shifts in perception and subsequent narrative content will discuss the details about the presence, or lack of, statistical significance between pairs of results.

Item one deals with the perception of administrators in School District A as to whether substitute teachers dressed professionally. There were responses of disagreement for before and after the training. The shift indicates regular classroom teachers perceived substitute teachers were more professionally dressed as a result of the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy. This item received a degree of freedom of 3. The Chi-square value was 6.34 and the probability was 0.096, which exceeds the required probability value of  $< .05$ . The change in

Table 4

*School District A Regular Classroom Teacher Responses Regarding Substitute Teacher Improvement*

Survey Questions	1	2	3	4	5	6
Prior to the STA, substitute teachers arrived to their assignments dressed professionally.	0	0	10	7	13	7
Following the STA, substitute teachers arrived at their assignments dressed professionally.	0	0	4	6	11	16
Prior to the STA, substitute teachers effectively followed the regular classroom teacher's lesson plans as described. *	0	4	12	13	6	3
Following the STA, substitute teachers effectively followed the regular classroom teacher's lesson plans as described. *	0	1	1	7	19	10
Prior to the STA, regular classroom teachers provided adequate amounts of work to keep students on task and learning.	0	0	4	7	13	12
Following the STA, regular classroom teachers provided adequate amounts of work to keep students on task and learning.	0	0	1	3	16	17
Prior to the STA, regular classroom teachers left clear directions which were easy to locate.	0	1	2	5	14	14
Following the STA, regular classroom teachers left clear directions which were easy to locate.	0	0	1	1	13	22
Prior to the STA, substitute teachers left detailed notes describing student effort and accomplishment. *	1	7	13	8	4	4
Following the STA, substitute teachers left detailed notes describing student effort and accomplishment. *	0	0	7	3	14	14

*Note.* N= 39. Six-point Likert (Strongly Disagree = 1, Strongly Agree = 6)

\* Chi-square analysis revealed statistical significance at alpha=.05. STA= Substitute Teacher Academy.

perception for item one is not statistically significant, based on the Chi-square analysis. However, there was a shift indicated in the rating scale results, which reflects a positive outcome of substitute teacher training.

The second item focuses on how well substitute teachers follow the lesson plans left by the regular classroom teacher. There were responses of disagreement for before and after the training. The shift indicates regular classroom teachers perceived substitute teachers more effectively followed the regular classroom teacher's lesson plans as described. This item received a degree of freedom of 4. The Chi-square value was 23.4 and the probability was 0.001, which is less than the probability value of  $< .05$ . The change in perception for item two is statistically significant, based on the Chi-square analysis. Additionally, there was a shift in the rating scale results indicating improvement, which reflects a positive outcome of substitute teacher training.

Item three related to the amount of work left by the regular classroom teacher for students to complete under the guidance by the substitute teacher. There were responses of disagreement for before and after the training. The shift indicates regular classroom teachers perceived themselves as more effective at providing adequate amounts of work to keep students on task and learning following the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy. This item received a degree of freedom of 3. The Chi-square value was 4.56 and the probability was 0.207, which exceeds the required probability value of  $< .05$ . Therefore, the change in perception for item three is not statistically significant, based on the Chi-square analysis. However, there was a shift indicated in the rating scale results, which reflects a positive outcome of substitute teacher training.

The fourth item dealt with whether regular classroom teachers left clear directions for the substitute teachers. There were responses of disagreement for before and after the training. The shift indicates regular classroom teachers perceived themselves as more effective at leaving clear directions which were easy for substitute teachers to locate following the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy. This item received a degree of freedom of 4. The Chi-square value was 5.80 and the probability was 0.214, which exceeds the required probability value of  $< .05$ . Therefore, the change in perception for item four is not statistically significant, based on the Chi-square analysis. However, there was a shift indicated in the rating scale results, which reflects a positive outcome of substitute teacher training.

The final survey questions asked about the quality of notes left by the substitute teacher. There were responses of disagreement for before and after the training. The shift indicates regular classroom teachers perceived substitute teachers more effectively provided detailed notes describing student effort and accomplishment in the absence of the regular classroom teacher following the Substitute Teacher Academy. This item received a degree of freedom of 5. The Chi-square value was 23.2 and the probability was 0.001, which is less than the required probability value of  $< .05$ . The change in perception for item five is statistically significant, based on the Chi-square analysis. Additionally, there was a shift in the rating scale results indicating improvement, which reflects a positive outcome of substitute teacher training.

**Qualitative Analysis.** The regular classroom teachers were also offered the opportunity to share comments, concerns, or suggestions to make the training of substitutes more effective. The comments provided by the regular classroom teachers

express both positive and negative opinions of substitute teacher performance. It was the intent of the researcher to use these comments, and the accompanying data, to guide further substitute teacher training through the model for improving instructional effectiveness and double-loop learning.

Individual regular classroom teachers provided qualitative feedback in the archival and non-archival data sources. One of the respondents felt there was little change to the effectiveness of substitute teachers following the Substitute Teacher Academy. Another respondent focused on the continued lack of professionalism in the dress and behavior of some of the substitute teachers. A continued theme throughout was how often a few certain substitute teachers chose not to follow the directions left by the classroom teachers. Instead, the substitute teachers chose to modify the plans or disregard them completely.

There were also positive comments supporting the academy. One comment noted a significant difference in the effectiveness of instruction by substitute teachers. Several positive comments indicated individual substitute teachers were more effectively managing classrooms.

One respondent focused on the lack of teacher input regarding substitute teacher training. The respondent offered a suggestion that substitute teachers should be trained using more peer-driven efforts to insure more quality work is done each day students have a substitute teacher. This individual also felt merely handing out training papers, or handbooks, to substitute teachers was not acceptable.

**Integrated Research Question Two Findings.** Substitute teacher performance was discussed at length in archival data due to the problems which arose when substitute

teachers did not meet the expectations of the regular classroom teachers. Due to larger number of respondents, this subgroup of regular classroom teachers' responses allowed more detailed analysis. The significance of the analysis is demonstrated in how the quantitative data supported the qualitative data, and the qualitative data supported the quantitative data.

### **Research Question Three**

The final research question stated, "what are the perceptions of the substitute teachers in regards to School District A's policies regarding substitute teaching following the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy?" For each item, substitute teachers rated the performance of themselves when being utilized by School District A, and the preparation for substitute teachers by regular classroom teachers, using a Likert scale of 1 being *strongly disagree* and 6 being *strongly agree*. In the column on the left are the descriptors of the survey questions. The numbers on the right are the total number of responses from the Likert scale as indicated by administrators.

Additionally, substitute teachers were given an opportunity to provide qualitative feedback. In this study, multiple substitute teachers provided comments. These are included in the qualitative analysis.

**Quantitative Analysis.** The data in Table 5 reveals the combined opinions of all participating substitute teachers regarding substitute teacher performance. The survey also includes substitute teacher perceptions about the preparation by regular classroom teachers in advance of an absence by the regular classroom teacher, prior to, and following the Substitute Teacher Academy. The significance of the perceptions of substitute teachers is difficult to analyze considering there were only five respondents.

Table 5

*School District A Substitute Teacher Responses Regarding Substitute Teacher Improvement*

Survey Questions	1	2	3	4	5	6
Prior to the STA, substitute teachers arrived to their assignments dressed professionally.	0	0	1	2	0	2
Following the STA, substitute teachers arrived at their assignments dressed professionally	0	0	0	0	1	4
Prior to the STA, substitute teachers effectively followed the regular classroom teacher's lesson plans as described.	0	1	1	1	0	2
Following the STA, substitute teachers effectively followed the regular classroom teacher's lesson plans as described.	0	0	0	0	2	3
Prior to the STA, regular classroom teachers provided adequate amounts of work to keep students on task and learning	0	0	1	1	1	2
Following the STA, regular classroom teachers provided adequate amounts of work to keep students on task and learning	0	0	0	0	1	4
Prior to the STA, regular classroom teachers left clear directions which were easy to locate	0	0	0	3	0	2
Following the STA, regular classroom teachers left clear directions which were easy to locate	0	0	0	0	1	4
Prior to the STA, substitute teachers left detailed notes describing student effort and accomplishment	0	1	1	1	1	1
Following the STA, substitute teachers left detailed notes describing student effort and accomplishment	0	0	0	0	2	3

*Note.* N is not known due to fluctuation in substitute teacher pool. Six-point Likert (Strongly Disagree = 1, Strongly Agree = 6). STA= Substitute Teacher Academy.

Therefore the table intends to demonstrate shifts in substitute teacher perception.

Item one deals with the perception of administrators in School District A as to whether substitute teachers dressed professionally. There were responses of disagreement for before and after the training. The shift indicates substitute teachers perceived themselves as more professionally dressed as a result of the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy.

The second item in the survey focused on whether substitute teachers were more adept at following the lesson plans which were left by the regular classroom teacher. There were responses of disagreement for before and after the training. The shift indicates substitute teachers perceived themselves as more effective at following the classroom teacher's lesson plans as a result of the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy.

The third item in the survey related to the efforts of the regular classroom teacher as they prepared lessons for their own absence. The focus was on how much work was left for students to complete in the presence of a substitute teacher. There were responses of disagreement for before and after the training. The shift indicates substitute teachers perceived improvement in regular classroom teachers' practice of leaving adequate amounts of work to keep students on task and learning in their absences as a result of the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy.

Item four focused on whether the regular classroom teacher left lesson plans, emergency routines, daily schedules, and other necessary information in a place where it was easy for the substitute teacher to locate. There were responses of disagreement for before and after the training. The shift indicates the substitute

teachers perceived regular classroom teachers more effectively provided clear directions, which were easy for them to locate, as a result of the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy.

Item five received the largest improvement of all of the items. There were responses of disagreement for before and after the training. The shift indicates substitute teachers perceived themselves as more effective at leaving detailed notes describing student effort and accomplishment as a result of the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy.

**Qualitative Analysis.** In the study of School District A, substitutes were also allowed to respond to an open ended question which followed the Likert items in the survey. They were asked to provide comments, concerns, or suggestions for improvement. The intention was to utilize these comments to make future substitute teacher training more effective. The substitute teacher subgroup actively contributed to this qualitative portion of the study.

One respondent mentioned a noticeable difference in the substitutes who attended the academy, as compared to ones who did not. The largest notable gain was in the area of professionalism. One respondent wrote they thought the training improved the quality of lesson plans and should be a requirement for all substitutes, rather than optional. Another respondent indicated appreciation for the uniformity of expectations and procedures.

**Integrated Research Question Three Findings.** Substitute teachers provided some of the most diverse sets of data. When looking at the quantitative elements of the study, it provides evidence of a positive shift in practice for all areas surveyed. However,

in many archival documents, which included comments from regular classroom teachers, there are a few individual substitute teachers whose effectiveness do not reflect the quantitative data. There are repeated complaints about individual substitutes which cannot be included in the findings due to IRB regulations, but should be noted when looking at the level of improvement following the Substitute Teacher Academy.

### **Insights into Administrator Accountability**

The research for this study covered a timeframe from August 2013 to May 2014. During this time, the peer-led effort to improve instructional effectiveness evolved by using feedback acquired from archival survey instruments. It was the intent of the researcher to utilize this data to improve substitute teacher effectiveness, which reflects double-loop learning principles. After the collection of qualitative responses from regular classroom teachers and substitute teachers, there is a realization by the researcher that the intentions of the research and the actual implementation of improvement practices did not occur at the intended level. The results also did not guide administrative-led interventions to create positive changes of substitute teacher practices within School District A.

In chapter three of this research, the data collection methods section identified three areas of focus within the archival surveys which were utilized following both Substitute Teacher Academies. Figure 2, *School District A Qualitative Responses Indicating Substitute Effectiveness* has been included to show how the qualitative responses on archival surveys reflected the three areas of professionalism: teaching ability, and organizational skills. The comments provided by regular classroom teachers and substitute teachers, when arranged graphically, present a synopsis of professional

practice within School District A. The complete absence of administrative responses on any of the archival surveys, which were available to administrators from the inception of the study, indicates there is no measurable intervention taking place by administration to correct ineffective substitute teacher behavior.

It is important to note that the archival data contain issues noted by regular classroom teachers in the first six weeks of the school year. The same issues were still concerns in other archival data as late as April 2014. It should also be noted that in October 2013 the researcher used survey data to create a spreadsheet containing regular classroom teacher feedback. The researcher shared disaggregated data, positive comments, and concerns about substitute teachers which were revealed in the archival surveys, with administrators at all levels, including the superintendent. Again, Figure 2 has been created to show how the qualitative responses on archival surveys reflected the three areas of professionalism.

	Substitute Teacher Input	Regular Classroom Teacher Input	Administrator Input
Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple substitutes expressed frustration over the fact an administrator did not check on them during the day</li> <li>• Teacher relied on paraprofessionals rather than planning for a substitute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed political views with students</li> <li>• Substitutes spent the day on their phones and computers rather than leading learning</li> <li>• I feel strongly substitutes should be checked on by administrators twice each day</li> <li>• Substitute played harmonica</li> <li>• Substitute played flute which distracted students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Input</li> </ul>
Teaching Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No input</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did not go over any directions with the kids</li> <li>• Substitute visits a lot and does not hold students accountable</li> <li>• Substitute wrote up a new assignment despite the fact I left plenty of work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Input</li> </ul>
Organizational Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher does not always leave detailed instructions</li> <li>• No lesson plans- not conducive for success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Room and desk were a complete mess</li> <li>• Notes left by substitutes did not explain what students did</li> <li>• Had to clean the room upon arriving next morning after substitute teacher was in my room</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Input</li> </ul>

Figure 2. School District A Qualitative Archival Responses Indicating Substitute Ineffectiveness

## Summary

During this study there were three groups of individuals who supplied information regarding the effectiveness of substitute teachers. Administrators, regular classroom teachers, and substitute teachers participated in a survey to determine the impact of the Substitute Teacher Academy. This study gathered both quantitative and qualitative data.

The quantitative data were obtained through the use of a survey instrument which incorporated a Likert scale of 1-6. The indicators were 1 being *strongly disagree* and 6 being *strongly agree*. In each subgroup data set, of which there were three, the survey indicated a shift in perception for each area. The positive shifts indicate the Substitute Teacher Academy had a positive impact on the effectiveness of substitute teachers in School District A.

A second qualitative set of data was collected through the use of an open-ended response item. Each subgroup participating in the survey was given the opportunity to provide comments, concerns, or suggestions for improvement of future substitute teacher training activities. These qualitative comments provided insightful information, both positive and negative, which could be utilized by the researcher.

Chapter four focused on the findings gleaned from the surveys conducted in the study, as well as the archival documents. Data suggest an improvement in practice within each area discussed in the survey instruments. In chapter five, the researcher will discuss conclusions, limitations, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research and how these concepts support, or contradict the data gathered from the research.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the role administrators play in insuring that substitute teachers provide effective learning opportunities during the absence of a regular classroom teacher. It was the intent of the researcher to identify the problems administrators, regular classroom teachers, and substitute teachers face when the regular classroom teacher is absent. The original concept was formed with the assumption that there would be sufficient data available to formulate recommendations for improvements in substitute teaching practices based on timely and relevant examples in literature.

In the beginning, research was conducted to determine which areas others have most commonly focused on when developing substitute teachers to be effective educational leaders in the classroom. The literature review uncovered peer-reviewed sources that offered suggestions for successful acquisition, training, and evaluation of substitute teachers. Data were utilized to create a Substitute Teacher Academy. The first Substitute Teacher Academy was implemented in School District A in August 2013, prior to the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year.

The researcher, with input from administrators, developed the training format, designed the schedule, and handled all correspondence for the substitute teacher candidates. The focus of the academy was to familiarize substitute teacher candidates with school district policies and expectations. During the academy, administrators from each building level presented information about their respective buildings, staff, and

expectations. The remaining time was spent discussing the Substitute Teacher Handbook and answering questions from substitute teachers.

Following the academy, the researcher utilized three instruments (Appendices A, B, and C) to gather data about substitute teacher performance. These three instruments were designed to guide further substitute teacher training. The data collected were disaggregated and shared with administrators. The goal of the data collection was to incorporate the findings into *the model for instructional effectiveness* and double-loop learning theories. The intention was to create systematic monitoring of substitute teachers, in this case led by an administrator, for the improvement of substitute teacher effectiveness.

Data collected from regular classroom teachers and substitute teachers over the course of the school year were utilized throughout the study as archival data. The data did provide feedback which was used by the researcher to develop reports and design a second Substitute Teacher Academy held in January 2014. The format for this training was similar to the August 2013 training but included some scenarios and group activities which simulated real classroom situations.

Also during the January 2014 training, another instrument, (Appendix E), was used to collect data to help guide additional substitute teacher training. The intention was to share substitute teacher feedback with regular classroom teachers. The data collected from this instrument (Appendix E) was never utilized by administrators.

During May 2014 the researcher received IRB approval to conduct a survey of administrators, regular classroom teachers, and substitute teachers. This survey focused on the effectiveness of the two Substitute Teacher Academies held during the 2013-2014

school year. There were 10 items on the survey which utilized a Likert scale. These questions were written to allow ratings of substitute teacher effectiveness before and after the academies. Also included, were open ended questions which asked respondents to provide comments, concerns, or suggestions about the effectiveness of substitute teachers.

After the data were collected, the researcher disaggregated the surveys and recorded the total number of respondents for each Likert scale indicator on all three subgroup surveys. Based on the responses of each subgroup of participants (administrators, regular classroom teachers, and substitute teachers), the substitute teachers and administrators indicated improvement in substitute teaching effectiveness, described as a positive shift in Chapter Four. The subgroup of teachers was large enough to analyze using Chi-square analysis. It was determined that of the five items, there was a statistically significant improvement in items two and five. The two subgroups of administrators and substitute teachers were too small to analyze using the Chi-square method. Therefore, these two groups were noted for their shifts of perceptions in a positive manner. These increases also indicate the effectiveness of the Substitute Teacher Academy. However, archival data collected from August 2013 through May 2014 did not indicate the same results in all areas of substitute teacher effectiveness.

This chapter intends to look at the successes and failures of the original initiatives. Each Research Question will be examined and the results described in relation to what went well and what did not. The researcher will analyze the study in a Conclusion section and identify any Limitations which were encountered during the study, or were inherent in the environment, which impeded the study. Additionally, Implications for

Practice will be described in detail. The final step in this chapter will be to make Recommendations for Future Research.

### **Conclusions**

The initial goal of the research was to determine the role administrators play in insuring that substitute teachers provide effective learning opportunities during the absence of a regular classroom teacher. This study was peer driven and included input from administrators during the planning stage. Some administrators also participated in the final survey and provided qualitative feedback. However, there was varied levels of administrator involvement during trainings and archival data collection. The following sections address the involvement of all subgroups in this study.

#### **Research Question One**

The first research question stated, “what are the perceptions of school administrators on the performance of substitute teachers after the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy?” Mikesell (2003) stressed the importance of good communication between administration, regular classroom teachers, and substitute teachers throughout the entire school year. There was little formal evidence of administrators, substitute teachers, and regular classroom teachers communicating with one another about substitute teacher practices to improve student learning. In fact, some of the archival responses acquired from substitutes indicate that administrators rarely, if ever, checked on them during the day.

Although the individual administrator survey scores indicated improvement, it was overall a smaller change when compared to other survey items. All items revealed a shift in a positive direction. Within the open responses on both archival and non-archival

surveys, regular classroom teachers indicated issues with particular substitute teachers and the same individuals continued to get low marks throughout the year. These responses were shared with administrators, but no changes in practice occurred in substitute preparation.

### **Research Question Two**

The second research question stated, “what are the perceptions of regular classroom teachers on the performance of substitute teachers after the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy?” This subgroup provided the largest amount of participation, with 39 teachers participating. For the purposes of statistical analysis, there were enough respondents to utilize the Chi-square method of data analysis. The Chi-square analysis indicated significant change in survey items related to substitute teachers’ abilities to more effectively follow lesson plans and leave detailed notes for the regular classroom teacher.

Throughout the process, regular classroom teachers provided valuable insight which could have led to significant change in district policy in regards to substitute teacher preparation. However, administrators did not utilize the information provided to them from the study. The researcher disaggregated all of the surveys provided by regular classroom teachers which flowed out of the original training in August 2013. For each substitute teacher three surveys were conducted. Each substitute teacher's rating and any comments were placed on a spreadsheet and shared with School District A administration.

Comments provided by regular classroom teachers about poor teaching methods and the lack of professionalism continued for many of the substitutes. Many of the

teacher complaints centered on the lack of substitute teachers following the lesson plans as described. Over the course of this study, there were close to 200 surveys or evaluations. There are few, if any, comments on any of the survey documents about administrator interventions, which is the focus of the entire study. The repeated comments from regular classroom teachers about substitute ineffectiveness went unattended by administration.

### **Research Question Three**

The final research question stated, “what are the perceptions of the substitute teachers in regards to School District A's policies regarding substitute teaching following the training provided by the Substitute Teacher Academy?” Overall, the substitute teachers who responded spoke favorably of the training and the process of supporting and training. Each item in this subgroup of surveys demonstrated a positive shift in perception of the effectiveness of the Substitute Teacher Academy, same as the other two groups. The one area of weakness in the results was the lack of participation in the survey by substitute teachers.

### **Limitations**

This study encountered some notable limitations which rendered the endeavor less effective. The primary limitation was the inability of the researcher to fully implement all aspects of a substitute teacher training program. The researcher was not given permission to formally evaluate substitute teachers or discuss concerns raised by regular classroom teachers regarding substitute teachers. In fact, these concerns were not discussed with substitute teachers by anyone. There was no permission given to welcome substitute teachers to the district each morning and check on them to insure they had the

materials they needed to teach all of the classes they were covering. This task was not undertaken by any district employee at any time.

Another limitation was the inability to present the information from the Substitute Teacher Academy to all substitute teacher candidates in the same format as presented in August 2013 and January 2014. If the individuals did not attend either of the Substitute Teacher Academies, he or she did not receive the same information in the same amount of detail, if at all. Once the academies were complete, copies of the handbook were available to other non-attendees, but there is no way to determine how many of them received a copy or any type of training.

### **Implications for Practice**

Based on the findings of this study, there is an opportunity to create a strong substitute teacher training and support program which can be utilized in School District A and other districts. The design of the program would combine the conceptual frameworks utilized in this study and the research obtained in the development of this study. It is the intent of the researcher to continue studying and developing training programs for substitute teachers. The researcher intends to create resources which focus on quality planning by regular classroom teachers, effective delivery of research-based instructional strategies, and support, provided by administrators who have high expectations for meaningful student learning opportunities. These resources would be derived from the model for improving instructional effectiveness.

If a training program were implemented by the researcher, it would be designed to utilize surveys to gather data and determine which areas of substitute teacher utilization were strengths and which were weaknesses. The instruments used to gather data would

be based on research conducted in this study and in other studies. Interventions would be developed for areas of weakness which would provide support and pre-service training for substitute teachers (Mikesell, 2003). Within the effort for improvement, there would be implementation of double-loop learning intended to create better solutions to the problems identified by subgroups within the organization.

The lack of available literature in this study indicates a plan for substitute teacher improvement can evolve from the findings and would provide districts with some effective practices for creating quality substitute teachers. The plan would have three main focus areas, or phases. One would be designed to help administrators facilitate more effective training and support for substitute teachers. The second area would include strategies to involve regular classroom teachers, who already lack confidence in substitute teachers (Gray, 2004), in the process of preparing for absences and providing meaningful lessons each time they were gone. This area would also look for methods to curtail excessive absences. The third and final phase would be designed for substitute teachers. The resources and support materials would be developed to enhance the ability of substitute teachers to more effectively lead instruction.

Phase one for administrators is one of the more challenging areas to address due to the lack of available research, as mentioned throughout this study. There are no templates for success. There are, however, some weaknesses which became evident in the findings of this study. Based on the archival data collected throughout the study, which was summarized in Table 5, there was a lack of attention to the effective utilization of substitute teachers by school administrators in School District A.

Furthermore, when the researcher was looking for relevant research on the roles of administrators in developing effective substitute teacher practices, there was no useful data to be found. This indicates a large gap in research and, along with the data in this study, represents poor practices in the effective utilization of substitute teachers in other districts as well.

Administrators need to be consistent and clearly convey expectations for regular classroom teachers and substitute teachers. This is not happening in School District A. The lack of available researched-based data indicates it is not happening in other districts either. Therefore, as stated by Mikesell (2003), there is a clear need for administrators to be involved in the process of training substitute teachers. Administrators also need to clearly convey their expectations for student learning to regular classroom teachers and substitute teachers during days when regular classroom teachers are not present.

Most importantly, administrators need to be visible. They need to make the effort to check on substitute teachers when they are in the building. Administrators can benefit from taking the time to walk the halls and peek in classrooms (Marzano et al., 2005). They also need to make sure the lessons and information left by regular classroom teachers is clear and easy to use. The collection of this information could be used to formulate in-service training and other programs which support quality teaching practices. The information shared in these trainings will impact the quality of instruction system-wide (Whitaker, 2012).

Teachers have unique responsibilities as well, some of which were previously mentioned. One obvious requirement for the regular classroom teacher is to create quality lesson plans which the substitute teacher can effectively implement.

Additionally, it is important the regular classroom teacher leaves concise notes about daily procedures, special circumstances regarding students, detailed schedules with exact times, and all emergency plans. Those who fail to leave these types of details will not return to find a lot was accomplished (Preparing for a Substitute, 2007). The researcher believes there are adequate resources to develop training materials which can strengthen the regular classroom teacher's ability to better prepare for a meaningful learning in their absence.

According to research, it is possible the most important role regular classroom teachers can play has less to do with leaving clear directions and more to do with including substitute teachers in the culture of the school (Mikesell, 2003). Pairing with a substitute teacher or inviting them into the classroom are two ways regular classroom teachers can model effective teaching skills. Inviting substitute teachers to school functions and professional development allows them opportunities to become ingrained in the culture. Districts who truly value their substitute teachers create professional development in such areas as classroom management and instructional strategies just for substitute teachers. The time invested in these activities typically increases substitute teacher effectiveness (Mikesell, 2003; True et al., 2011).

The researcher also feels there are opportunities for effective training specifically for substitute teachers. The substitute teacher needs to make sure their credentials are in order, but the substitute teacher also can benefit from being active in professional development and working to improve their teaching ability. Substitute teachers can develop ideas which can be utilized when accepting a position within a district, even if it

is just for one day. Effective substitute teachers take time to learn the culture and build relationships with students and staff (Mikesell, 2003).

One recommendation is to develop a toolbox with various activities to insure better results when substituting. This toolbox of activities could be utilized by the substitute teacher any time the regular classroom teacher did not leave enough work to keep students busy. The activities could also be used as enrichment if needed. Some of the types of activities the substitute teacher could have available could include interactive learning strategies, extra worksheets or puzzles to fill extra class time. The substitute teacher can also bring reading passages and develop lessons to enhance basic skills or just bring a book to read to the students if time allows. The problem is some substitute teachers do not realize they can do this and show up prepared to babysit, when in reality, the day could be much more productive (Simmons, 1991).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study revealed a great deal about the practice of utilizing substitute teachers when a regular classroom teacher is absent. There has been significant research conducted on substitute teacher training, retention, and support. Teacher absenteeism has also been researched extensively. In both cases, multiple researchers have developed interventions to improve the opportunities for providing meaningful instruction to students no matter who is in the classroom. The research is not exhausted, but finding quality data was challenging.

There is, however, a lack of research on the role of leadership in the development of strategies to improve instructional effectiveness when regular classroom teachers are absent. Throughout this study, finding relevant data which were directly focused on

administrators working with substitute teachers was difficult. In some cases, the information was available but was over 30 years old. In the end, the best way to look at suggested roles of administrators was to apply the concepts of effective administrators, such as those proposed by Whitaker (2012) to the context of dealing with substitute teachers. Although this provided a method for analysis, it did not yield any research data.

It is recommended the role of administrators in insuring the effectiveness of substitute teachers be an area of further research. Many sources mentioned the importance of having administrator input and support, but there were no conclusive statistics to develop hypotheses of what made administrators successful, or unsuccessful, when dealing with substitute teachers. Further research in this area could produce initiatives which impact substitute teacher training, and consequently impact student learning, for many school districts.

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Appendix A

## Kansas School District A Substitute Teacher Survey

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this survey is for substitutes employed by Kansas District A to provide feedback regarding their experience substituting for regular classroom teachers.

**Directions:**

Using the scale of 6 (always) and 1 (never), please read the options carefully and indicate the level you feel is appropriate for each of the following items:

---

1. Once I arrive, the teacher has left detailed instructions of the expectations for the day.

Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Almost Always	Always
1	2	3	4	5	6

---

2. I am able to find all materials needed to complete the lessons.

Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Almost Always	Always
1	2	3	4	5	6

---

3. I feel confident I can complete the directions left for me.

Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Almost Always	Always
1	2	3	4	5	6

---

4. During the day, someone checks on me to make sure I have what I need to be an effective provider of learning.

Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Almost Always	Always
1	2	3	4	5	6

---

**Directions:**

Using the scale of 6 (strongly agree) and 1 (strongly disagree), please indicate the level you feel is appropriate for each of items 5-10:

5. I am given clear directions on my substituting assignment before I arrive at the district.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

---

6. There is an easily understandable protocol to follow once I arrive at the district.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

---

7. I am able to keep students on task each class period, all day.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

---

8. I understand the expectations of performing substitute teaching duties in this district.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

---

9. The district personnel make me feel as if the help I am providing is important.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

---

10. I have a desire to continue to perform substitute teaching in this district.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

---

11. Please write any concerns or suggestion you have which would make your experience as a substitute more effective and beneficial to the students of Kansas School District A.

12. Please use the space provided below to describe any positive or negative experiences you encountered during this substitute assignment.

# Substitute Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Purpose:

The intent of this survey is to determine the level of satisfaction Kansas School District A teachers have regarding substitute teacher performance.

Directions:

Please select your response to the following questions using the scale of 1 to 6.

---

**1. I feel the substitutes who cover for me are competent to lead the learning in my absence.**

1   2   3   4   5   6

Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree					
-------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	----------------

**2. I have an easy to follow emergency lesson plan which allows for student learning should I have to be gone on short notice.**

1   2   3   4   5   6

Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree					
-------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	----------------

**3. I believe there are activities which students, under the guidance of the substitute, can complete in my absence which enhance or support the learning opportunities I provide when I am present.**

1   2   3   4   5   6

Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree					
-------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	----------------

**4. When possible, I leave detailed directions describing what I want each class to complete in my absence.**

1   2   3   4   5   6

Never	<input type="radio"/>	Always					
-------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	--------

**5. When I return from my absence, I find students have completed work to my expectations**

1   2   3   4   5   6

Never	<input type="radio"/>	Always					
-------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	--------

**6. When I return from my absence, I find a written report from the substitute.**

1 2 3 4 5 6

Never	<input type="radio"/>	Always					
-------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	--------

**7. I have a substitute folder with contact information, classroom procedures (taking roll, etc) and emergency procedures which I keep in the same place.**

1 2 3 4 5 6

Never	<input type="radio"/>	Always					
-------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	--------

**Open Response**

Please indicate any concerns or suggestion you have which you feel would make the substitute experience more beneficial to students at USD 404

An empty text input field with a light gray background and a thin border. It includes a vertical scrollbar on the right side and horizontal scrollbars at the bottom.

**Open Response**

Please indicate any concerns or suggestions which could be addressed which would make your interactions with substitutes more effective

An empty text input field with a light gray background and a thin border. It includes a vertical scrollbar on the right side and horizontal scrollbars at the bottom.

Appendix C

## Evaluation of Kansas School District A Substitute Teacher Academy

**Objective:** To evaluate how effectively the Substitute Teacher Academy conducted in Kansas School District A's improved the quality of professionalism, classroom instruction, and communication between the district and participating substitute teacher candidates

**Directions:** Please indicate your response in each of the areas described below. Please circle your response to the following questions using the scale of 1 to 6.

- 
- 1. Prior to the substitute teacher academy, substitute teachers arrived to their assignments dressed professionally?**
- Strongly Disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    Strongly Agree
- 2. Following the substitute teacher academy, substitute teachers arrived to their assignments dressed professionally?**
- Strongly Disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    Strongly Agree
- 3. Prior to the substitute teacher academy, substitute teachers effectively followed the regular classroom teacher's lesson plans as described?**
- Strongly Disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    Strongly Agree
- 4. Following the substitute teacher academy, substitute teachers effectively followed the regular classroom teacher's lesson plans as described?**
- Strongly Disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    Strongly Agree
- 5. Prior to the substitute teacher academy, regular classroom teachers provided adequate amounts of work to keep students on task and learning?**
- Strongly Disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    Strongly Agree
- 6. Following the substitute teacher academy, regular classroom teachers provided adequate amounts of work to keep students on task and learning?**
- Strongly Disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    Strongly Agree

**7. Prior to the substitute teacher academy, regular classroom teachers left clear directions which were easy to locate?**

Strongly Disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    Strongly Agree

**8. Following the substitute teacher academy, regular classroom teachers left clear directions which were easy to locate?**

Strongly Disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    Strongly Agree

**9. Prior to the substitute teacher academy, substitute teachers left detailed notes describing student effort and accomplishment?**

Strongly Disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    Strongly Agree

**10. Following the substitute teacher academy, substitute teachers left detailed notes describing student effort and accomplishment?**

Strongly Disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    Strongly Agree

**Open Response**

Please share any positive comments, concerns, or suggestions you have about your experience as a substitute teacher in Kansas School District A. Concerns and suggestions will be utilized in future substitute teacher training to improve instruction in the absence of the regular classroom teacher.

# **Kansas School District A Substitute Teacher Handbook**



## **2013-14**

### **Welcome**

The administrators, staff, and students welcome you to School District A and appreciate your willingness to provide our students with a quality learning experience in the absence of the regular classroom teacher. The contribution you give to our students is invaluable and the high expectations we have for learning are in your hands when you are the leader in the classroom. Thank you for being a part of a school striving to provide the students with a quality education that prepares them to be responsible and productive citizens in an ever-changing world.

## Objective

The objective of this handbook is to provide substitutes with resources which enhance their ability to meet the daily academic needs of students at School District A. This handbook includes the following:

- Substitute Expectations
- School District A Policy and Procedures
- Professional Ethics
- Basic Teaching Strategies
- Explanation of Classroom Expectations
- Emergency Procedures
- Important Contact Information
- Accountability Documents

The following sections of this handbook provide more detail to help substitutes, working in conjunction with district staff, to meet the high expectations for student achievement.

### **Substitute Expectations**

*Write your name on the board*

*Read over the lesson plans before school starts-* There might be a need for copies, supplies, or materials in the lesson which you might have to take care of before class begins. There may also be content within the plans which you are not comfortable teaching. The time you take at the beginning of the day will benefit the remainder of the day.

*Familiarize yourself with the building-* Learn where the restrooms, exits, and cafeteria are located in the area of the building where you are substituting.

*Monitor the hallways between classes by standing at the classroom door*

*Be the Educational Leader of the Classroom-* we ask you maintain an environment which encourages students to be on task all day. Please be up and interacting with students.

*Dress professionally-* we ask you dress for the role you are covering. For example, PE is different than English

*Be on time-* teachers are expected to be in the building no later than 8:45. Substitutes should be checked in to the correct office by 7:45. Check out time is 3:15. It is important time cards are filled out completely and correctly in order to be processed for payment.

*Please do not use your cell phone during class-* Again, we ask you uphold your responsibility to lead the learning while in the classroom.

## School District A Policy and Procedures

There are different policies at each building level. It is expected substitutes become familiar with basic policies of the respective building assignment. Furthermore, there are some general guidelines which all staff members must follow including appropriate behavior when interacting with students and staff. School and student safety is a priority.

### Professional Ethics

#### Confidentiality:

Exhibit an ability to keep information regarding students and school issues confidential. Student information should not be treated with disregard. This includes avoiding discussion of interactions with other individuals who are not associated with the school.

#### Sensitivity:

Demonstrate a high standard of professionalism regarding contact with students, teachers, and parents. Please avoid negative conversations which generate from interactions with students or staff, in and out of the school building.

### Basic Teaching Strategies

Individuals who substitute have a variety of skills and life experiences which add to the richness of the education process at USD 404. Below are some basic ideas to serve as guidelines for the less experienced substitute and a reminder to veterans of the classroom.

#### **Greet the students when they enter the classroom and introduce yourself to the students**

- the time you take to do this will establish a positive rapport with students and serve as a way of eliminating confusion regarding who is in charge while showing you are a real person. This is your opportunity to gain their respect and attention.

#### **Take Roll**

**Introduce the Lesson-** The following is a description of steps used in the Hunter Model of teaching. This is not the only method for delivering information, but it is an effective guideline for beginning teachers to share information with students.

1. **Anticipatory Set** (In what way will you activate their **prior knowledge and experience** to help them relate to today's lesson.) Focus attention, brief practice on previous/related learning
2. **Objective/Purpose** (The **object** is what **students will be able to know/do** by the end of this lesson. The **overarching purpose/understanding** is the **broad goal/curriculum** standard related to the discipline.)
3. **Instructional Input** (What knowledge will you communicate to the student--**tell, lecture, stand up and deliver** so that the student will

- understand the objective.) Disseminates new information and activities to achieve the stated objectives
4. **Modeling** (How will you **show/demonstrate** the skill or competence so the student will also be able to do it?) Demonstration and/or example of the acceptable finished product or process
  5. **Checking for Understanding** (How will you check that the students have understood/learned the objectives?) Activities which examine the student's possession of central and essential information to achieve the stated objective
  6. **Guided Practice** (What activities will the students **perform under your supervision** to insure that they are able to practice the material. If they make mistakes, you are able to show them how to do it correctly.) Close monitoring and direction of the students by the instructor as they practice the whole task for the first time independently of each other
  7. **Independent Practice** (List homework or seatwork assignments the students will be given to successfully practice the material/skill **without teacher supervision.**) Only after you **know** the students can proceed, the continued practice of the whole task by the students without the instructor's monitoring and guidance.

**Note: Not all steps are present in every lesson.** In some cases, **some of these steps can occur more than once.** It is **not a rigid formula.** It is intended to guide thinking about what is necessary in a particular lesson.  
(AEA 267, Area Education Agency; Iowa Department of Education)

### **Actively Monitor Students**

- An effective teacher moves around the room to help students and monitor what they are working on. It also discourages students from being off task.

### **Collect all assignments at the end of class**

- Put the work collected from each class together and make notes of any student who did not finish and why (didn't understand, messing around, absent, tried really hard but did not finish, etc). It is extremely helpful to the regular classroom teacher to know why things did not go as he or she had planned. The feedback from substitutes helps guide future lesson planning for teacher absences.

## **Emergency Procedures**

There are emergency procedure packets posted in each teacher's room which describe what precautions to take based on the emergency. Please locate this document when you enter a teacher's room so you may refer to them should you need to. Keep in mind, the more calm you stay the better it is for the students. It is very important you take the rosters and account for all of the students you have in the particular class or hour. The following are general guidelines:

Fire Drill- Using the evacuation map, calmly escort your students to the designated area.

Tornado Drill- All students will be escorted to the orchestra room, next to the lunch room.

Bomb Threat- In the unfortunate event the school building or campus needs to be evacuated, an announcement will be made over the intercom with specific instructions of where to lead the students. Depending on the circumstances, evacuation plans have students quickly, but safely, going to the football field or the designated church.

Please remember the importance of accounting for all students during an emergency situation. It is vital you *take the rosters and take roll upon arrival at the designated safe area*. We must be accountable for all students in all situations.

### **Important Contact Information**

Adapted from Blue Valley (KS) and Gwinnet (GA) Public School Districts

## Helpful Teaching Tips

## Emergency Substitute Activities

Appendix E

## Kansas School District A Anonymous Survey from Substitute Candidates

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this survey is for substitutes employed by Kansas School District A to provide feedback regarding their experience substituting for regular classroom teachers. Your honest and anonymous feedback is very valuable. Please elaborate on any experiences you think might make your efforts more effective in the future. Our primary goal is to provide meaningful learning opportunities for the students of this district.

**Directions:**

Using the scale of 6 (always) and 1 (never), please read the options carefully and indicate the level you feel is appropriate for each of the following items:

---

1. I feel welcome when I enter the building to substitute in this district.

Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Always	Almost Always
1	2	3	4	5	6

---

2. Once I arrive, I find the teacher has left detailed instructions of the expectations for the day.

Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Always	Almost Always
1	2	3	4	5	6

---

3. I am able to find all materials needed to complete the lessons.

Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Always	Almost Always
2	2	3	4	5	6

---

4. I feel confident I can assist students in completing their work by using the directions left for me.

Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Always	Almost Always
1	2	3	4	5	6

---

5. During the day, someone checks on me to make sure I have what I need to be an effective provider of learning.

Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Always	Almost Always
1	2	3	4	5	6

Directions:

Using the scale of 6 (strongly agree) and 1 (strongly disagree), please indicate the level you feel is appropriate for each of items 6-14:

6. I am given clear directions on my substituting assignment before I arrive at the district.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2	2	3	4	5	6

---

7. There is an easily understandable protocol to follow once I arrive at the district (check in, find room, look at plans, etc).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

---

8. I am provided lessons which are able to keep students on task each class period, all day.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2	2	3	4	5	6

---

9. I am able to describe to others the expectations of performing substitute teaching duties in this district.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2	2	3	4	5	6

---

10. The district personnel make me feel as if the help I am providing is important.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2	2	3	4	5	6

---

11. I feel this district values learning regardless of who is in the classroom.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2	2	3	4	5	6

---

12. In an emergency, I know my responsibilities and how to accomplish them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

---

13. I feel the regular staff members treat me as a professional.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

---

14. I can identify staff members who are willing to help if I need to ask questions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

---

15. Please write any concerns or suggestion you have which would make your experience as a substitute more effective and beneficial to the students of Kansas School District A. The responses you record are anonymous and will be used to improve the quality of future substitute experiences. **Please be specific.**

## Appendix F

Dear research participant:

I am attaching a survey regarding substitute teacher performance. I am conducting a research study titled: *A CASE STUDY OF PEER-DRIVEN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS DURING TEACHER ABSENCES; IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS IN AN ERA OF ACCOUNTABILITY*. The purpose of this study is to gather data through the survey regarding your perceptions of substitute teacher performance following training in one or more substitute teacher academies held August 5, 2013 and January 2, 2014. Results will be used for a research project as part of coursework I am taking through the University of Missouri.

I am asking for your assistance with gathering this data. Please fill out the survey and return it to the appropriate office personnel for your grade level. Please also be sure you sign and return the informed consent with your responses. Each office will have an envelope to collect your responses which will be kept in a secure location. If possible I would like to have all surveys returned by \_\_\_\_\_, 2014.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Kevin S. Elliott

## Appendix G

Dear research participant:

Thank you for considering participation in the research study to evaluate the Substitute Teacher Training Academy. This study, titled: *A CASE STUDY OF PEER-DRIVEN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS DURING TEACHER ABSENCES; IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS IN AN ERA OF ACCOUNTABILITY*, is being conducted for completion of my doctoral degree in educational leadership and policy analysis at the University of Missouri.

The purpose of this study is to gather data through a survey regarding your perceptions of substitute teacher performance following training in one or more substitute teacher academies held August 5, 2013 and January 2, 2014.

Before you make a final decision about participation, please read the following about how your input will be used and how your rights as a participant will be protected:

- Participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any point without penalty.
- You need not answer all of the questions.
- Your answers will be kept confidential. Results will be presented to others in summary form only.
- Names and dates will be used for organizational purposes. The completed documents will be stored in a lock cabinet. All computer data will be in a password protected file.
- Responses will not affect your employment status or threaten your employability within the district.
- Your participation will take approximately 5-10 minutes.

The project is being supervised by Dr. Robert Watson, Missouri State University. Dr. Watson may be contacted at (417) 836-5177 if you have further questions.

If at this point you are still interested in participating and assisting with this important research project, please fill out the appropriate surveys. Keep this letter for future reference. You can contact me at 417-622-9594 if you have questions or concerns about your participation. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kevin S. Elliott

## VITA

Kevin Samuel Elliott was born in 1971, the oldest child of Jerry and Mary Anne Elliott. He spent most of his childhood in the small Missouri community of Archie, graduating in 1989. Kevin earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Education with an emphasis in Technology Education in 1994. In 2007, Kevin returned to Pittsburg State University to begin work on a Master of Science in Education degree with an emphasis in Secondary Education, graduating in 2009. Kevin completed his Ed. D in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 2014.

In 1994, Kevin began a 20 year teaching career, primarily as a woodworking instructor. Kevin accepted a position as a professor of Technical Teacher Education at Pittsburg State University in May of 2014. Kevin has been happily married to Mia Elliott since November, 1995. He has two sons, Devin and Logan.