

Top Tips for CRTs

Being a relief (or substitute) teacher can be quite challenging, especially when students see an unfamiliar face and might try to test the teacher's boundaries or view them as less of an authority. Here are some top tips to ensure you are viewed as an 'equal teacher' and to manage classrooms effectively:

1. **Establish Authority Early:** From the moment you walk into the classroom, you must project confidence and authority. Even if you're feeling nervous, stand tall, make eye contact, and speak clearly.
2. **Set Clear Expectations:** Start by outlining the rules for the day. Be clear about what you expect in terms of behaviour, work completion, and respect.
3. **Consistency is Key:** Enforce the rules consistently. If you let one student get away with a minor infraction, others will take note and try to push the boundaries too.
4. **Learn Names Quickly:** This personal touch can help establish rapport and respect. If students see that you've made the effort to remember their names, they're more likely to see you as a dedicated teacher.
5. **Be Prepared:** Familiarise yourself with the lesson plan ahead of time and bring additional activities or materials just in case there's extra time or the planned lesson falls through.
6. **Stay Calm and Positive:** No matter how challenging the situation, keep your cool. Getting visibly angry or frustrated will only escalate issues. Keep a positive attitude and praise good behaviour.
7. **Build Relationships:** Even if you're only there for a day, try to connect with the students. Ask them about their interests, hobbies, or how their day is going. Building a quick rapport can make a huge difference in how you're perceived.
8. **Collaborate with Other Staff:** Check in with other teachers, the office staff or the assistant principals for any tips or information about the class you're teaching. They can provide valuable insights into the students' behaviours or any issues that might arise.
9. **Engage the Students:** A bored student is often a disruptive student. Try to make the lessons engaging and interactive. If you notice a lack of interest, adjust your teaching style or the activity to recapture their attention.
10. **End on a Positive Note:** Regardless of how the day went, end the day by thanking the students for their time and effort. Leave a note for the regular teacher highlighting both the positive behaviours and any challenges you faced.

Remember, every day and every class will be different. Some days might be more challenging than others, but with time, experience, and consistency, you'll be better equipped to handle whatever comes your way.