

# Back to ( )ELL...



The regular reader knows just what letter to place in the title parentheses to complete the picture of my day today. Some time ago I wrote about an experience at a school that left me passing over certain assignments for the next year. A couple of months ago took the challenge and subbed for that teacher again since most of those former ELL students were gone and was relieved that things had changed for the better, so when another ELL assignment popped up at that school I took it without a second thought. It was for a teacher I don't remember, but it shouldn't have been a problem. Well, we have second thoughts for a reason so taking the job without one was akin to famous last words like, "Nothing will go wrong; trust me."

So, at the beginning of the day I arrived and it was mentioned that it was a two-day assignment. What? *Two* days? I had to check my schedule again because I was sure it was only one day. The teacher, who was there but would be testing students, finished going over the plans with me and I went right to a computer. Yep- just one day. At that point I was actually hopeful there was a mistake and it was supposed to be two. By the end of the day I was glad it was not a mistake at all. For some reason the two-day absence was put in as two separate assignments- my guess being that the software they use cannot support multiple-day assignments as I have never seen a multi-day assignment posted. I had two such assignments a few months ago in this district, but it was put in manually as a different job number for each day which just serves to validate this theory. So apparently what happened was I got one day, another sub got the other day. I do hope she is up to it. Ironically, she was there today subbing for another ELL class, the one I had no trouble with earlier this year.

When going over the plans I was somewhat pleased to find that I would be covering three math classes. I expected the toughest would be 8th grade, so once that was over (it was the second class- 7th grade was the first) and things were still going, if not smooth, only slightly rough I thought it would be a pretty good day. The rough spot for 8th grade was really no more than the quick quiz at the beginning being anything but quick for a few students, making less time for going over homework and letting them get started on their assignment. So, after a two-period break I was ready for sixth grade math. Remember those famous last words? Ready- Uh-huh. This was the loudest and most complaining class I've had in the last couple of years with some boys who loved knocking over the books of each other while I wasn't looking. Sigh. They even complained when I didn't check in their homework. I mean, who complains about that?? Just take the extra day to have it done as a gift and keep quiet about it! Then the plans called for them to take a test which they had in their packets. Did you catch what was wrong with that sentence? In their packets. So what happens when some students couldn't find their packets and the teacher didn't leave behind extras? Well, I found out. I had three kids run to the office, which I only did because it was just down the hall, so someone in the office might take pity and make some copies for me. Then I found some students only had one of the pages. They had ripped the other page out, which had a prior assignment on the back. Back to the office? Not a chance- the secretaries suffered enough with the two runs (they only copied the first page last time) so I just marked down their names and let it go. I also forgot to thank them after school too when I checked out- oops. And throughout this there were some students who just would not stop talking. I needed this class *before* the two-period break, not after.

So after this class was a multi-grade language arts class. Needless to say, some of the 6th-graders from math were back for two more periods (block period). While not as bad as the

prior math class, it had its own challenges. 8th grade left after the first half to see counselors from their respective high schools they would go to next year, and that relieved some pressure but not all- remember 6th grade was still there and so was a very obnoxious 7th-grade girl who loved talking back and doing as little work as possible. After this class and a tutorial class (study hall) the day was finally over. Now I'm writing it up for you to enjoy too...