

Not so bad after all / Quiz show

When one thinks of 8th grade, it is often associated with hormonally-challenged, impossible to control young adolescents, and indeed I have found this to be the case in several classrooms. Add learning, or especially behavioral disabilities to the mix and... well, I'll leave it to the imagination. There is one school where I just refused to take any more positions last year for the older kids (7th and 8th in fact, this year just 8th so far at that school). The school district I was in today I consider to be the best of the local districts I work in. Besides the money spent on education from a funds-not-so-challenged village, the kids tend to be far better behaved than in other districts. I would place the reasons at better family life. In many areas there are low-income families which causes family struggles due to not enough money and parents who are always working and have no time for their kids and so pretty much leave the raising of the kids to the schools. This town really doesn't have any low-income families (it costs too much to live here!). Of course there are other factors influencing family life and behavior, but this I think is number one. In any event, these 8th graders were not so bad to deal with at all. Well, the fact that I always had an assistant helped more than a little as well. As with other special ed teacher situations in a middle school, I had many of the same students all day. I taught two language arts classes (4-6 students in each!) and watched over two tutorial (study hall) periods. Additionally I had two science "co-teaching" classes. Like one time last week, one of these "co-teach" classes had two subs! Fortunately the main teacher left the other sub clear plans.

Interestingly enough, the regular teachers for myself and the other teacher I mentioned were actually in the building, just

in meetings all day. Something that it somewhat common with special education actually. The teachers have many meetings throughout the year, so it is only logical that some of those meetings would be in the school rather than an administration building.

One of the neat things to see was one of the science classes created electric quiz machines- the type where you use a wire to complete a circuit with a correct answer (multiple choice or true/false) and light up a bulb. The quality and size of these quiz games greatly varied, and some were even quite creative. One student took a shortcut and used an Operation game as a starting point, but most did theirs from scratch. Some used one wire (true/false and multiple guess) and some used two (matching). One boy used a motor instead of a light bulb that would shoot up a spinning helicopter-disc. They were very interesting to try out. Actually, the class didn't get to try them out as other classes apparently did due to poor treatment of a substitute teacher yesterday. Yes, I got to watch the aftermath of a bad substitute report. Apparently they lost out on playing a review game yesterday as well as not getting to try each other's quiz games. Hey, just because it's a good town doesn't mean the kids are *always* good. I guess maybe I just lucked out today, but what I said about this district generally holds true.