

# Still my favorite grade



Monday: 5th grade. Location: my hometown, same school as last week's PE assignment. This wasn't my favorite fifth grade assignment, but it was still a good day. The day started with specials. As I subbed for PE last week, I knew a little bit of the schedule so I expected this. It's always nice to have extra time to go over the lesson plans, particularly in elementary school when there are so many different things going on. Spelling pretest went well, but I thought there were some challenging words on that list. It didn't stop three students from making the challenge list though with three or less incorrect, to the disappointment of one of them. They tell me the challenge list is much harder so they don't like to do it. One student mentioned purposely spelling some wrong to avoid this list. I hope he wasn't serious. Note to self: make challenge list more fun too so students actually *want* to succeed. Math was next, and being the advanced group I started out with my usual routine of putting up some high school or college problems on the board and asking them to solve them, saying, "This is the advanced class, right?" Yes, ha ha. So the real lesson was kind of a review for them I'm told, so the teaching part was kind of short. Toward the end a student came back it asking for his homework for the rest of the day. I asked him to wait a minute while I addressed a problem with the math group, but he just left. I found out later he had a migraine so I can excuse his impatience. I ended up sending his work home with another student.

The afternoon was reading and writing, followed by social studies. There was a whole group and small group lesson. Then we went over the reading test they took last week, the one the teacher still had with him. Oops. He asked me to make fresh copies for the kids, but since they were only going

to look at them and nothing else, the teaching assistant gave me an alternative by making transparencies instead and saving a tree. The social studies was finishing up a packet, and studying for their quiz on Tuesday. I wish I had seen the packet ahead of time. There were so many questions on the first page it would have been easier to go over a whole class example before they started.

So that was Monday in a nutshell. Today I was at another school for the first time, another one close to home. I picked up on it right away though. It was a low-level reading program. In fact, I subbed in a class like this just last week. It was another district, but it seems they use the same program, just as many districts use the same U of I math program. It was mostly small group work with 7th and 8th grade classes. There was some whole group instruction, but it was just introducing the small group lesson. It wasn't a bad day, though I've had far worse. Some of the students were ELL, and regular readers know about some of my experiences with ELL students. Speaking of ELL, I had an opportunity to sub for 1st grade ELL today but I decided to take a pass. One thing worse than those bad experiences in middle school ELL was in the primary ELL department, where there are many students who know very little English and are therefore that much more difficult to teach.

So, tomorrow I will be in yet another school I've never been in. 3rd grade. Until then.