

The joy of videos

Many times when a teacher's absence is planned he or she will plan something even the most brainless substitute can handle. Often this is a test or book assignment. Other times, like today, it's a video. Actually yesterday I showed a video in 5th grade, but that was only one half hour out of the entire day, so that doesn't count. You see, I am talking about middle school with its repeated lessons throughout the day. This is where videos can turn the most brainy into the one of those most brainless by the end of the day. Since it was social studies (not language arts as I said yesterday) the same lesson plan was done six times. That is six times showing the movie [Shenandoah](#), or at least the first 35 minutes of it. This movie stars the late [James Stewart](#) as a farmer and father of six boys and a girl in 1864 Virginia, during the Civil War (oxymoron: nothing civil about *that* war). His wife had died sixteen years ago and so he raised his family on his own. Though he is Virginian he is staunchly opposed to slavery, and will not support the war in any way, shape, or form. The part I saw has him at odds with a soldier trying to recruit his boys, a man who wants to buy a mule from him and pay him in Confederate dollars, and a buyer for the army who wants to buy or confiscate his horses for the army. Later on I understand his youngest gets kidnapped by one of the armies, but I didn't get that far yet. So thanks to this class, I now have to find the movie and watch the last hour fifteen of it. Just one time through though- six was a bit much ☹ .

At least this time the video was actually interesting. Previous videos in middle school included Al Gore's propagandistic global warming documentary and a 7th grade sex-ed film. Both made me feel dirty afterward.

Also interesting to note was today was another 5th grade tour day. It included 5th-graders from the school I was at the other day. The ones I had met were pleasantly surprised to

see me. One of the previous days this happened too with a different school I had subbed at. It's great to see their faces light up in recognition. Though it unfortunately reminds me of a time last year when I ran into a sixth-grader at a store who recognized me from a couple weeks before. I say unfortunately because he was so disappointed when I didn't recognize him. Names and faces have always been a weakness of mine, and this was exacerbated by memories of all the students I had seen since then pushing out memories from two weeks ago.