

First full week, finally

Did I really not post about my teaching for the last week? Well, let's see what I can remember. Monday I worked as a special ed teacher at a junior high. The teacher I subbed for I remember used to work in the district's therapeutic day school program which is a program for students with particularly strong behavioral problems. They even had large people specifically trained to restrain problem students and bring them to a cooling-off room when required. I actually subbed for him in that position a couple of years ago. These days he has moved to those with lesser, but still behavioral, problems. Much of the day was quite simple with either team teaching (read "sub acts as teaching assistant") or resource periods where students would work on homework. He did have a language arts block at the end of the day though. I did have an assistant to help as I worked with a group at a time so it wasn't too bad. We read a story about grey wolves. The fun began last period, which was a study hall. That's when a lot of the behavior problems came out. No, that's not true- the last group of language arts was a struggle as well. They were pretty much the same students in both cases in any event.

Tuesday I worked in grade 1. And 2. And 3. And 4. And 5. And- no, I'm finished... I was in fact a floater. I took over classes for an hour at a time. I do wish they had organized the meetings a little more in my favor though. I actually had to go from one end of the school to the other end at one point, a few minute walk due to the design of the building when I had to be in the next room right away. Fortunately in that case the kids in the second class had been sent out to recess so the teacher was able to go to her meeting though I had not yet arrived. It was overall an easy day and I was mostly able to talk directly with the teachers before and after meaning no written notes.

Wednesday I was in music. This was actually the most

challenging assignment. The kids in many of the classes were very talkative. Grades were mixed here too of course, from second to sixth (not inclusive- I had no third graders). The older ones were the most challenging. We did some music games the teacher had left, including instrument bingo (a standard) and a game where they formed musical symbols on the ground with their bodies. *That* one was fun.

Thursday- let me look it up. Ah yes, 5th grade. Pretty normal though I had one very challenging boy in that class. I'm not the only one who had problems with him either- I overheard a conversation in the lounge about him. Apparently when we switched for math (I had the advanced class and did pan balance problems with them- similar to hands on equations I think I mentioned once before) he refused to do any work at all. Well, with me he worked slowly but he did work. He got distracted very easily though. In the end he wasn't as bad as some students I have had, but still a challenge nonetheless.

Friday I was in another special ed classroom. The three sixth graders- wow. Next to ELL a couple of years ago they were the most troublesome. It was at this same school by the way... One of the sixth grades is apparently on ADHD medication. His parents I'm told are quite good at making sure he comes to school ready and medicated. Guess which day they forgot? Yep. Once he had his meds after lunch he was a pleasure to work with. Of the other two one was got very easily distracted and the other tended to work on only what he wanted to work on and was quite belligerent toward another student. Two of the three finished their science assignment by the end of the day (worked on during no less than three periods...) and one even finished his math assignment. There was one seventh grader who mostly worked independently and an eighth grader who wasn't a problem when working, but he got some bad family news in the middle of the day and he was pretty much done working at that point.

Well, that was how my week went. Now who would like to join

me in subbing? Come on, there must be one of you... ☐

Avast, ye scurvy dogs!

On this official [International Talk Like a Pirate Day](#), I forgot one thing while subbing- I forgot to talk like a pirate. Despite my reminder to myself. I think the kids would have enjoyed it. Oh, well. Cleanup continues here on the home flood front- I finally ripped up the carpet at the foot of the stairs which has not dried since getting flooded. The other day I also discovered that the dryer did not in fact survive the sump-pump failure. It started once for a test run, but then once I put a load of clothes in suddenly the dryer wouldn't keep going once the start button was released. Later that evening, I came down to an odd smell, which after looking up the problem was probably a fried heat control board which is \$130. Sigh. At least the washer works so I only have to dry at the laundromat for now.

Today completed a week (well, $3\frac{1}{2}$ days) of elementary subbing. Up until this week it was all middle school. Two days ago I showed up at a classroom expecting 4th/5th and it turned out to be 2nd. The teacher changed grades this year and her info was not updated I guess. I'm mad at myself about that day by the way. I overheard something from one of the kids and I said to myself, "blog moment." Now I can't remember what it was. Next time I will write it down I think. Anyway, an interesting thing happened that day. I walked in on a meeting- yes, even the elementary teachers sometimes have team meetings- they must time their specials to coincide- and one of the teachers mentioned that I subbed for her last year and the kids loved me, asking for me to sub again. And since the students were being tested, the whole reason a sub was needed

in the first place in this case, and that teacher has two days scheduled *next* week to do the same, she took the opportunity to ask if I was available. Another teacher asked the same. One will be testing Monday and Tuesday, the other Wednesday and Thursday. So... long story short [too late] I have four days in second grade next week. Will I survive? Well, you'll have to tune into the blog to find out. ☐

So... This brings me to yesterday, a half day of PE. Two mentally impaired classes where I really just helped the assistants work with the kids, and three 4th or 5th grade classes where the kids got to toss the pigskin around, preparing for the passing part of a pass, punt, and kick contest some time in the future, apparently sponsored by the NFL. A few of the 5th graders really had good arms- could throw pretty far.

Today was a mix. Between morning and afternoon I had 3rd-6th grade (one 3rd/4th multiage class, one 5th/6th multiage. They were at two different schools too, meaning I had to spend half my lunch leaving one school, travelling, and checking in at the other school. Fortunately the plans at the second school were pretty easy so I was able to go over them quickly. Nothing too special. A lot of worksheets in the morning and a lot of supervising while students read or wrote in the afternoon. Actually, scratch that- there was reading with a group for 45 minutes and during their independent reading time I did book conferences with a few kids so I did get to do some actual work beyond classroom management. Speaking of which, this was a slightly tough crowd to keep under control. Nothing like the ELL fiasco a couple of years back, mind you, but challenging just the same. Fortunately I did have help in the form of an assisatnt and a high-school helper. You know, why didn't I ever have the opportunity to go back to elementary school when I was in high school? It would have been fun I think, and a break from real schoolwork, though I suppose this high-schooler will have to write up her

experience, or keeps some sort of log. That could take the fun out of it I expect.

Last couple days

My last post on my actual experiences with the kids was last week, so I guess it's past time to write about it again. I finished last week as a traveling social studies teacher on Friday. That's right, this district has a separate teacher do social studies for 1st-3rd grades. I'm not sure why. To get started, when I accepted the job online it showed what school the teacher works at of course. The school is located at the far end of one of the further districts from me (read: at least a half hour drive), but this was the school one of the kids in my church group attends so I thought I might see him, and so I accepted it. As it turned out, the system I believe lists the school at which a traveling teacher works at the beginning of the week. However, this was Friday so all bets were off. I actually wasn't aware it was a traveling job when I signed up, so I didn't think anything about it. Now, I was at my Thursday job when I accepted this job (no, I wasn't looking when I was supposed to be teaching so just take those fingers off the keyboard and read on! ☹). By the time I got home there was a message waiting for me from the teacher telling me that I would be at a different school in the morning, and yet a *third* school in the afternoon. I wouldn't be at the listed school at all. I am glad I listened to the message and didn't go to the original school. We all know I have gone to the wrong school before...

To make things short to move on to this week, the day went okay. Second grade was working on tourist booklets for their town, with an attractive front, facts about the town on the

first inside flap, and pictures on the rest. Being second grade, they needed help on the spelling of course. Also ideas for facts and pictures. Being the town that had the first store ever in a major restaurant chain, that was prominent on several projects. 1st grade listened to a story on safety. Dinosaur boys and girls were featured in this story. Hmm- so **that's** why dinosaurs became extinct- they broke all of the safety rules! ☐ 3rd grade were learning about Chicago history and we worked on a timeline of major events in Chicago history.

Monday was one of those days of subbing for a teacher who was still in the building. She is a resource teacher for grades 1-4. Of course this was just one day so for all I know she may have 5th and 6th grade students on other days. She had to do some testing so that's why I was subbing for her. There was one first grader who was pulled out three times for this this teacher, and apparently at least once more for another. It would seem he doesn't spend much time in his classroom, at least on Mondays. He was pretty unhappy when I pulled him once right after the other teacher brought him back. I really hope this level of disruption is actually helping him. The morning was spent with three reading groups of different grades, and a push-in where I went to the classroom and worked with small groups of students. They were reading plays (leveled for their reading level of course). Drama can often be favorite moments in teaching and today was no different. In the afternoon I had one pull-out (the first-grader) for math and other than that I was helping out in classrooms as needed. They started the fourth-graders on algebra, using hands-on equations. This is a program using manipulatives on a "scale" to solve equations by balancing the two sides. I didn't have any algebra until I was in junior high...

Today as I mentioned last post was a half day for me. Fortunately it gave me time to get assignments for later in the week in my downtime. I had PE at a school that I have had

many problems at. It's an all-year school that actually has classes from 8AM to 4PM. This long day probably contributes to the problems I have had. The first two classes were 4th/5th grade classes. The first class had a new teacher. Actually, the teacher started the year as a first grade teacher (had been one for at least the few years I have known of her). Apparently the 4th/5th grade teacher moved a couple months ago and the school switched the 1st grade teacher and hired a student teacher to replace the 1st grade teacher. I compared two class lists, and it looked like two of the more "lively" students were gone as well, but they might have been moved to another class for all I know. We played speedball in the three classes I had (40 min classes by the way, not 30 min). The two 4th/5th grade classes did very well. The 3rd grade class was a different story. They played like everyone wanted the ball rather than just wanting to play to win. Once one student had possession of the ball, most of the rest of the class surrounded him or her, pretty much preventing the student from doing anything other than handing the ball off to a teammate. After awhile some students just quit playing- this wasn't a game of good sportsmanship. I actually had to stop the game and have the kids spend the last five minutes sitting down. The nurse came in and yelled at them too (one of the students had run out of the gym to her office toward the end- he had pulled a girl's hair and then she tried to get him back. Sigh. When I told the gym teacher about the morning (he arrived before I left) he knew right away who that student was...

So, that was my last few days. If you're still awake, now is the time to leave comments (hint, hint!). Until tomorrow then.