

Welcome to Starbucks, may I take your order?



Massage the teacher = bad. Just remember that, m'kay? In reference to a previous post we learned that while paper passer, messenger, and librarian are good jobs for teachers to give their students, massaging the teacher doesn't quite fly. However, apparently not all service jobs are a problem. From the title I think you can guess what unusual job I ran across today. Coffee. That is, making and serving coffee to several teachers in the school. That's right, this teacher is training her students up for the type of job they can only hope to achieve should the economy not pick back up. Another 733 points today- sigh. There's more to this story though. Apparently today was something like clothes mismatch day. Some students traded a shoe to have mismatched shoes. One boy had a sandal on one foot, a gym shoe on the other. Other students turned shirts inside out or wore them backwards. It was quite funny to see hoodies with the hood in front, like they were made for people who get carsick... ☐

So one student was wearing an apron. A forest green apron. I walked up to him in the morning and joked with him, "could I have a grande latte, please?" I had noticed the coffee job by this time by the way, so it wasn't coincidence much like I would like to say it was. There were two girls assigned to this. As a non-coffee drinker I don't have much experience making coffee and I guess they didn't either as we tried to set the older-type coffee maker up. Guess who *did* know what he was doing and came over to help? Mr. forest green apron of course. That was the coincidence and what I found funny. I left it to him and the girls and started with the lesson.

Let me tell you that this had to have been the noisiest group

I ever worked with. Sixth grade and social. This sort of group should have been in a middle school still trying to learn the new system back at the bottom of the food-chain. Some people disagree and say that sixth graders in elementary school is better for them. I was in a sixth grade middle school class myself, so I guess it's just what I'm used to. When I first got there today I found out they had a sub yesterday. I read some of the notes she left about their behavior. Great... It could have been worse though. There is bad behavior and annoying behavior, and chatty behavior falls into the latter category. The ELL class I mentioned several posts ago would be the bad behavior, as would some of the BD classes I have subbed for. Talking I didn't mind so much, except when I or someone I have called on is trying to talk of course. They turned out to be good kids, just chatty.

And I will be with this class again tomorrow (a two-day assignment, yay!), so more on this in another post.

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... ☐

I hate going to the wrong place...

Sigh. If there is one thing that is deficient it is the software that one of the districts I'm in uses. No teacher comments on jobs, and no way to change the school in the case of a traveling teacher. So, it is up to the teacher to contact

the sub and let that sub know when a position doesn't start where the system says it does. Needless to say, today I was that sub. Last time I took a social studies position the teacher called me to let me know where I would need to be. Not this time. While I was aware it was likely to be an itinerant position again, I just figured since no one contacted me I would be going right where the system said I would. Silly me. I went there and, you got it "Oh, she doesn't come in until the afternoon. You have to go to this other school..." I was pretty P0ed when I was told this. *Someone* has the responsibility of letting me know, whether it be the teacher or the office. At the other school I actually ran into the teacher in question. She was doing an observation so that was why she needed the sub. I ~~didn't want to be rude~~ played it calm and apologized for not being on time because the system said I was to go to the other school. Whether or not she got the hint I don't know as all she said was it was no problem since I didn't start teaching for another hour.

I'll have to say she did prepare thoroughly for me with all the materials separated by class, detailed plans, and whatnot. Meaning of course that I couldn't blame *her* if things went wrong. □ Okay, I wouldn't anyway, and nothing did go wrong. It was a rather pleasant day. Between the two schools I had four first-grade classes, one second, and three third. The lesson plans unfortunately were not quite the same for each class of the same grade so I was kept on my toes. The one thing I really didn't like having to do was pick one student from each class to get an award for behavior. While I would like to say I was completely objective on the selection I really couldn't keep a constant eye on each student to determine who best earned it. It was inevitably more like picking three or four students to watch who seemed to be behaving themselves and look for reasons to disqualify them, then still winding up picking between two or three at the end, completely subjectively. Oh, well.

Yesterday I was at a local middle school as the industrial tech sub. Tomorrow I will have a half day (oh why do I take these? At least I will get to sleep in!) for IT at another school. I already know what to expect there, so I could write up a comparison of the two, but I will save it for tomorrow anyway, just because I can. ☐

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 is 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.