

Early to rise, not early enough to bed



This has been an early week for me. I know a friend of mine over here always gets up at 5 or 5:30, and once upon a time I had a job where I had to do that, but these days I am just not used to it and exhaustion leaves its mark on me by the middle of the week. Such as today. Fortunately I was able to nap for a little more than an hour so I am good for the moment.

Let's see, by Sunday night I had no job for Monday so I had to go to bed at around 11 with my phone by me. Sure enough, I got a wakeup call at about 5:30. I would be needed in a middle school so I could not go back to sleep, and up I went. I did have a chance to catch up on my newspaper reading before work. How was the day? It was actually quite interesting, thanks for asking. It was a class where there were students with semi-severe learning disabilities- about as disabled as students can be in this district as they hire out a special education company to handle more severely disabled students unlike the other two districts I work in. There were two assistants in the room and a student teacher, so I didn't have so much work to do other than walking around and helping out. There were three grades represented so it was a little crazy, though not as crazy as last Thursday when I did ELL. I'm not sure why I didn't write that one up. It wasn't so crazy because of the students, but because of the school play. That Thursday and Friday they were showing the school play, *Around the World in 80 Days* ([link to random theatre company that performed it](#)) ([link to publishing company page](#)). Between the two days all three grades had to see it. Let's see- two days, three grades- how did that work? Well, they had 8th and 6th grades go on separate days, then split up the 7th grade. Now how does that work when half the ELL class, comprised of all

three grades again, would see the pay one day and the rest the other day? You see? Quite a mess, especially when the absent teacher made no note of how she wanted to do it- no mention at all in fact about the play. Oh, and the play lasted for three periods, not all of which the students were in this room, so no, we couldn't just say, "We'll all go today and tomorrow you'll all have class." That would have left some students missing actual classes one day and having no classes the next while their team or grade was at the play they already saw the day before. It wasn't easy but we worked it out.

So back to the topic of early starts. The next day I was scheduled in the district that starts middle school really early. So, up at 6AM. I worked as a 7th grade LD teacher. All the classes were either team taught or resource, so I didn't do any teaching. In fact, even the guided reading groups I was supposed to do were vetoed by the other teacher who was concerned about behavior of the students. She was scheduled to be observed- apparently the administration was impressed at how she teaches her class and set up other teachers to observe what she was doing. Yeah, If I were her I'd probably be worried too about how the kids would act with a sub when I was trying to lead a group (we were both supposed to do groups). Resource was just simple reading together and students answering questions about the reading. Again, I was not alone with the kids as there was an assistant this time. Better than a homework period I suppose. Math was like language arts- walk around and keep students focused.

While yesterday I was like an assistant but getting paid as a teacher, today was the opposite. Like Monday I didn't have the job set up by the next day, so I set my alarm for 6 so I could get up and look for jobs if I didn't get called first. Problem is, my mind was awake before 5:30 and there was no way I could get back to sleep for the half-hour until the alarm would go off. Up I went again. I searched for jobs in vain as none showed up this morning. I got caught up on my reading

again while I checked every five minutes. Ironically, it was a phone call at 6 that gave me the job. Low paying, but more than a half-day which is probably all I would get otherwise at that point, though I still kept an eye out for a better job in another district up until 6:15, after which I knew I could no longer cancel the first job (two hours before starting time). Again, no time to go back to bed, so I finished the paper and opened the book I was reading until it was time to eat and finish getting ready.

I was really hoping I was not going to be a one-on-one assistant. I really dislike those jobs. I got my wish. This teacher getting paid as an assistant (seriously, if they are going to give her so much responsibility they should pay her as a teacher (and on that note the subs like me... ☐)- I have done less as a sub for a regular special ed teacher, and I don't mean because there was a student teacher either. All day I was pulling out groups for reading or math, three different grades, taking them to a different room to work with them. There was supposed to be an intervention group as well after lunch, but I had no plans for that so they cancelled it. If I were to hazard a guess at why she doesn't get paid as a teacher, she probably doesn't do much planning, but I wouldn't be so sure. My mother worked as an assistant for a couple years and they gave her some planning as well so I guess districts are allowed to do this.

That brings me to now. I have two more middle school days. They are at a close school so I get to sleep in until a late 6:15. Okay, still early. I will be glad for the extra hour on Sunday. Next week I will also have a day off as all districts are taking off election day. All but one are taking the next Tuesday off as well for Veterans Day so I will likely have that day off as well. Nap days. ☐

Small classes and early starts

7:15. That's what time a sub has to be at the junior high schools (still called that even though they are on a middle-school system- I guess they didn't want to change the letterheads ☐) in the district I was in today. That means being up before six. At least I had a solid night's sleep instead of constantly waking up like I often do. Once I got there, it turned out this teacher had a class that started ten minutes before the regular classes. Say what? Fortunately the plans said another teacher was asked to run this class so no problem not being able to completely go over the plans. The one I was subbing for was also a traveling teacher, which in this case could be called class-on-a-cart. This teacher had a class in a different room every period. One class even had two different rooms- more on that below.

So I got to the room with my cart and the teacher who was supposed to take over (surprise to him!) just said that I could handle this and just ask if I had any questions since he would be in and out of the room. Well then, I had to look at the plans again after all. It really wasn't hard like he said. All I had to do was pass out quizzes they had to complete, inform them of their class/homework assignment once finished, and then monitor them. Fortunately I had second period off to look at the rest of the day.

The next period was communications, basically a speech class. Well, they were good at speaking all right- to each other in conversation that is. They were completing an assignment as well, so again no teaching- just monitoring. The next two classes actually lasted for a period plus another half-

period. Being math classes this was a bit odd. This is actually why one of the classes was in two different rooms. They spent one period in one room, then had to move for the next period. I would gather the regular teacher in that room doesn't have two periods off in a row to allow us to be there for the full time. To get the half-period the students actually sacrificed their study hall half of lunch to have the longer math period.

Where does the small classes part come into play? Well, you three who actually read this blog (□) already know special education classes can be smaller. Well, two of the math classes were such classes- the first had about eight students in it. Most of them worked well, but there were two girls who thought they were in that communications class and chatted pretty much the entire time, sometimes with others across the room. At least they did *some* work so I was able to put up with it without sending anyone to the office. I left a note about this of course. This was the first of the two special-ed math classes. The second, get this, had **two students**. That's right, just two. They pay for a teacher to teach a class of two students?? I would really like to know more about this but as a sub for just the day I really only know what's in the notes- nothing about it there!- and from what I might pick up from other teachers, but I didn't want to be nosy. Oh well, some things just remain mysteries.

Until tomorrow then. Time for me to sleep...