

Industrial Technology

IT for short, not to be confused with [information technology](#) which was a possible career track for me once, was where I was Monday and today. This is the class that was once know as shop, as it used to consist solely of things like woods, plastics, and metals. Nowadays those three still exist, but are played down by the age of computers and such lessons as audio engineering, CAD, CAM, robotics, digital music and photography, and more. How does a teacher fit all this in in one quarter (eight weeks)? Well, in the case of one school the students select different “modules” they will work in for ten days apiece. That means if a student abhors woods he doesn’t have to take it. How other schools do it I am not sure. It does seem that at the school I was at today they are always working with wood so it may simply be up to the teacher or district. How do these two districts compare? Read on.

The school I was at Monday actually has an assistant in the room meaning the students do not have to give up their regular work. Ordinarily a sub in IT would mean a video or seatwork as subs are generally not certified on the machinery. Thankfully, as I do not want the responsibility of keeping 20-30 students at a time from getting hurt. It was extremely fortunate that this school had the assistant because apparently the teacher had been out for a week before I came in. If they had to do seatwork all this time they would have had some serious catching up to do. Plus, with two there [situations like this](#) can’t happen...

So Monday my time was spent signing off on modules, passing out module quizzes, getting items students needed, and otherwise helping students. Well, the latter generally consisted of “let me get the TA for you.” Okay, I am a computer person but even so I can’t know all there is to each of the computer modules. I did help where I could though. All in all this was a fulfilling day and I enjoyed it. I

forgot to give back the keys and had to come back, but I enjoyed it.

Then there was today. One teacher, no assistant. I arrived before the teacher left (half day afternoon position) and of course the students were working with wood. Well, now that I think about it I guess some of the class was in the computer room so that would be why there is so much working with wood. Still, even with this in mind this school does a lot more with wood than the other one. Anyway, with no assistant that meant- drum roll please- seatwork. Last time I was there it was a video on drywalling. A time before that the video was tiling. Today, seatwork. And not just any seatwork- they worked on *word searches* of all things. All period. Eight of them. Well, only one or two got through all eight. A few students barely got through one. Which type of student were you in middle school? Anyway, this was not nearly as fulfilling as Monday. I just sat back and handed out new word searches as they finished the old. Thankfully it was only a half day. Two full periods, and a period with only seven ELL students. Difficult students I may add, but I don't want to get into the whole ELL student thing again...

The next two days will be middle school PE again. Same two districts I just compared IT in. Maybe a PE comparison in the future? We'll see.

Half days

These are the bane of my substitute existence, next to holidays. No, I don't mean the days students get off early but rather days where the teacher take off only half a day. It seems I may have three of these this week unless I can find

a full day to take their place (I can cancel jobs in two districts via the web) or find a half day job for the other half of the day. The latter almost never happens. As for the first, it can happen but on this side of spring break with the testing going on it is very uncertain. Yet I keep trying.

One of the half days was today, for the afternoon. At least I got to sleep in, but I depend on this income so I really need to work as much as I can. It was for industrial tech, what used to be called "industrial arts" when I was a kid, and "shop" even earlier than that. Naturally with a sub the kids can't do shop, but many times they are allowed to use computers. See, that is the "tech" part, technology. They could be running some sort of modeling or simulation program, or programming a robotic arm. Today one class was working on ifilm projects. All stuff that didn't exist back in the eighties. We had metals, plastics, and wood. That's it. Now these teachers need to be trained on so much more to do this job. As for the other class (only two today! :)) they clearly were working on a project, probably woodwork, so they got to do some paperwork today. Oh well.