

# Wake up sleeping student and get sued?

Apparently parents of a high school student are considering just that after a teacher woke up a student by slapping her hand on the student's desk. According to their claim he suffered hearing loss as his ear was on the desk at the time and the sudden sound ruptured his eardrum. If this is true, then I fully understand the parents' concern, but something doesn't seem quite right here. From the article:

*Barry said the boy's ear hurt instantly after Nadeau hit his desk.*

*"He woke up and immediately felt pain in his ear," Barry said. "I think he was so taken aback that he didn't say anything at the time."*

*The next day, Vinicios' parents took him to the hospital after he complained of hearing loss and they discovered a bloody fluid on his pillow.*

If his eardrum burst as they say, wouldn't he have been in so much pain he would have said *something*? Screamed out in pain? Immediately gone to the nurse? I just don't know...

[Sleepy Student Claims Teacher's Wake-Up Slam Caused Hearing Loss](#)

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# Expert or one-time-struggler as a teacher?

I have often reflected on teaching a particular subject I was good at in school- math. Face it, either you're good at math or you're not- it's just one of those subjects. If you get it then you're well on your way to high grades, but if you don't...

As a great student in math I have struggled to teach it sometimes. It's like, "Why don't you get it? I just showed you how to do it!" Even now, with all this sub experience, I often either go too fast and leave some students struggling or I take too long to teach it as if I'm afraid of going too fast. It's difficult to find the right balance. Okay, to be fair as a sub I don't know the students, so getting the right balance is just not possible, but it doesn't stop me from wondering. Today I subbed in 6th grade, but this kind of goes back to last week too when I was in that 3rd/4th grade class for a few days and only taught math. Then, the teacher wanted one section taught per day if at all possible. Four days, didn't quite finish two sections. Well, three days really since there was no math on the last day.

Today was a little different- she assigned five journal pages out of **two sections**! Well, I guess she didn't really want me to teach it. I wound up just going over a few examples on the board from each section and letting them work, asking questions or work with a partner as needed. I think in this case working with a partner was almost mandatory since I didn't have time to teach full lessons. Did she want it done this way? I'll never know.

This makes me think of a proof that I am slow at teaching math: the University of Chicago math program. This seems to be used *everywhere*. Well, at least in elementary schools. This is a very structured program meant to be taught in about

one hour. This includes a game included in most lessons, but I rarely have time for when I teach the program for some reason. It starts off with a “math message,” which is a math problem that will lead into the lesson. This is followed by a full-group lesson that often involves some sort of manipulative which aids kinesthetic learners (touch), which believe it or not is most people. True, many can learn by seeing or even by hearing, but touch really makes a difference in many people. A Chinese sage once said after all:

I hear and I forget.

I see and I remember.

I do and I understand.

In any event, following the full-group lesson there are small group, partner, and/or individual activities (one of which is the aforementioned game). I think I need a full 90 minutes to get through all of it sometimes!

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## Scheduling errors

One problem that comes with subbing is scheduling errors and cancellations with little to no notice. There was one day last year when I signed up to sub for a social worker only to find out when I arrived that the social worker is a position that doesn't get a sub. Okay, you might say to yourself, “how obvious,” but in that same district earlier I had subbed for a speech/language pathologist. Obviously a sub can't really fill in for that position either, but as it turned out there was a student teacher so they needed a sub just to have a certified person in the room so I just figured this would be the case again. Well, at least they paid me for half a day's (non)work.

Anyway, today there was another error, only it wasn't an

error. I was called in for a full day, but when I got there the plans were only for a half day. I checked with the office and it was indeed a full day they scheduled. Fortunately they had another teacher that would need me in the afternoon so they could keep me the full day. But wait, it wasn't over. The team partner of the one I subbed for then told me shortly after that *she* wouldn't be there in the afternoon and was wondering about *her* sub. I had to go to the office anyway about a small problem with the arrangement to work for the afternoon teacher, so I said I would ask about her sub while I was there. Well, it turned out there was no sub arranged for her. To make a long story short (yes, I know...) apparently the original teacher had requested a full day sub to cover for *the two of them* and her partner either wasn't told or forgot, so they changed the arrangement again and so I wound up actually subbing for three teachers throughout the day like a floater. As you can see, the classrooms themselves aren't the only source of drama.

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## Getting the hang of this

Last post was actually my first post- short and sweet as a friend was guiding me through the process. Come to think of it, this one will be short too. Sometimes I have jobs lined up in advance, like for this coming Friday, but most of the time it can be a little stressful waiting for jobs to become available. In the past one would always just wait for a phone call from a sub caller, and in fact I am in one district that still does that exclusively. For the rest the onus is on me to keep checking the websites, which can be more stressful than just waiting for calls. Anyway, it's time to end this post- I am still being trained by my friend and he's waiting to go on...

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# Holidays

Holidays, pronounced “*no-pay days*” are the bane of a full-time substitute teacher like myself. The pay isn’t that well to begin with and each day off is money left out of the next paycheck. Well, it does mean a day to sleep in and get other things done- like type this blog entry :P.

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