

Two of a kind

I keep meaning to mention this bit of info. Or maybe I already did but don't remember. In any event, I was at a middle school doing PE, but you already knew that. Unlike Thursday's PE, we actually got to go outside. Well, there were two periods of sixth grade health, but that's why I specified PE, didn't I? □ So, for PE 8th grade played kickball and 7th grade played soccer. We used the baseball diamonds to play kickball. The first class went fairly well. They chose to play boys versus girls which worked out about as well as you would expect, being the girls at that age are more, well, feminine than a few years ago. This of course is not meant to be sexist as there *are* many female athletes, most, if not all, of which can wipe the floor with me as I am a non-sports guy. However, when talking about eighteen girls, most of them react to sports like kickball as one might expect. It should be noted that they **wanted** to do boys versus girls. I was skeptical about it, but if even the girls wanted it than I wasn't going to stand in the way. They outnumbered the boys too, so I figured it wouldn't hurt. Except the boys still issued the girls a major defeat. The second class I didn't even let get to the point of suggesting boys vs girls. As soon as we were on the field I randomly picked two students as captains and had them pick teams, alternating boys and girls as long as possible. This class was the goofiest of the day, though not matching the two classes I mentioned Thursday. They just didn't take the game seriously. Well, I guess if I was going to be in high school in just a few weeks I might take advantage of a nice day outside with a sub too. I didn't let it bother me- I just wrote it down for the gym teacher to read when he gets back.

But where does the title come in? Well, it has to do with 7th grade soccer, which went quite well by the way, excepting the fact that the goals were not placed across from each other

which I only noticed after a student informed me that the point I was about to place the ball wasn't center. I looked back at the goal I was using to center the ball and it was centered as best as I could tell. I looked at the other goal and I was putting the ball at a point that wasn't even between the two goal cones. What the...? Unfortunately I couldn't move the goal because the teacher this morning had drawn goalie boxes. Oh well. There were no sidelines anyway so no big deal. The second 7th grade class is where the title *finally* comes into play. How often is it one finds two students at the same school, in the same grade, and on the same team with the same name? And by this I mean first and last name. I actually noticed this issue weeks ago. It was when in one class I noticed there was a boy named Peter who sounded like a student I knew from church. Once class started I looked at him and he wasn't the one. Another day I noticed the name again, and found it was attached to a different boy. Huh? This boy did look familiar. It took another couple times subbing for this grade before I realized the two were on the same team though rarely in the same class for some reason. At least the classes I subbed in. My guess is they were purposely given different schedules to aid the teachers. However, when it came to PE, there was only one time available per team so both Peters were in the same gym class, though different teachers. Well, for soccer the two classes combined and I took the boys out on one field while she took the girls out on another field. So, you guessed it: Peter vs Peter. They aren't really two of a kind other than their name. They look different, and in soccer one defended while the other played on offense.

Oh, and only one was the Peter I knew. He goes to a different church now, but he did attend mine a few years ago. ☐

They will not be missed...

I was in conversation with another teacher and he happened to say this about the current eighth grade class. After today I would agree on this for a few students with a wish that they would grow up soon. These students are the ones teachers have in mind when they say they will never teach middle school. One of the eighth grade PE classes had a several students that could fit this category. They would *not* settle down and listen to the rules of the game they were to play. By the time they finally got started, there was less than 15 minutes left until I had to bring them back up to get changed. Yes, we were inside even though it was a fairly nice day outside- the other two classes were outside and apparently there are only two fields to play softball. I can't say, unfortunately, that eighth grade was the only issue. One of the sixth grade classes also drove me nuts. It took awhile to start with them as well, and it took a lot of time to rotate teams between games as well. Fortunately the other four classes went well (6th, 8th, and two 7th).

What we played was scooter volleyball. Two nets were set up in the room downstairs (they call it the fitness room- apt because they do that there as well, like aerobics they had to do when I was there a couple of times last year). The teams sat on scooters (those squares on four wheels/castors you plant your butt on) and played volleyball that way, using a gator-skin ball probably because the court was so shallow and the ceiling low. Most volleyball rules applied, but some were a little different like you could catch and throw the ball, not just bump or set it. It was also played in two-minute games so the one team who was rotated out wouldn't have to wait long.

Well, that's about it. I should say I am fortunate there was still another guy teacher there with me today to take over most of the duties in the locker room. When you think of a

gym locker room you might think of a place that reeks of B0. You'd be half-right. It reeks all right- of Axe and other spray deodorant. Either way, something to stay out of. At least it's not like when I was in junior high when we had to take showers. Nude of course. I think I would have to just say no to subbing for PE if that were the case. I guarantee I would not bother with making sure they all took showers. It's interesting to note that many of these schools still have the showers, even if they are no longer used. Well, used for their intended purpose. Some schools use them as storage.

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.

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 POed 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. ☐

Teacher videos

I was taking a look at [Teachertube](#) today and found something interesting. Now this is something I have yet to have to do as a substitute- play a video from the teacher. Apparently this teacher left **video** instructions on what the kids would do in class that day. If I were his sub I think I might appreciate it as he was able to go into some detail on how to navigate a website on the Pilgrims. Sure, I could follow written instructions and show the kids myself, but in case of an

internet-illiterate sub this would be the next-best thing to the teacher being there. Take a look for yourself. Teachertube is not yet a valid site for embedding so you will have to click the link:

[Substitute Teacher](#)

Oh, and while you're there check out [The Amazing Dancing Sub](#). Now I once sang a bit for a class after I told them I was in a show and they wanted a sample, but dance? I don't *think* so... This guy definitely has a unique calling card for teachers (note the end of the video). ☐

[Link for our admin \(hint, hint!\)](#)

New type of position

I've been subbing for a few years, and I have to say that Friday was the first time I ever subbed in the sort of position I was in. The teacher seemed to be like a glorified teacher assistant, though of course I don't know the extent of her duties outside the realm of what I did so this opinion of mine doesn't mean much. My main duty in the morning was following a diabetic student from class to class. I had to make sure he got to the nurse as needed. Apparently even though he's in 6th grade he doesn't have a good handle on managing his condition, and his parents I'm told are just as lost in handling it. In any event, when I wasn't involved with taking him to the nurse and waiting for him to test himself, snack, and retest, I helped out as needed in the classes. There were some students on behavior point sheets (including the diabetic boy) and when I worked with them I

could easily see why they needed them. Trying to get them to work was often a challenge.

In the afternoon I wasn't with the one boy until I had to pick him up and take him to the nurse during the end of a period. Then, the school being short a sub, I had to sub in an eighth-grade class for one period causing me to lose one break, but that's the way it works sometimes. I have avoided working in eighth grade at this school all year due to some troubles I had last year with the then-7th graders, so I prepared for the worst and was pleasantly surprised when it didn't come. The read the chapter aloud nicely, then did their work though admittedly some needed prompting. I ended the day with a tutorial (study hall) with just six students, about half of what one student told me I should expect. One I knew where he was. Another was absent. The rest I didn't know *who* they were let alone where they were. I wasn't left a class list.

On a non-school note, I have kept forgetting to mention this, but on Wednesday I was coming home from a drama rehearsal when I turned on K-Love and heard a woman telling about a supernatural healing experience when she was being prayed over. She had lost hearing in one ear and vision in one eye and she suffered pain in that side of her head. Then this one time she was miraculously healed. The station started asking her questions about it and then the station just went completely dead. When it came back a couple minutes later a song was playing. Was I just going through a blackout area for that station (other stations worked- I checked) or was the evil one trying to keep people from hearing more about this healing? I guess I won't know for sure. I just thought this interesting to mention.

Guess it isn't banned from schools after all

In days of banning tag from the playground because some kids "get too rough" it seems only natural that dodge-ball is so far banned, it is even anathema to mention it. Perhaps that is really only valid in the elementary school though. Or maybe the ones making the rules don't like the attitude of middle schoolers so they say to go ahead and bash each others' brains out with round throwable objects. In any event dodge ball is definitely allowed in middle school, or at least some middle schools. It was probably banned a while ago before the advent of soft foam balls more commonly known as gatorskin, or rhinoskin balls, though something tells me no alligators or rhinoceroses were hurt in the making of these balls. Softer even than Nerf™ balls ever were, it would take a pretty thin head to actually get hurt by one of these balls, but yet they can still be thrown across the room or even used in a pinch for kickball.

If you haven't figured it out by now I subbed for a PE teacher today. I actually wanted to get up a 6AM to see what was available, but I woke up at 5:30 instead, and this was the only job on the systems so it's the one I took. Of course I didn't mind at all since it was only a mile away too. □ I probably mentioned earlier that middle school PE is one of the easier positions to sub for as the other teachers usually run the show with me helping out. Not always, but most of the time. Because there was another teacher out as well, and the field was still wet from yesterday's two downpours, they mixed up thing a little and instead of doing softball and whatever one of the other teachers was supposed to do (health?) we all played dodge-ball instead. We divided them up into six teams and they played three-minute games, rotating between games to keep things fresh. Three grades, six PE periods, all dodge-

ball. There was one period where a girl came up to me and asked if she could take attendance. I had to do a double-take as she clearly had some hormonal problem. There were patches of hair on her face. Growth that would take a guy weeks to grow, so it wasn't just peach fuzz like on many eighth-grade boys. I just took a look at Wikipedia and it looks like it could be either [androgen](#) excess or a rare disorder called [hypertrichosis](#) (werewolf syndrome). I tried very hard not to stare at her, and felt guilty every time I so much as glanced in her direction. Of course I let her take attendance even though I was really just playing at it since I was told I didn't need to take attendance and didn't have a record book to take it in in any event. I just didn't want the kids to feel they could blow off gym sometime and not be missed.

The end of the day was kind of interesting. This school schedules homeroom at the end of the day, so I was on my way up to the 8th grade classroom I was supposed to be in when I found out all the eighth-graders were on their way to the multipurpose room for an assembly. Okay then, I went there instead. They had a presentation from some Japanese-American people about World War II. I'm guessing it was put together by a teacher from one of the middle schools as she was there and she teaches world history. And she is Japanese-American. They had a video of shots taken in the WWII internment camps and then two elderly people who lived through it talked to them. It was interesting, especially as one of them after going through this decided to join a special Japanese-American infantry that was formed some time after Pearl Harbor. He did this even though he like the rest of the Japanese-Americans were treated so shabbily. He had a few reasons for doing this though other Japanese-Americans understandably refused to have any part of the not-so-good 'ol US of A at this point in history. One reason was he had very good childhood growing up under the tutelage of several teachers who left good impressions on him. Also he wanted to prove that not all Japanese-Americans were on the side of Japan. In reality, I

think very few were on Japan's side in this war making this whole internment camp thing a ridiculous waste of time in addition to being reprehensible. This man became a teacher himself, apparently well-regarded in the circle of Chicago's school system. It would be eye-opening for me if I didn't already think the whole thing was wrong. In fact, when 9/11 happened we didn't do anything even close to this to Middle-Easterners in this country and it looks like we're still here. I still don't trust Islam, and many others don't either, but there have been no more terrorist bombings in this country since so it was clearly the right choice to leave them be.

Life as a sub in Florida

If C ever wants to sub, he'd better not do it in Florida... This sub was unceremoniously let go after doing a magic trick for the students. His sub supervisor (I guess they do things differently over there- no sub supervisor here) called him in and accused him, of all things, *wizardry*. Seriously. Read the story at the link below:

[Teacher Fired for Magic Trick, County Calls It "Wizardry"](#)

Something's a-Foote

Okay, I really want to know who someone is. Really. When I work in one of the two middle schools in this one school district, I am constantly mistakenly called Mr. Foote. It's usually the students, but about a month ago a teacher called

me by that name too. Yes, today I was mistaken for him **again**. No, that isn't my name even if I do supposedly look like him, or he like me, or- oh, you know what I mean. ☐ Will it really be like looking in a mirror when I finally corner him? You know, I will really be depressed if this guy turns out to be a retired, elderly gentleman as many of the guy subs are. Well, women too, but obviously the "gentleman" part doesn't apply to them. ☐

Today I re-subbed for a class. That is, I had subbed for this teacher before (apparently our mystery sub did as well, sometime since my last time). It was just simple 7th grade science with a literacy class thrown in. Oh, a tutorial class with **seven students**. I hope this means most students are in academic courses since tutorial is more of a study hall- no learning there. For literacy they just worked on a book ([S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*](#)) and group packet, while in science- drum roll please- a video. And a comic strip project where they are making a comic strip about the [states of matter](#). The video was about just that, the four states- solid, liquid, gas, plasma. There was a video quiz at the end that for some reason the kids thought was hilarious because it was fill-in-the-blank, but instead of saying "blank" when they read the question ("The *blank* state has both definite shape and definite volume") it played a long tone ("The **bee-e-e-e-e-e-ep** state has both definite shape and definite volume"). I gather they were imagining foul language being bleeped out.

By the way, they may say "there ain't no free lunch" but there was for me today. The PTO supplied sandwiches and sandwich sides for us because of teacher appreciation week. On Friday they will have a baked potato bar. Yum. I will be there for 6th grade. Now I just have to worry about tomorrow.

...and get their parents in trouble!

Two news items in one day after a drought! This one is about several parents being arrested- because their kids racked up too many unexcused absences. I am not really sure how to feel about this one. After all, parents do have a responsibility to make sure their kids are educated. But handing them over to the police? (shakes head in bewilderment). As long as this doesn't involve criminal charges- unless they were doing something illegal with the kids- I guess it can't hurt to scare them a little in front of a judge.

[15 Fla. Parents Arrested In Connection With Children's Unexcused Absences At School](#)