

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!

Cleaning up the streets?

Apparently someone who was attempting to clean up the state he governed needed to look in his own backyard. As more details rise from the controversy surrounding the sex scandal of New York governor Eliot Spitzer, one of the leading stars involved in the prostitution ring is an aspiring actress/singer named Ashley Dupre. It is really unfortunate that a young person would feel the need to become involved in such a lifestyle... even living with the governor in an apartment in Manhattan until he walked out on her. Although she does not want to be thought of as a “monster,” who can say whether or not she will ever be seen as anything but the governor’s plaything. It just seems like a lot of young ladies (and men) who want to become

stars are prone to controversy. Britney, Jamie Lynn (good name... wrong spelling), [Lindsay Lohan](#), and several others seem to grace entertainment periodicals and news broadcasts everywhere. Not very good role models for teenage youngsters. The evils that celebrity leads to.

Which is not to say that the main character in the mess is the young lady. On the contrary, it is disgusting that the man who had been praised for reportedly decreasing the amount of crime and smut in New York state would be such a hypocrite.

Horton Sees the Idols

What better way to promote a new movie than on America's number one television show which is seen by millions every week. Last season two movies peddled themselves on American Idol, [Shrek 3rd](#) and [The Simpson's Movie](#). The top ten finalists were treated to the premiere showing of Shrek and got to go backstage for the behind the scenes work of The Simpsons. The Shrek connection kind of threw me since Dreamworks is not affiliated with FOX (that I am aware). Of course, money talks.

Last night's result show also featured a promotional opportunity for 20th Century Fox's latest attempt to transform a Dr. Seuss book into a theatrical masterpiece. The last two (The Grinch and The Cat in the Hat) were mediocre at best. I'm not sure if Horton Hears a Who will follow in their footsteps, but the cast list seems promising. Jim Carrey, Steve Carell, Carol Burnett, and Amy Poehler are a few of the talents who are lending their voices to the animated feature.

In order to further promote the film, Jim Carrey was in the American Idol studio audience with a giant set of elephant ears on his head and humongous elephant shoes on his feet. I

personally felt sorry for the man who sat behind him. Later, the man of a thousand faces blended in with the finalists who were nervously awaiting the announcement of the contestant who would be getting the hook, axe, or otherwise sent packing.

I hesitate to tell you that the poor soul who was voted off the island (oops wrong show) was a young man who (according to newspaper articles) previously was employed as a male stripper at an establishment that catered mostly to male clientele. It would not be American Idol if there was not a bit of controversy.

The Office and The Anniversary

Our wedding anniversary is coming up – this year marks #9! – and there's a pretty cool gift we get this year: the first new Office episode in months! Steve Carell gave an interview with *TvGuide*, and said that his character Michael Scott is hosting a dinner party, and it goes terribly awry. If you know anything about the show, then you know how hilarious this will be and are looking forward to it as much as we are. So on April 10, check out the first brand new Office episode since the writer's strike saga!

And that reminds me, on April 10, 2009, we are hopefully going to have the time and resources to put together a "second wedding" for our tenth anniversary. We didn't know any of our Ohio friends when we got married way back in '99, so we'd like to renew our vows and "get married" all over again in Ohio, 10 years later! And, luckily for us, April 10, 2009 falls on a Friday! So, this year we will be watching the Office. Next

year, we will be “getting married” again, hopefully!

Nothing today

I was home for most of the day (AM only job) but even so I don't have anything to write right now. Sorry. Until tomorrow then.

The Wedding Singer

Yep, that is me. I've probably done five and will be doing my sixth on March 29th. The first was for my cousin about 10 years ago. I sang at my 2 brother's weddings (one of which is divorced) and my sister's (who is separated (wow... scary thought only 1 out of three is still married)). Then I sang for another cousin's ceremony. Last night, the organist and I met to go over what I am expected to sing on the 29th. Most of the songs I have done before... more or less traditional wedding songs (The Rose, Sunrise Sunset, One Hand One Heart, and Theme from Ice Castles (Through the Eyes of Love)). When I saw the list, I asked the organist why we were singing so few. We will need to add at least one to the Pre-ceremony list; there were two and I have been known to have as many as five. We must be going to rush those guests into the church in a hurry. Even with the organist playing between the two songs, it would take no more than 10 minutes to get through it all.

As for the songs themselves, I have sung “The Rose” during at least 3 weddings. I have been in two different productions of

[Fiddler on the Roof](#), so “Sunrise Sunset” is familiar (but at a Catholic wedding seems strange). “One Hand One Heart” from [West Side Story](#) is about as traditional as “The Bridal March.” The Ice Castles theme is probably the most unfamiliar to me but I have been to enough weddings to have heard the piece more than once. I have always wanted to do “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring” but maybe for my own. At least they are all in English.

Gas Gouging in NW Ohio – Alive and Well

My fellow Northwest Ohioans, this is a call to action!

Have you noticed that we are being taken advantage of? Yesterday, the national gas price average was \$3.22 / gallon for unleaded. Yet here in NW Ohio, every station in this town had gas for **\$3.39 / gallon**. The price of gas in the Northern suburbs of Chicago has reached \$3.27. We (especially in our family since we have loved ones in that area who we have to watch pay through the nose for EVERYTHING) have always prided ourselves on having lower prices than they have, MUCH lower actually. We used to have gas prices about \$.25 / gallon lower than Chicagoland. This is no longer the case! Their gas is now \$.12 **cheaper** than ours! What will follow? Will we no longer have cheaper food than they have? Will we soon be paying \$10 for a hamburger, have an average restaurant bill of \$30 for lunch for two, movie theater tickets at \$10 each? Where does it end? I can’t help but feel the gas stations have called our bluff. We can’t boycott them, because let’s face it, we’re an island. We get to enjoy our relatively crime and pollution free existences because we are

so far from the nearest large cities. However, the local gas stations are starting to take advantage of this, because they know it will cost way too much for us to get out of town to get some gas somewhere else. The average price in Toledo yesterday was \$3.22 / gallon , but to get to Toledo, it would cost about \$5-\$10 in gas, depending on your car! And who has time to run to Toledo for gas, anyway? But why is it that Toledo has cheaper gas prices than we do? Everything was always cheaper here... at least it used to be.

I'm just worried about how they will gouge us next. I looked into filing a complaint with the attorney general of Ohio, and their website said to contact the stores first. So I guess it's only fair that we first let the gas stations know that we're terribly unhappy. I would write to the newspaper here in town also, but they've never printed my letters. Maybe I complain too much? Actually, one letter was very nice thanking the person who turned in my lost wallet with all the money still in it, but they still didn't print it. Anyway, if someone else wants to write to the paper, that'd be great. The more the merrier on this, I say, what could it hurt? Complain to the local gas stations and ask them questions, write to the newspaper, write to the attorney general, anything and everything anyone can do will help. Remember, driving season hasn't even officially started yet, and when it does, the price gouging at the pump will only worsen! Here is a link to the complaint section of the Ohio attorney general's website – it tells you how to fill out a complaint online, and also gives phone numbers and email addresses:
<https://www.ag.state.oh.us/citizen/consumer/complaints.asp>

Please help me – let's do SOMETHING!

Rollbacks Are Extinct!

Just a short little venting post because I made my weekly stop at Walmart today... and not one, not two, but **THREE** price increases awaited me!

1. drawstring kitchen garbage bags – when I started shopping at Walmart in Ohio only 5 years ago, these were \$1.33 / box of 20. Last time I went to Walmart, they were \$2.88 for the same box, and today, they are \$2.98 for the same box that was \$1.33 not more than 5 years ago! That is more than **DOUBLE** the price in 5 years!

2. bananas – when they opened our brand new SuperWalmart a few years ago, they pretended like the regular price of bananas was a cheap \$.29 / lb. but the truth is, I haven't seen them at that price since! They have gone up and down constantly, and are now a whopping \$.67 / lb – the most expensive bananas I have ever seen and I refuse to pay it! And let's face it, Walmart has the worst looking produce I've ever seen!

3. dryer sheets – before today were \$.88 / box. Today, they decided we should have to pay \$.96 / box. If they go over \$1, I will no longer be getting my dryer sheets at Walmart.

To complete my complaint session, I actually had to email Walmart the other day to complain about their photo service. I used to get all my digital photos made into prints at Walmart because it was cheap and convenient. I would order between \$1-\$10 at a time. Since I have a lot of kids, they (used to) get lots of business from me. But now they won't let me pay for my orders in the store. I like to order the pictures when I take them; sometimes there are only a few at a time. And I refuse to sit there and make teeny weeny charges on my credit card over the internet every few days – it's a bookkeeping nightmare, not to mention how little trust I have

in Walmart after all the other crap they always pull.

About the grocery prices, I understand that there is something called inflation, but this is ridiculous! No wonder Walmart has abandoned their “rollback” campaign – rollbacks are extinct!

10,000 B.C. – When Movies Cost \$3

Oh wait, that was tonight. Seriously. We saw [10,000 B.C.](#) (a new release, no less!) for **\$3 for 2 people!** It was a 5:00 movie at matinee price, plus bring a guest for free night = \$3! Add in our popcorn and pop, and we spent less than \$10 for a new movie at the theater, with popcorn and a drink! Can't beat that! If we didn't live around the corner from the theater, we would have spent more on the gas to get there – more about gas prices in my next post, ugh.

We had heard that 10,000 B.C. was not a very good movie, but the other choices were [Spiderwick Chronicles](#) (which we really liked but have already seen) or [Fool's Gold](#), which I have no desire to see for some reason. 10,000 B.C. was exactly what the previews showed – an adventure movie set way way back into the past. I don't know how accurate it is, but the computer animation depicting early humans (though you forgot this fact given that many of them spoke perfect English) hunting woolly mammoths was pretty good, actually. In the movie, they also used the mammoths as “work horses” to haul blocks to build pyramids, which I didn't know, if this is indeed fact... interesting theory. Though they aren't clear if these are the Great Pyramids of Egypt, which I think were actually started

more likely around 3,000 B.C. or after... but I'm no expert, this movie did get me thinking and wanted to research a bunch of stuff. It was neat to see everything interacting together, the early humans and the dwellings they built, the animals, the environment – a great way to envision the past, but it did have me wondering how much is based on scientific fact, like I said. I won't go into the plot, mostly because I sheepishly admit that I couldn't follow it. I didn't get my nap today, and I fell asleep during what were apparently a few pivotal scenes in the movie. But, for \$3, who cares? And don't think that the movie is boring either. I have 3 kids and I'm pregnant, I get very tired and could probably fall asleep anywhere without that daily nap I've been so lucky to have most days. And I did get to see [The Dark Knight](#) preview, which was pretty cool. I'm not a big fan of the Batman movies – I've only seen 1 and 3, but this one looks really dark and creepy. I think the whole [Heath Ledger](#) (R.I.P.) incident will sell tickets, but the previews might do a little ticket-selling themselves... I can see why they say that role affected him in such a negative way – he looked really scary.

So, if you like lots of fighting; epic battle movies set in the past, or are just an admirer of CGI animation, check out 10,000 B.C. – especially if you can find it for \$1.50 / person!

Baby You Can Drive My Car

Finally, after 7 seasons on the air, American Idol contestants can sing songs from the Lennon/McCartney songbook. Of course, what better way to celebrate the feat of convincing Michael Jackson to allow it (since he owns the rights to the Beatles works) then to have an all Fab Five show. Let me also point

out that (IMHO) after seven seasons, the show has lost some of its luster. It is no longer the "must see show" of the week. It is becoming tedious watching Randy say: "It was just awiight fo' me Dawg." Or Paula exclaim: "You look beautiful" when what she really means is "That was really bad." Or even Simon bashing the hopefuls. It has all become a bit formulaic.

Two of the performances stood out to me (one good; the other... welllll). The first was a performance of "Let It Be" (the final single released by the Beatles in 1970). Brooke White chose to perform the song while accompanying herself on the piano. It was a truly heart-felt performance.

However, Kristy Lee Cook decided to change the classic "Eight Days a Week" and give it a country flavor. Not only did the judges totally dismiss the brave choice, she will probably be in the bottom three tomorrow night. I am not what one would call a country music aficionado, but it was just a strange rendition.

So while it is becoming a bit tedious, I still do try to catch American Idol when I can. I can actually say I know where Carrie Underwood came from... and she is a country singer.