

# Mine is smaller than yours!

Wait- that's not quite how the saying goes of two boys comparing sizes, is it? Well, in second grade apparently that is quite the appropriate comparison for comparing the lengths of their pencils. Literally speaking of course- how can you even think...! ☐ Oh, never mind. Anyway, the lower grades can prove to be quite interesting as the way a small child thinks is so alien to adults. In the case I mentioned, two boys were in competition to see who could use the shortest stub of a pencil. The clear winner was the one who sharpened his pencil so much only the metal eraser band was left with only a small point at the other end. The next day, there was a boy who would break the point on his pencil on purpose and just use the broken tip. I guess that actually beats the stub from the day before. Including last Wednesday, I kind of just worked my way down the hall from one second grade room to the next. Each room had its own challenges and own interesting characters.

Umm, 'scuse me a minute while I close my window. A skunk just walked by... There. Whew. Where was I? Oh- characters. The latest room had a boy who liked to fight and apparently did so at recess time yesterday. He was supposed to spend lunch with the principal today, but he didn't show up. Did his mom keep him home? There was also the hearing-impaired girl who required me to wear a microphone. I had to try to remember to take it off when I wasn't talking to the whole class or to her. For some reason I thought it would be a good idea to stuff it in my shirt pocket when not in use. Bad idea of course. Instead of getting me talking to others, she got the scratching of the microphone against the material of my shirt. She never told me. Only during the afternoon today did she tell her one-on-one assistant who told me. Apparently Pokemon is still in fashion, as one boy showed me his small book of cards he would take with him to lunch. And you

already read about the pencil boys.

Of course as is normal for primary grades, there was the ever-present “this is how we do things and so you’d better get it exactly right.” Okay, it wasn’t that bad but small children really aren’t as flexible as older ones when it comes to routine. Speaking of routine, it was nice how the teachers worked together and had their classes doing a lot of the same things. Some of the stuff I got to teach more than one class, making it easier for the second since I already knew what I was doing. All-in-all, it really wasn’t that bad working the five days with second grade. Experience normally has me dreading multiple primary days as so much extra focus is required compared to the older ones, but this wasn’t bad at all, perhaps because the teachers were still there (doing testing) and checked in from time to time taking some of the pressure off. I don’t know. Tomorrow will be a little different in any event. I have two half-days for music, but I might drop the afternoon because there’s a job fair going on at that time that I should attend.

EDIT: I forgot to mention the “does this look like the face of a guilty person” look of innocence one of the boys gave me when I asked him to change his card (behavior system). It reminded me of when a sixth-grader tried this a couple of years ago with another teacher. It failed then too- the teacher just said (a little sarcastically), “aww- how cute” then gave him his punishment anyway.

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## 2nd Grade

This will be a shorter post this time around I think. Today I worked in a second grade classroom. This is stretching my

comfort zone a bit, but toward the end of the year they are becoming more like third-graders as they grow. Unlike yesterday I was the sole adult in this room, which is the norm for regular classrooms. The other second-grade teacher, a rare male primary teacher, was very helpful in making sure I knew what was going on and checking up on me when he could. As this was hardly my first time in a classroom I didn't need too much help, but he did make sure I knew about an assembly at the end of the day that for some reason didn't make it into the plans and gave me some tips about the class as well. Even though this was also a no-specials day (if you don't count the assembly) it was rather enjoyable. I had only a break a lunchtime, but was able to do an acceptable job with the plans. I didn't finish the reading plans, but typically a teacher writes more than can often be taught to make sure there is no time the students aren't engaged. The fact that the plans were well-written and detailed was a bonus. Not to pick on any gender, particularly mine, but I find that most often women leave more detailed plans than men. This is not always the case of course but it is typical. The only real downer for the day was that I had to stay longer than normal because again there were no breaks other than lunch, so I didn't have time throughout the day to leave all the notes I wanted so I had to spend time after school instead. Fortunately this school was in my home town so I still got home at a reasonable time.