

Paper Plane

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Entering a primary classroom for a secondary teacher can be quite confronting. In my new job, I am working across both primary and secondary and last week found myself taking a grade 2 class for a lesson.

“How did you find grade 2?” my partner, also secondary trained, asked me that evening.

“Well, you know when we feed our chickens? And they all look up at us from really low on the ground, some jump and some stand on our feet? Well, it was kind of like that.”

Nothing prepares you for the up close and personal side of being in a primary classroom. I think, at one point, I had seven kids hanging onto me.

“Grade 2, let’s all sit in a circle on the floor together.” Instantly, five kids tried to sit on me.

“Everybody take two steps back from Miss Adams and find your own place on the floor. Who is touching my hair? Who is that? Marianna? Okay, Marianna, please stop touching my hair and find a spot in our circle; a spot that’s not on my lap, please.”

However, if I thought grade 2 was non-stop and high intensity, nothing quite prepared me for the world of the prep classroom. An awful lot seemed to happen within the half hour I was there watching the class.

“Everybody stand up from their table and come and find a spot on the carpet.”

“Zac, are you going to join us on the floor?”

“I want to but I’m stuck.”

“How are you stuck?”

“My arm is in the chair.”

“I think we can get that out. You try pulling your arm out backwards for me.”
“Nope. I’m stuck.”

“Let me try.”



The child was genuinely stuck. We had to use the pump pack soap from the toilet to soap him out of that situation. He got a cat sticker for being brave.

“Who made that noise? Was that you Vera? Vera, we have two faces on the board. One face is a happy face and Miss Handley writes people’s names under the happy face when they make a good choice. We also have a sad face on the board. Miss Handley writes people’s names under the sad face when they make a poor choice.

“You making that noise when everyone was sitting politely on the floor was a poor choice, Vera. I’m going to write your name under the sad face for poor choice.”

Once the gravity of this situation had sunk in, we moved rapidly to making “s” words and sounds.
“Ssssssssnake. Ssssssssssssssad. Sssssssssseven.”

“Excellent work! Now we can reward ourselves with the ‘Good Job’ song. Pat on the back, pat on the back, pat on the back and clap your hands. Sing it with me.”

The entire class patted themselves on the back and clapped their hands. I must admit that later in the day, I may have had that same tune stuck in my head because, I too, had done a good job.

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