

Gary's Testimonial

Peter called me to start working for Super English two months before I had planned to come to Surat Thani. At the time, I was working in Thailand for an ESL agency that seemed...all right at a glance. The agency in question was far from the worst, but I felt forgotten as I was shuffled from Bangkok ten hours south by bus to Nakhon Si Thammarat with little notice, communication, or news.

When Peter called me asking whether I'd like to start my contract with Super English in the middle of the semester, I was all too happy to board that last minibus out of Nakhon. The welcome I received on arrival set the tone for the rest of my stay in Surat Thani. The Thai staff helped me get settled into my digs. Levi and Savannah showed me the Night Market where I had the first non-fried chicken meal in about a month (options were severely limited in my previous small town). Surat was beginning to feel like home already.

By the time I started teaching classes at Suratpittaya, I had had time to settle in to the city and get ready to meet my students. That was truly daunting, considering they were 500 rambunctious preteens and another 500 hormonally enraged teenagers. Matters were further complicated by my arriving in the middle of the school year with half the curriculum's lessons finished, but the SE teachers at the school transitioned me into the classes with ease and gave me, again, one of the best welcomes I've received in Thailand.

Teaching in Thailand can be challenging, terrifying, and ultimately rewarding. The English level of most of the students is daunting. How do you communicate, well, anything to someone who speaks just a few words? Because of the materials and training in Super English, I developed my abilities to work with the different skill levels in each class. I had a little experience before moving to Surat Thani, but entering into the teenage classes was a whole new world. Between the school and Super, I had plenty of freedom to create exciting and interesting lessons for classes of all levels. A lesson on commercial jingles led to watching and dissecting commercials as a class, and the students responded! Since then, I've included music and dancing into lessons to break up the tedium of preparing for exams.

All in all, Super English, the staff in the office, Peter, and my coworkers have made the last 8 months some of the most relaxed and memorable of my life. I'm grateful for the people who helped me in my first few months, and I got incredibly lucky with the people who came after. I'll miss my Sunday patio time with Catherine, Lee Hu coffee with Amanda, swapping book recommendations with Levi, and a thousand small moments that made living in Surat worth it.

People have a lot of doubts about teaching in Thailand. I heard horror stories about employers that would promise support, training, and the world. I personally lived that story for a while until I was told "Oh... We forgot you were here." Coming to Super English, and working for a company that truly cares, can make your time in Thailand even more wonderful. The trips I've taken to places like Rajaprabha Dam mean getting to spend time with my coworkers in one of the most beautiful places in Thailand. And I would never have seen it without coming to SE.