

Hey, I'm a teacher!

By Emma Thorpe

Welcome to Thida! Now there's a greeting I am proud to be representing! It has to be said, I do love my job! And yes, you may think "Who is this crazy character? How could you possibly love being immersed in an environment of approximately six thousand students where craziness, running, and playing rule the day? A place where everything is in the air? Where the casual observer could conclude such a perfect recipe would make for a chaotic environment with stressed teachers, frazzled brains and nail-less fingertips!" Well here's how:

At Thida, none of that takes effect, in fact I have never seen as much order amongst children. Having a student Wai you at Thida is an everyday occurrence for sure. I mean, at first it melted my heart. I was honored as much as I was confused: "Why is this small child praying beneath me with a bowed head?" When in my life has a single child stopped from their play-time to show such respect? Here in Thailand, the children love us, they admire us, and emulate us. You're their Rock Star! "Teacher, teacher!" and "Teacher Emma!!", with a little exaggeration, is something I hear perhaps 500 times a day. It's a great feeling! Every single child wants you to hi-five them, first-bump them, wear their sticker, or wear their bracelet. Always add a few minutes onto any estimated arrival time anywhere amongst the Thida grounds because it's almost certain you won't go 5m without a small voice screaming out "Teacher, Teacher!" It just never gets old. Hearing those words amongst the screaming, playing and laughing just blurs into the joyful undertones of noise at Thida.

Based at the New Thida building, I primarily teach 4 IEP Prathom 1 sections that I see once a day, along with 8 regular Anuban 2 sections that I see once a week. Just like any other ordinary school, as you can imagine, yes, I have my characters. The class smarty pants, the teacher's pet, the trouble markers, a few cheeky chops, an uncountable number of little munchkins, not forgetting little miss attitude. In saying this, every single child is super unique in



their own adorable way. The feeling of satisfaction when that one child realizes that today you have remembered and learnt their name, that one second of fame, that wide eyed grin, is just one of many moments when you realize that making their day makes your own.



I am one and a half months into teaching at Thida and I realized today that I'm beginning to know more names now than I ever thought would be humanly possible. With a completely random mix of names such as, 'Cartoon, Book, Film, Tennis, Pooh' and 'In', who would have thought that 6 weeks ago, these words meant nothing but a piece of English vocabulary? Today, they mean much more: a personality, a strength, a weakness and a smile. When you know who to always approach for the right answers, which

students to have demonstrate for the class, when you know what kids that will need just that little extra encouragement, when you understand the dynamics of your classroom, that really is magic!

Every single day, four times a day, I am still overwhelmed by the herded stance in the classroom along with the scripted, robotic, mono-tonal, "Good morning teacher!" All 60 dark eyes staring my way, waiting for instruction, waiting for me to teach! For about 2 seconds the pressure is on. Then the rather predictable team names come swarming your way for the day and before you know it, you're the teacher!



Having fun in my classroom is something I strive to achieve every day. Taking control of a classroom and having fun is something I try to intertwine. We use a set of classroom rules with several hand motions. Acting out these rules soon becomes competitive between teams and within 5 minutes, I have their attention, a visible amount of points on the board, along with a huge buzz, student excitement and a competition to be the best! Bam! We can begin today's lesson. Another moment of realization: "Hey, I'm a teacher!"