

Week 4



Music classes

Week Four here in Thailand passed by faster than all previous weeks and I was busier than ever. The planning of music classes tends to take longer and longer as it is hard to come up with new and interesting things all the time. To sing English songs is great but the students don't know many so it isn't easy. My main song idea for the week was "Old Macdonald had a farm", a song most people back home have suggested as a great kids song, and it is a great kids song but tricky to sing even if you know the words. If you are ten years old, haven't heard the song before and don't speak many word of English...well, then it's tricky, very tricky! My effort to learn the song and print off pictures with animals was totally pointless ☺. The only good thing is that I now know the lyrics to 100% and my neighbours also know the lyrics to 100%, poor things, they are so fed up with the song so they are moving out tomorrow. Shame, as it's such a great tune.

As animal songs were the idea of the week, I also introduced another animal song from the eighties, the Chicken Dance...I can't believe I ended up spending my time in the jungle in Thailand dancing the chicken dance and on top of everything, I enjoyed it, and so did the kids. Result. Dancing might be the way forward. ☺

The Kindergarten for 3-4 year old in Pakklong was, as always, something special. They are always extremely enthusiastic and usually when I arrive at the school each all of them greet me and before they leave the school four hours later they have probably managed to say HI at least 10 times each, that's 10 times 35 students = 350. I have these guys at 11.30 just before they are supposed to sleep for an hour and I'm sure something like the chicken dance isn't the way to get ready for a nap. To get them into sleep mood we tried some slow guitar tunes and it seemed to work. It was actually really nice to play lullabies for a change.

While we were playing children's songs in Pakklong the older students in Ban Bangmuang tried more grown up stuff. The guitar group had a go at blues, something I think they have never heard before. They looked confused but they did like it. It is fairly easy to play but it still takes a few days to get the fingers to do what they are supposed to. On the Friday in Ban Bangmuang I also had my first ever Violin class. The school had an old violin without strings that I fixed for them and some of the students are extremely keen. We started with Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, the same song I started with 33 years ago, a perfect beginner's tune on violin and they did very well. I might do a few extra private lessons with these guys before I leave as it is hard to focus on each student when you have 30 in the same room.



School project

During the week, the first concrete floor went down. Suddenly you get the feeling that we are about to finish off the school in just a few weeks but we still have the painting to do, electricity, water, toilets etc so it will take some time. Language-wise, I've managed to be part of the conversation on the building site now mainly by copying what other people say and when I have a chance, I write things down. It is interesting but still a bit frustrating when you cannot say what you want. For the other guys at the building site it seems hilarious. I'm sure I'm not the best Thai student ever but I'm trying and before I leave I will be able to have smaller proper conversations.



Jungle trip

Toon, one of the teachers in Pakklong invited me with some of his friends in Pakklong for a jungle trip Friday and Saturday. We drove for half an hour straight out into the jungle and spent the night in a house. Four Thai guys and me. I still didn't understand much of what was said but it was great fun and completely relaxing. When the phone connections don't work and the next pub is miles away the only thing is to relax. Not a bad idea at all. On Saturday morning we took some motorbikes and drove even deeper into the jungle through rubber tree plantations, coffee trees, rivers and a water fall. After some trekking through high grass without snakes (!) we finally managed to do some fishing and caught around 50 fish. It was a great little trip and I'm already looking forward to the next one.

Until next time.

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