

# Meanwhile, Back in Second Grade...

*By Laura Reher*

I feel awesomely blessed to be serving at the International Community School as an assistant in a class with 20 second graders and as a teacher with an after-school group of first and second graders. As I expected, this year is both wonderful and challenging. I find it quite ironic that I have just graduated from college and am returning to second grade to learn numerous lessons and be reminded of many others. A few of these are included below.

I have learned...

- A smile really does cross language barriers.
- There are Burmese lyrics to “London Bridge is Falling Down.”
- Teaching elementary school is even more challenging than I thought, and trust me, I really did give teachers a lot of credit.
- Spellcheck really doesn’t like my children’s names.
- One genuine smile or hug from one of my students can make my whole day.
- To be extremely specific when giving any instructions.
- Kids have an incredible knack for cutting to the truth of the matter.
- The phrase “this is just as hard on me as you” really is true about disciplining them.
- To never underestimate what children are capable of (mostly in positive ways, such as intellectually).
- To be even more open-minded than I already was.
- It is impossible to win a game of tag when 20 kids are chasing you.
- To strive to have the same level of resilience, ability to forgive, ability to adapt, excitement, and most of all, zeal for life that many of my students have. Basically, I want to try to be more like some of them “when I grow up.”
- That I really work day and night because I dream about school when I sleep. There is no telling how many papers I pass out each night.
- To truly appreciate and soak up the gifts of the day (the sunrise, smiles, hugs, holding hands with a child who has bonded with me, laughter, artwork made “just for me,” and seeing a student’s progress).
- My students will (and already have) left an incredible mark on me, and that five weeks is much more than enough for them to each hold a very special place in my heart.
- To rejoice in the opportunity to learn more every day.