

Back to three showers a day!

It was 43 degrees yesterday. Most of you in the states think that is more of an April night time temperature. Except, I mean 43 degrees Celsius! That registers about 110 Fahrenheit. In Honduras it just means get into the shade, turn the fan your way, crank up the air conditioner(if you can afford one), or sit and sweat.

One of the ongoing, mystifying, troubling problems we face at EIS is NO AIR CONDITIONING. The main classrooms have had ceiling fans for years! Why should the kids need air now? It costs too much to maintain the cooling. The windows would all have to be changed before we could install air. The parents aren't willing to pay? Or is it the board?

Perhaps I should take a pause here to explain how this school is run. Escuela Internacional Sampedrana (EIS) is a private school that gets all of its funding from the families that go here, and have gone here in the past. As far as I know, they get NO funding politically. *When you want to change something at this school, it is, inevitably, a question of money rather than need. It is truly run like a business. (This is an opinion pooled from many sources.)* The final decisions are made by a board of nine members.

Not a fan of the Fans!

School starts at 7a.m. and ends at 1p.m. Why? Because it is hot! But the heat starts around 5:30. I know. I get to school at that time and I turn on all the fans to their highest level and open all of the windows to get the air moving. The point being...it is hot all day long, and the fans don't solve the problem. We just leave the problem. The kids get into their air conditioned cars and go back to their air conditioned homes.

An important adjustment for teaching here is the fan factor. There are four or five ceiling fans in each classroom. It is rare not to have all of them roaring at the top setting, to push the air around the room. You learn very quickly to weight down any loose papers! My fifth-graders still forget that. At least once a day, even after a whole year of mentioning it, a student starts passing out papers to the class and just puts them on top of the desks. Whoosh! "Mr. L. I didn't get one!" (I have the problem solved for next year and it has nothing to do with air conditioning)

Drive the point home!

I recently had a parents day. I packed about twenty parents, assorted family members, and all thirty of my kids into the classroom for a short talent show. It was about 41 degrees outside. Do you think it was hot? Yep! I even know of one teacher that was contemplating a devious plot to turn off the fans before the parents arrived.

Write some letters! That is what the fifth-grade team came up with. We each had our students write argumentative paragraphs about changes in the school. I might not give

them to the principal. Debbie has enough to do. Maybe our Superintendent would be willing to read a few letters at the next board meeting.

Top 13 Fan Problems

1. You cannot hang up student's work from the ceiling.
2. It is just too fun for a child to attempt a successful paper airplane collision with the fan. (The plane gets caught and goes around in the fan until the fan stops!)
3. The noise of 4 raging fans consumes the room. It makes the children LOUDER.
4. DUST and allergies
5. FANS DO NOT SOLVE THE HEAT PROBLEM.
6. Papers. Flying papers. Scattered papers. Papers strewn about. Lost papers. Papers.
7. Any object, that can be thrown in class, is more fun if you add the factor of random direction: where will the eraser go if I launch it into the fan?
8. The switches are right next to the light switches. Students can reach them. (there are 4-5 settings) More rules.
9. DUST.
10. FANS DO NOT SOLVE THE HEAT PROBLEM!
11. Fans BREAK so easily
12. It is dangerous if you pull a "Captain my captain!" when there is a moving fan above you.
13. FANS DO NOT SOLVE THE HEAT PROBLEM

Internet Here We Come

Soon, we will be completely online! The board passed a large budget to wire the school with classroom computers, post student grades online, and link the information databases. What a jump into the online world. The factor will be the time.

The goal is to have the online package up and working by the 2002/2003 school year but that deadline is approaching at light speed! The plan is to have all of the teachers posting grades, sending in daily attendance, and creating classwebsites from their rooms. Very few of the rooms are even wired for computers, even if we had the computers.

We have a training seminar coming up on May 21,22,23. A trainer from the online program is going to introduce the system to the entire faculty and administration. Yipeee!

Some of the upcoming articles planned:

- computer access
- Acto Civico "What the heck is that?"
- Parent involvement
- Driving in Honduras