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Over 40 years ago I started teaching...many different ages, many different subjects and in many different places. We lived, worked, served and raised our family in Japan, Indonesia, but mostly in China for 35 of those years. In each location, I was blessed to have opportunities to teach...music, math, science and computers. Four years ago, we returned to the U.S. permanently and it wasn't long before I heard about the perfect job for me at a Christian school teaching Junior High math and science. It has been a joy to work along side the many wonderful staff at TCS.

With the need to spend more time at home, I have made the decision to retire from classroom teaching. It is difficult to think that I will not be going back to the classroom in August. When I student taught in 1973, I knew that this was what I wanted to do. I have been fortunate to have worked all these years and be able to say even now that I still love teaching...especially math and science in the middle school grades. I started with chalkboards and chalk dust up to my elbows, mimeos and stencil machines and for a special occasion, we watched reel-to-reel movies. Standards were the table of contents in the textbook and reports were all hand written. Lesson plans for a whole week fit on a 2-page spread in a teacher plan book. Grades were tediously calculated once every 8 weeks and went home on a hand written, quarterly report card.

Now so much has changed. Chalkboards morphed into whiteboards. Movies on reel-to-reel became video cassettes and later DVDs and even those are now just streamed from the internet using overhead projectors. Whiteboards no longer need markers as they are replaced with smartboards and tablets. Lessons are all thoroughly planned in detail and linked to standards and then digitally submitted to principals and uploaded to the school's curriculum management website. Teachers are able to communicate with students and parents easily with text messages and emails, quickly scanning assignments or providing digital copies of missed work. Teaching is no longer just the teacher doling out facts and information, but students using information, interacting and working together to solve larger problems.

What hasn't changed is we are still working with students who have needs and dreams. They still struggle with the same relationship issues with friends and family as they try to figure out who they are. They are challenged to balance outside activities, responsibilities and commitments as they try to find time to understand world history, memorize 20 new Latin words, write a two-page essay, remember math formulas and practice music or sports daily.

It has been a tremendous joy to be a part of the lives of these students during these growing years of their lives, even with the many problems. It has been fun to laugh with them and even cry with them and also to pray with them. Each one has his/her own unique skills and talents and learns to express themselves through those. I rejoice when they get that "Ah-ha" moment and they finally "get it", or the wonder in their eyes as they view or comprehend that which amazes. I delight in the many questions and the lunchtime chats.

These students have touched my life, and I pray that my time with them has likewise made a difference in their lives...that they not only gained knowledge in my classes, but that they have been encouraged to explore their world, learn all they can and become all that God has created them to be.

We are not yet sure what the future holds, but we will take it one day at a time and continue to enjoy the beautiful blue skies and sunsets in Prescott along with spending time with our neighbors and friends while we discover what the next chapter in our lives reveals.

Kathy Red