**The Memory of the Theater Class**

Young (Seo, Young AE)

“Carpe Diem, Lads!! Seize the day. Make your lives extraordinary” Robin Williams (As English professor John Keating from “Dead Poets Society”)

I believe a good teacher greatly influenced student’s life. The meeting with Michele Thomas who was the teacher in my theater class at Hunter College changed my entire personality and attitudes to my life. She taught that all people could be extraordinary somehow. The class was a big challenge for me that I could never experience, but she always gave me confidence and helped me to get over a difficulty. I learned something more precious than English. I am not afraid anymore to make progress toward my goal to become a teacher even though I am late to start new career. I could hear what she whispered to me that it is never too late to start fresh, and there is nothing you could not do if you put your minds into it.

I went to the International English Language Institute (IELI) which is part of Hunter College of the City University of New York to learn English 11 years ago. I started from Pre-Intermediate and proudly to finish the advanced class. For the advance program there were two options, academic class & theater class. I had a plan to enter university, so I should take the academic class for improved my TOEFL score and preparing an admission test of university. But I was wavering between two options. I was sure if I chose the academic class, I would be more comfortable to study. I was good at working with multiple-choice questions in limited time. There was no pressure to speak up my voice. I had been the academic class for 6 months, but most of teachers did not recognize of my existence. I felt safe to hide myself, but at the same time I was worried about improving my speaking skill. The reason I came to New York was to learn English and not hide, so at the end of worried I finally decided to choose the theater class without hesitation.

The first day I met Michele Thomas I was little scared of her appearance. She had a huge red hair and big golden gray eye which was staring at me. She was very energetic and active. She never let me to be bored. I heard she has created the theater class for the first time in IELI program. Everybody said it was not going to work for ESL students due to the tight curriculum and the difficulty of studying English literature at the very beginning, but the class has still been existed successfully and helped foreign students to improve their English effectively.

I was a terribly shy student in my class and could not speak loudly. Especially in front of people my voice was changed and sounded like sheep. Michele taught me how to take a deep breath and stretch to my body to get over the tension. I studied three plays “Lost in Yonkers” by Neil Simon, “The Glass Menagerie” and “Cat on a Hot Tin Roof” by Tennessee Williams on the theater course. It was very hard for foreign students to understand American English literature. I saw many native college students in the United States had a tough time when I took the English 102 class (English literature) in LaGuardia College. Michele always pulled out difficult words from the plays and explained well with gesture and easy words. She used the video tapes which were the stage and movie version of the plays. Her visual materials helped students to understand the stories easily. I repeated new vocabularies and memorized my lines on the plays. Even I used to imitate the character in my plays. At the first time it was tough to speak in front of my classmates and write the essay assignments and research paper about the plays. I almost gave up this class, but every time she encouraged me how I am talented and creative. The end of the class, I played the main character in a play and did successfully finished my role with a burst of applause and had my own writing portfolio about theater class experience.

It was an unforgettable learning experience. Throughout the theater class I am more confident what I am doing something. It changed my personality from passive to active. Believe Michele Thomas is the best model of teachers who has three values of teaching such as respect, empathy, and authenticity. I wish I want to be a good teacher as Michele who inspired students with her enthusiasm one day.