The faces of teaching

TESOL- 75

Essay #1

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In July 1996, it was my first experience to travel out of Korea. I was so excited to see and meet new things in America. I still remember the feelings and atmosphere of the day. While I was staying at my aunt’s house, I experienced culture shock. Not only the culture, but I was surprised by American school education. It was so different than what I have experienced, it had no spankings, no forcing memorizes vocabularies and mathematical formulas and no 10 different private educational institutes. After I came back to Korea, I pleaded my parents to send me abroad to study. It almost took 4 years for them to decide send me to America. We searched for schools and finally found right one for me. It was a boarding school in Calhoun Georgia. They had good ESL (English as Second Language) classes for foreigner students and I was able to live in the dorm with American friends, it was great chance to face new things. The school I attended, it was a small school which had only 200 students and almost 80% of the students lived in the dorms. Also faculties lived 5 minutes away from the campus; it was more like family, not just teachers. I

My favorite and the best ESL teacher, Mr. Donald Short always taught us with well organized course plans. His lesson plans were in very good order. He used many visuals and audios such as pictures, videos, songs and demonstrations. I remember one day, during American culture class he demonstrated how to make omelets and pancakes. I couldn’t believe it was included in the course work because it was so fun. It was definitely different than the way how I learned subjects in Korea. He also taught us with very creative ways, for example, He suddenly stopped the cartoons we were watching and then he would ask us to fill in the lines. This method was a new experience for the students. It was a very unique teaching method.

Mr. Short’s teaching style was very enthusiastic with a good sense of humor.

He always gave us Icebreaker activities before he started the class. Icebreaker is a facilitation exercise intended to help a group to begin the process of forming themselves into a team, a cohesive group, and to become familiar and comfortable with one another. Icebreaker made us comfortable and active; it was like playing games to us. It was so much fun to have icebreaker, I waited for icebreakers every morning. Speaking a second language can be fearful, nervous or uncomfortable at a time, but icebreaker helped us to participate in a relaxed setting. One more thing he liked to do was take us on field trips. The field trips could be at the market, museum, library or shopping mall etc. I remember my favorite field trip; it was fun to go to a shopping mall or market place. We usually worked as a group to find lists of goods that he gave us to find at the market place. He chooses the enjoyable and interesting ways for us to discover and memorize words. In this case, we also learned proper behavior and manner in public.

Mr. Short was an enabler; he was more like a guide to his students. He was a very confident teacher who could share control with his student. He also had a lot of respect and patience for his students. The methods he used were mostly used TBL (Talk Based Learning). TBL method bases work cycles around the preparation for, doing of, and reflective analysis of tasks that reflect real-life needs and skills. I think the reason that he used this method often was he wanted to teach us American culture as well as language. Knowing the culture can be helpful and sometimes needed to understand the language better. Another method he often used was CLT (Communicative Language Teaching), which is based on beliefs that learners will learn best if they participate in communication. When we were covering American law he made us act out a play, he had given us a scenario for us to play. I remember I was the lawyer who represented the victim, it made me to research similar cases along with rational thoughts. By doing this task, it taught me how to research on my own independently.

Confucius stated “I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.” I believe studying something can be difficult but it could be different depending on who teaches and how they teach. When I become teacher I would like to implement a variety of teaching methods used by my former teachers and also what I have learned in TESOL program. Through my experiences, I dislike Korean education method which calls cramming method of teaching; I prefer modern teaching style such as student centered environment teaching. If there’s no respect between teacher and students then the learning process can’t be achieved. I will try best to be the best teacher I can possibly be by studying other teachers’ methods and I will also introduce my TESOL methods.  I believe studying something can be difficult but it could be different depending on who teaches and how they teach.