Who is a Good Teacher?

*“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”*

-Nelson Mandela-

All of us have teachers in our lives. They could be your school teachers, mentors, or parents. No matter whom they are, you might barely remember them, or you’ve never forgotten them because they have strongly influenced your lives, whether positively or negatively. Can you imagine how it would be, if Helen Keller didn’t meet her teacher, Anne Sullivan? So, I think it is very important to be a good teacher for children.

While learning about approaches, I realized that the behaviorist approaches have had the most influence on my own idea about teaching. From elementary school to high school, it was natural not only to repeat same contents, but also to use rewards and punishment until students could get knowledge. For example, a math teacher in my middle school kept writing the long progress of math question and explaining without any eye-contact. He had us to copy what he wrote on a blackboard, and to memorize them for tests. His lesson plans were very clear and anyone could get high grades in Math if they answered exactly what he said. That’s not all. My English teacher gave us homework which was to memorize 50 words, writing down each English word 10 times on the notebook! I wrote 500 words but couldn’t get high scores on the dictation test. I didn’t have to be creative at all.

Somehow I understand why they taught us like that. In fact, there were 50 students in a class at the moment, and to meet each one’s expectation was actually impossible. For me, however, there are other approaches to choose for my future students because I would teach English to children in a small group. Of several approaches I’ve learned in class, I hope the theory of multiple intelligences will have more influence on my teaching in the future. According to this theory, children can be intelligent in different ways. Some can learn best through reading books and playing word games, others through touching and exploring objects. I believe that Sunday school teachers of my church are using the multiple intelligences very well. In the Bible camp, they use songs and gestures, which are the musical intelligence and the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, to make 5 to 7 year-old-children to remember the Bible stories. On the other hand, they use storytelling and quite time to think alone for 12 to 13 year-old-children, which are the verbal-linguistic intelligence and the intrapersonal intelligence. I will try and find the strength of my students and encourage their abilities.

To develop this approach for children in Asia, I think that teachers should engage students and get them to look at issues in a variety ways. By using the “why” question, teachers should elicit students’ ideas and give them opportunities to build on by themselves. Also, teachers should have clear, written-out objectives. Even though teachers let students have time to think freely, their lesson plans should have goals. We have to consider what you want to teach them, what assignments students have, and what the grading policy is, so that students can feel a sense of achievement.

Children are much more creative than we think and have unlimited potential. We must not restrict their abilities. It is not necessary to be a famous teacher, but a good one since a good teacher has good influence on students. I certainly believe that such a good teacher will be able to give children the most powerful weapon to enrich their lives.