TESOL WD 116th

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Good Teacher and Bad Teacher

Since I started to study teaching English, I had tried to find answers of the questions: what teaching method is the best for students? What teacher is good or bad? And now, I realized that there is no the best teaching technique for students, and a good teacher should be able to combine some teaching skills or choose proper teaching method flexibly depending on a class. Establishing good relationship with students is also necessary for teacher. With those ideas, I compared two teachers I met; one is a good example and the other one is a bad example. For the comparison, I focused on four issues: teaching method, effort to involve the students, feedback, and rapport.

One of my memorable professors is my Writing & Grammar teacher I met in Canada. There were about 30 students in his class. Because it was Writing & Grammar class, the students were supposed to acquire grammatical knowledge and writing strategy, so his class mostly consisted of lecturing. Even though his class could be just a one-way lecture because of the class’ characteristic, he tried to involve his students actively in class. For example, when he had the students solve exercises in textbook, he made the students discuss about the answers with their partner. By discussing, students were able to remember what they had learned; in addition, teaching and learning occurred among students at the same time. There is another example. Before writing an in-class essay, he made the students discuss assigned issues in pair or groups. This activity gave the students opportunities to see one issue at different viewpoints by exchanging their ideas.

In addition to his effort to involve his students, his useful and helpful feedback made his class more productive. After we took a grammar test and in-class essay, he gave us feedback on them. For the grammar test, he returned our test sheets and went over each question. While covering the problems, each student was able to recall what they had learned and ask a question about what they still didn’t understand. Rapport is the other strength of his class. As it can be guessed, Writing & Grammar class is likely to be very boring and tedious. But, he always tried to listen to his students’ answers or comments and reacted to them actively. Sometimes, he told funny stories to entertain his students at appropriate time. Through this interaction, the classroom’s atmosphere became brighter; moreover, the relationship between the professor and his students was able to be closer.

The other teacher was my speaking teacher, a bad example. I met her in Korea, so definitely it was EFL context. There were 14 students in her class, which was quite small class. Even though it was speaking class, she tended to rely on textbook and focus on transmit target sentence structure. Among the three kinds of teacher: the explainer, involver, and enabler, she seemed to be between the explainer and involver. Her class mostly consisted of explanations of target sentence patterns in assigned chapter, and classroom activity was only reading dialog with partner by taking turns. The students didn’t even think she was putting an effort to improve her class. Needless to say, her students began to lose interest in the class. That is, she failed to involve her students in her class actively.

Furthermore, her way to give student feedback was also inappropriate. The students in her class was at beginner level. According to what I’ve learned, for beginner level of students, promoting conversation and encouraging them are more important than correcting every single error. However, she strictly pointed to students’ grammatical errors, wrong pronunciation, et cetera whenever she found them. As a result, she discouraged and depressed her students by emphasizing accuracy which isn’t required for beginners. Under the condition, she wasn’t able to establish good rapport with her students. She was rather a controller or intellectual than a friendly facilitator or mentor. She was too distant to have a friendly relationship with her students.

I can conclude from my experience and my beliefs that to be a good teacher, teachers should be able to choose suitable teaching style for their class. As it was already seen, even traditional method which is known as an old-fashioned style can be the proper one for some classes, like a grammar class. After choosing appropriate method, teachers should keep trying to involve their students. If not, the appropriate method will totally lose their value; meaningful learning never occurs. Giving feedback is very necessary as well; however, unsuitable and excessive feedback will bring a negative effect. Lastly, building a good relationship is an important work to lead more effective learning.