My Dream as a Teacher of English Learners

130th WD Essay KyuNam Kim (Q)

I have started this course for California State University at Long Beach Times Media TESOL Center Class 130, because I wanted to see if I had a valid chance at making my long time wish come true. My dreams to be an English teacher are these; to teach at my old high school, or to have a teaching job at a university. I used to think about being an English teacher ever since I got back from the USA in the year of 2003.

However, I did not pursue it right away, because I was not sure if I could be good at it. The funny reason is that I have had so many memories of great teachers. I did not think that I would be able to become a teacher like them. Here are the teachers that I remember. I will try to learn from them, and try to become an even better teacher than they were.

The first teacher that I remember so much about was the teacher that taught me in the first year of Elementary school. He was kind, generous, had a lot of tolerance, but was also very strict when the time called for it. He loved to play with us as well, but wasn't that fun or great at teaching things, I don't even remember what he taught us, but he had some characteristics that I would love to have for myself as a teacher.

The next teachers are from USA, my drama (theatre arts) teachers really helped me a lot in learning English and making my pronunciation better. I took this class because my guidance counselor recommended that I take this class when I was in 8th grade, and I ended up taking that class through grade 9 and 10 too. The drama class was just so much fun!! It is the most experiential class I had attended so far.

All the activity, and laughing and doing things together. Also the introduction to the making of musicals and plays was really exciting for me as well. I was not a very good singer, or actor so I participated in building the set, or keeping order in the auditorium on the night of the performance. Now I realize that these teachers were using fun and interesting activities as a teaching method, and it was really helpful, because I learned really a lot about communication and English speaking.

Then I came back to Korea, and went to Geochang HS. I spent a great amount of time there, but I do not remember many teachers, the classes were mostly memorizing many things and I had a hard time in class. Most of the teachers did not use various methods of teaching, but those teachers that I can still remember vividly are the ones who managed to make it fun even though it was just a lecture. They managed to use humor to make a dull lecture as interesting as possible.

After graduating from high school, I went to HUFS to study Spanish. I had a lot of expectations and high hopes about the University classes, but was dismayed to learn that it was just much more of memorizing. I was so disappointed that I just took one semester, and decided to enlist to do my military service in Korea. While doing this military service, I wanted to improve my Spanish skills, because I was having such a hard time learning it at school. I enrolled in a Spanish class, but I was betrayed again, it was a bit more fun than my university classes but the essential was the same; memorizing things. Now that I have tried to teach some kids myself; I know why they made me memorize all those things. But did they have only that way to do it?

Couldn't they have done better to teach basics? I believe that that was the easiest way to teach for teachers, not a way that is beneficial to students.

I went back to school after 2 years of military service and decided to take a lot more English classes, and less Spanish ones, I wanted to switch my major. As a result I met some great teachers, not all of them used the same or similar methods, but they made you talk, and discuss, I loved it. One of the teachers was a Korean professor who taught German, but she loved English literature, so she made a class to teach it. I was really lucky to take her class without prior knowledge, we studied Shakespeare, Alice in Wonderland, and some other works of literature. This professor chose to use a lot of different methods for covering our materials. We did role- playing, some discussions, was assigned to analyze a chapter of the book and taught it to other students, and etc.

So why do these differences occur? I believe that it is a cultural problem as well as a methodical problem. They used to do things this way, and it kind of worked for them, so they are forcing us to do it as they used to do it. I used to take a class in my university and think that 'I can do a class like this, it's not really hard to do.' But the truth was that they were not really committed to teaching as much as the teachers that I remember very well and I don't want to end up as a crappy teacher like them. Those great teachers had influenced me in ways that I didn't know myself, and I became discontented with the quality of classes that uncommitted teachers were giving me.

They were just seeking the easy way out. These teachers were not taking or making much influence on the students they teach. There was not much interaction between us.

I want to become a better teacher than that. I want to become a teacher that inspires my students about their future and give them fun learning experiences. English has so much materials to have fun with, I want to become a teacher that makes students able to have fun with English. There's a famous saying by Confucius; The Genius cannot win a Diligent person, but the Diligent person cannot win an Enjoying person. If I am able to make my students to have fun with English, than I will feel very successful. It is my dream to make a enjoyable environment where my students and I can both enjoy and learn English.

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