My Best Teacher

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I think my best teacher is the person in the first year of the middle school. Although I do not remember her name, but I vividly remember her face and voice. She was my first English teacher in my life. I had never learned English before I met her. She was Korean but she spoke English better than Korean. First time, I was very nervous but the friends who did the precedent learning sat with a confident expression. She introduced herself and gave a paper to us. That was an alphabet worksheet. When I got it, I felt my face turn red because I did not know how to write the alphabet in order. As I could not do anything, she came to me and held my hand. And she let me write it as she wrote. Then she smiled and praised me to cheer up. After that day, I changed. I became a person who was interested in English and very active in English time. In order to be an honorable student, I previewed the lesson and practiced it a lot. Also I tried to participate in class and show my development actively. By the end of the year, I finally got confidence in English.

She was a modern teacher even though it was 25 years ago. After a midterm, we listened to music and filled the blanks in some pop lyrics. I was surprised that it was really funny and exciting. When we listened to it a few times, she checked if we corrected or not. Then we sang along to music. Sometimes there was an English song contest in class. We had to pick a song. I picked "You are my sunshine." So I practiced a lot for a few days and sang that song in front of my friends. Of course I still remember that song. And we did role-play with my partner so we got a chance to speak and improve English. She taught it not only in lectures but also in activities. She always made us learn English with various ways and we loved the things she taught so much. So we felt English was not difficult.

In my opinion, she was an enabler teacher because she tried to approach different ways in teaching English. Sometimes we played a game like mime or twenty questions and so on with new words and phrases. If we did not understand some situations then she drew or showed a picture. She tried to help us to understand English as a second language. Once I asked the difference between ‘wake up’ and ‘get up’, she gave me time to share with my friends. Then she accepted our ideas and took me to understand the situation. When we had something to ask, she allowed us to share our opinions in class. Also she asked something about English and gave time to think about it, we told and debated our ideas with her. She led us to speak English more and have fun in class. No student was afraid of making sentences even if they had grammatical mistakes.

Considering how I learned so much, I think she understood the student levels and effective methods for students to learn a second language. It was my first time to learn a second language in Korea Public Education. So it was important how she approached English. If I met another teacher who was strict, traditional, boring, and explainer, I would have been a person who hates English very much. And she focused on approaching English easily to us. For example, when I could not read the phonemes of alphabet at all, she let me know the sound of the song. In addition, I was taught English with song rather than learning through the Mother Goose. We were beginners except a few students so she usually used simple expressions that I understood at that time. She made a low-anxiety learning environment so we got each motivation and self-esteem to learn English.

She seemed to know how to teach English in fun ways and what we wanted to learn. I think she might have gone to study and learn English abroad in her youth. And she might have wanted us to learn as the way she learned at school. If she would have just lectures or reading a book, I could not have remembered her and her teaching because the retention rate of lectures is only about 5 percent. However because she taught us English with many kinds of techniques, I could choose her as my best teacher. I still meet people who make English classes boring. As I see them, I feel sorry about it. The world is changing and the method of teaching is changing, too. I want to be a modern, effective, and enabler teacher like her. That is why I keep studying steadily.