Unexpected Blooming

Tesol #73 Time Media

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“It's not what is poured into a student that counts, but what is planted.”

-Linda Conway-

I’m working as an illustration lecturer from June, 2010 at the Kyung-Hee University. And the lecture must be given in English. This is a discipline of the visual department. Compare to other schools or institutions, university class is not much enforced. But in my case, teaching in English still lots of unexpected problems turns up abruptly such as an ‘English only’ policy, student tardiness and frequent absence, or teacher support for student presentation. I know not only giving a good lecture is important but also how I can manage the class is more important to students. In this essay, I will discuss how I can deal with these problems through my experiences.

How to make a very strict “English only” policy in a class?

Every one semester, generally there are just one or two students from abroad and the others are Korean. In 2010, the last fall semester was not successful. There was only one Chinese student was abroad student. Ironically, his Korean language skills are better than English. Therefore I loosely allowed speaking Korean in my class. It was my greatest fault I ever make in my class. Therefore regretfully, I didn’t give a lecture in English properly at that time. And some students did not satisfy with it. After the fall semester, I never give an exemption.

 Also I got some techniques for my students. The first technique is a ‘Cheer Up’. Most students are afraid about making a mistake when they speak in English. And I always say “Please try to say in English, I’m here to help you, and here most people are not native speakers includes me so we can help each other.”

The second is a ‘warning’. And I also make students threatening with bad words; “I’ll make your grade dawn, if you speak in Korean”. But truly I never make grade dawn.

And lastly, I really give a ‘reward’ to someone who has great presentation in English with their art work, I give 0.1 plus of the score.

 If I’m teaching young students in a school or institution, I’ll make more enforced to students as like giving an extra work. If a student has three times of warning by using their mother language, and then who will have an extra work. But, I know my students are adults and they are self-directed. Therefore, I’ll guide them respectfully.

Frequent tardiness and absences

Always, student’s frequent tardiness and absences are issue in a class. Even very strict policy of attendance in University in Korea; three times of tardiness is one absence and four times of absence is failed the class in a University. Frequently, students still have a problem with this issue. Why?

Normally Korean University class policy is lean on a lecturer’s morality. That means a lecturer can control student’s absence. Unfortunately there are some immoral cases happened.

So I believe the policy of attendance is must be strong and managed clearly.

Here are my methods. Every beginning of the semester, I always give a very seriously warning about this issue and clearly give an explanation over and over. How it affect to students and how they are important. And secondly, every time when I check attendances of students from two times tardiness I give a notice to student can recognize, and at three times tardiness I give an absent mark accurately with a caution. And also for absence, from two times give a caution and three times of absence I try counseling with student. If students are young, I can make a call to their parents and tell them a problem. But my students are not. So I try to solve the problem face to face.

How can I help my students prepare for a presentation?

In my lecture, normally I give four projects in a semester and students need to have presentation in English about their art project. Mainly giving clear concept information is important to make a good presentation. I always give some outline for preparation of the presentation such as project title, meaning, materials and difficulties about a project. These categories help to speak out in 10-15min in English. And for the next stage, mostly I leave someone who want to have the presentation at the beginning, they normally ready-to-go and also have confidence to lead others. I believe ‘observe others’ can be a good teacher. Thus student who has not ready to go can have time to learn from previous students.

And I am always opened to help my students online as well. Students can e-mail me at anytime with their problems. And also there are some students call me to ask where their art-work attached beautifully and I am always trying to help them put on the right position with their opinion until just before critical-day.

In conclusion, what is planted to the student? The class just not flows with well lesson-plan. There is also class management helps to increase the good result. And also the management skill is not only improved by learning it is also by daily practice skills. Therefore teacher must aware that there are lots of unexpected implementations and try to solve the problems in smoothly with their fully armed with the methods, knowledge, and techniques in everyday.