I will make you a student

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“A teacher is one who makes himself progressively unnecessary.” Told by Thomas Carruthers gave me a question; “how so?” But it is simple. A teacher makes the student into a person who could study himself. From a teacher, a student can learn how to speak English, to be responsible, and to learn how to design his/her study. Eventually, the student will not need the teacher anymore. He will graduate from the teacher, and the teacher will be unnecessary to his pupil.

When I was working in an English institute called EBT, Mrs. Seo the principle required me to speak English anytime and anywhere in EBT. EBT was using direct method and it made sense to me because most of all it was their policy. Moreover, it made the students be friendly and be familiar to English fast.

While I was working in EBT I had several new students came to EBT. They had hard times at start because first, all of the lessons and activities were in English. Second, I was watching them if they were speaking Korean even in break times. Third, they were shy to speak out because they didn’t have much experience about English. As time passed, most of the new comers had gotten better through lots of role-playings, class activities, and drills. From those activities, the students could have some ideas about how to use English. Because of the positive interactions (like fun) the students had shared with each other, I could hear more English than gestures. For example, the students started to say “Can I borrow your eraser?” rather than pointed to the eraser. I think that the most important and absolute rule the teacher should have is that the teacher never speak Korean. When I needed to explain words I tried gestures and facial expressions with verbal explanation so the students could feel the words. I never used Korean because I learned that if the students noticed the teacher never spoke Korean and knew the teacher would never use Korean to explain anything, then the students would not use Korean at first place.

I had a student names Holly when I was in EBT. She was always late to class. She didn’t come to her supplementary classes. Often she didn’t do her homework. I was upset to her at first. I tried to scare her to do her homework or to keep the class time on time. Then someday I was wondering how I would feel if I were her. One day I ask her what made her to be late in class. I told her what made me upset instead of why I was upset. And why she should be on time. She said sorry so we made some rules together. First, if she was late she had to stay longer in my class. Second if she didn’t do her homework I and she would spend time together to do her work. Third, I would call her mother about how she was doing once a week. Holly thought the third one was not fair but it actually gave her some motivation. Because if she tried to come to class on time or to do her homework, I told her mother that Holly was improving her behaviors. Then Holly’s mother would say encouragements to Holly. Even now days when I look back, I believe I made a positive reward cycle among I, Holly, and Holly’s mother.

Whenever I have a big project I remember Mrs. Lee from my elementary school. Because she taught me how to prepare projects. She used one-week-plan paper to teach us how to prepare the final science project. The plan was simple. There were seven divisions on a paper. We wrote down ‘D-1’ on the first box and D-2 down on the second box and so on. On each boxes had their own tasks. Like first day’s task was to do brain storm about the project’s theme. Second day’s task was to choose my own theme on the project. My theme was water pollution. Third day’s was to gather information and references. Fourth day’s was to make bone structure how you would perform the science project. Fifth, sixth, and seventh day’s task was to complete the presentation. I think this number-of-day- plan paper will help my future pupils to prepare any size of projects.

From a teacher, a student can learn how to speak English, to be responsible, and to learn how to design his/her study only if the teacher shows him/her the right way. I hope I was one of the teacher Thomas Carruthers mentioned in his quote to my past students, and I shall be to my future students.