**Be aware of how powerful the teacher’s influence can be**

*"A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops."*

*- Adams, Henry Brooks*

83rd WD\_ Shinhye Kim

  As taking the TESOL course, I tend to compare the ways I have learnt English in the past with the skills I am learning through the course. Basing on these experiences, I started to think what kind of a teacher I am going to be and what are the effective ways to teach English? What are the things not to do in the class?

  There are several teachers who taught me English from the elementary school up to my university. Among those, I would like to mention a teacher who I met at a university in China September 2002 – July 2006. I took her class for 4 years even though I did not like but because she was the only one English teacher assigned for foreign students at that time. She was very teacher-centered, during 50 of minutes class, the only chance the students could speak was when the teacher asked them to read texts given, apart from that what she did was just chalk and talk, and always led the class with one way communication. Including myself, most of us did not like her class, but because it was a required subject for graduation we had no choice. One other thing I did not like about her class was the way she treated the students, she just respected those who had abroad experiences and could speak English well, and so during the class she mostly gave opportunities to those students to answer her questions and would give them good scores and comments. So other students just sat there chatting or sleeping did not have any motivations or aims to study English. Drawing near to the final exam, she would just assign to do the paper work by ourselves and leave the classroom not concerned about the students, even if she was in the classroom she just concentrated on doing her own thing. She did not really like to be involved in the students’ activities. I personally think that it was not only the students' problems the bigger problems were on the teacher side. One of the teacher's qualifications is the ability to motivate and encourage the students to keep on their studies and help them achieve their personal goals. I surely can say she had forgotten the importance and did not see how her teaching methods could influence on the students. As a result, many students thought English was difficult, boring and useless, even some cheated in the exams. Regardless I, they know how important it is for their future, they hated English and never look or study it again. This is what teacher's influence I am talking about. Once again my past experience reminds me to realize how important teaching methods can be.

    Thinking of my English teachers in the past, there was only one teacher influenced me the most was Hillary who I met in UK for a 6 months English course in Feb 1999, her class did not only make my English get improved but also influenced my attitude towards the life. At that time I was only 18 years old, staying alone in a foreign country, not knowing anything about "the real English", so I was very afraid and worried about the course. But the class was not like how I expected. At first, the teacher kept encouraging us to speak out not with fear but with a confidence and also gave many examples we could easily mimic. Besides, she led the class with many useful activities that the students could apply on their daily lives. Going through the course, she totally changed my thoughts about English. I started having a desire to study more and could not wait for her next class. Another thing that I enjoyed about her class was she did not only teach the language itself but also shared her weaknesses and past experiences that could challenge us to go forward. We could tell that she had got the passion for teaching English and caring about the students needs.

As I am learning to be a good teacher, I have to be aware of the important roles and the abilities of a teacher, should more focus on students needs as well as motivate them to achieve their individual goals with what they learn in the class, and always keep in mind how powerful the teacher’s influence can be.