Angels and Demons

TESOL #90 WD

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“*Teachers affect eternity; no one can tell where their influence stops*.”

– Henry Brooks Adams, American journalist, historian, academic and novelist

Learning a new language can be an unpleasant and unbearable experience. Not like others, I got to study second language of English since my childhood; therefore, I didn’t have many difficulties or troubles to begin learning a new language. Although I started studying new language earlier than others, I had a sense of distance as learning advanced level of second language. As, it turned out, I had a successful language learning experience with an involver-type teacher who also reflected Carl Roger’s three characteristics of teacher, EAR: empathy, authenticity, and respect in modern classroom. Therefore, I was able to study with less fear on the challenges I faced and I build a stronger relationship with my teacher in a positive environment.

I had two most memorable types of teachers in my life. They are involver type teacher, Ms. A, English Literature teacher in my 10th grade year and Dr. G, explainer and the enabler type of professor who taught me a couple of my business classes in college. My English Literature class teacher Ms. A was an involver teacher who was on top of the subject matter that she’s teaching and aware of teaching methodology. When students ask her about meaning or pronunciation of the words or meaning of metaphorical stories, she often answers us back with demonstrating words by giving phrases or audio/video examples or body demonstrations or gave us play acting activities. Likewise, she didn’t answer us back directly with just explaining in short single-answer, but always tried to us to get involved and dig up the answers by ourselves. With her audio-visual, live demonstration, and experiential teaching techniques helped me a lot to learn and adapt difficult literatures in second language quickly and easily. However, Dr. G, the explainer and enabler type instructor was not like the involver type teacher, Ms. A. professed. He always gave us only brief explanations with a couple power points slide and gave us tons of reading and writing assignments. Only a few minutes of concise explanation extended me hard time understanding his motivations and guidance. Therefore, I realized that the involver type teaching was well fitted into my learning style rather than teaching through explaining and facilitating.

Comparing Ms. A to angel and Dr. G to demon might be a wild exaggeration. However, Ms. A was one of the best teachers I had because she had Carl Roger’s three characteristics of teacher, EAR: empathy, authenticity, and respect. She wasn’t an involver type teacher but explainer type teacher before. She was well known for bringing her big red William Shakespeare’s complete works with her and shows perfect example of TTT (Teacher Talk Time) in her classes. Nevertheless, she somehow knew that I was an extremely shy person then she demonstrated empathy towards me and that she changed her teaching techniques to help me to build on outgoing and extrovert personality rather than force me to follow her teaching methods like the other usual teachers. Also, even as I take a long time to adapt unusual activities like acting extrovert role in front of classmates, Ms. A always was patient with me and showed me authenticity and respect, the other characteristics of Carl Rogers. Dr. G, on the other hand was the demon instructor for me, had none of tthe three characteristics that Carl Rogers professed. He was always a very argumentative person that he always made me angry by belittling girls with their weaknesses. I had very bad feeling about him and it was always unpleasant to see him and take his lectures.

I believe that a modern teaching is usually more effective than a traditional teaching. Ms. A’s English Literature class was based on a modern teaching. Even though she partially had traditional teaching methods such as explaining, but her major technique was modern teaching with activities and audio/video distributions. When she gives a lecture, she only gave what we really need to learn through explanations then gave us lots of kinesthetic activities such as play in roles. She had prepared many types of plays and stories so that we can focus on the subject matters, also satisfied different types of learners with different types of class materials. Her efforts made the class more student centered environment and STT than teacher centered or TTT. When I stood in front of the entire of class and did drama play acts from William Shake Sphere, I felt uncomfortable at first but as I learned more techniques, presentation and giving speech became increasingly interesting. The modern teaching made me to interact with other classmates and I had more confidence by the end of the semester and helped me to adjust at college..

Albert Einstein said, "*It is the supreme art of the*teacher*to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.*" It is tough and not easy to learn new things include languages. Like many other people, I often had a fear about learning and studying new or difficult things if I get limited information about it. But with an involver type teacher who encouraged me enthusiastically with Carl Roger’s EAR characteristics in modern class, I got to succeed in language learning experience and even got to change some of my weakness. I believe that Ms. A might be a teacher who Albert Einstein mentioned. For that reason, I have had a successful learning experience and I also want to be an involver type teacher with EAR characteristics. In addition, I don’t want to fear or hesitate learn in students, but influence and impact students enriching their lives in good ways.