99th WD T SEUNG-A CHO ( Maurin) - ESSAY 1

7 years ago today, I went to London to study both English and Master courses in Musical Theatre. Before taking the M.A courses, I was required to take a language course for six months to improve my English. I immediately took a level test and I was placed in an intermediate English conversation class.

The class was very fun. I not only enjoyed the class, but I also made a lot of friends who came from different countries. No matter what race we were, English was the means of communication as we tried to interact with each other although we were not fluent in English. Our teacher, Ray, was by far the best English teacher that I have ever met before. He was not a typical traditional teacher as he encouraged students to participate and talk more. Especially, he let students know what rapport is and how much it is important for both students and teacher. I could categorize him as a combination of an involver and enabler.

Three months later, I was informed that I would have to pass the IELTS test in order to take the M.A. courses in Brighten. As taking IELTS became a necessity, I decided to take the IELTS preparatory course. IELTS, the International English Language Testing System, is similar to TOEIC and TOEFL, and it is a multi-level exam. As Universities often demand an IELTS score over 6 (competent user), I had to study really hard to get it. IELTS class began with so many difficult frames and I found myself in a very tough situation. My teacher’s name was Roxane and she was very well known as a strict and stubborn teacher. She was one of those typical traditional teachers, and I categorize her as an explainer, as she seemed to have little knowledge of teaching methodology despite the fact that she knew the subject matter well. Furthermore, she spent too much time writing on the blackboard. It reminds me of “Jug and Mug” theory. She poured out everything she knew and, student had to take it exact way that she gave us. Purpose of learning IELTS was only to 'get high band point' and, I simply followed Roxane's tight plan. As she planned, I received the band score of 6.5, and I could get into the M.A courses in Goldsmiths University.

As soon as I got to the University, it seemed that the real obstacle was still ahead. Band 6.5 was not my English level. It was merely an indication of hard training. My English was insufficient to understand any of M.A classes. Whenever I came into the class, I felt always frustrated and nervous. I could not even speak any words. There were a lot of native speakers in my class, and they didn't understand why I wasn’t talking much at that time. I felt like I didn’t belong there. Nevertheless, I struggled in every subject that I studied. Then, I started to skip my classes and almost gave up on the M.A courses. As the most important thing in M.A course was writing a Master's thesis of 15000 words, I miserably failed the Master's thesis in the end.

I always wonder what if I met a different kind of teacher, who was not an explainer but who was really helpful, and guided me well when it mattered the most. Possibly I could be in a totally different situation. Who knows? Anyway, I do not want to be a teacher like Roxane for my future students.