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The Best Teacher I Want To Be

Ronnie Whitman, one of the best teachers in my life, was a director of the interior design department at the Art Institute of California that I graduated from in Santa Ana, USA. I met her first in the class called “Beginning of AutoCAD”. This class took only a semester, but I spent a lot of time with her because she was also my academic director. I was scared to go out even for groceries, and the electric dictionary was my best friend before I met Ronnie. I could feel she tried so hard to make me comfortable all the time. Her high expectations explained with passion made my bachelor’s degree a great success.

Everyone loved Ronnie. She always started the class with a big smile; she made us comfortable by having any free conversation at the beginning of classes. She had abilities to read people’s minds, and she always had solutions somehow. We all could see she had a lot of experience. I was very nervous being the only foreign student in the class. I had a hard time even looking at people. My hands were wet and trembling. Ronnie introduced me friendly to the class, and she asked them to help me. She also gave me several chances to present my work to the class. With that, in my career as a designer, I was ready to have presentations with my work and the customers felt easy to contact me even though my English skill was not perfect. The private parties with her family or friends were amazing, and I had more chances to talk with people in English to develop listening and speaking skills. Even though it was not her job to check on my condition to see that I was on right track in the academic system, she made me ready for each step during my college life in 4 years. She achieved the meaning of the affective filter hypothesis wonderfully.

Since the class was about learning computer programs, such as making a floor plan, elevations and more for design, it was easy for me to understand how to use visual materials, instead of, a textbook or lecture in a traditional classroom. We also had interpersonal work when each student designed partially each different area of one big space under a concept to make a beautiful loft. Then, we naturally could see not only the creative design elements, but the problems from others also to discuss solutions together. Ronnie was a great enabler instructor because she made the class figure out what the designer had to do and deal with all different kinds of situations. She might have known about effective teaching techniques because she applied several different techniques well such as audio-visual, experiential learning and discussion groups. This made the class easier to understand, and it improved our retention rates.

Helping Ronnie as a tutor was another good experience. She asked me to help the classmates by teaching them the AutoCAD program individually as needed because I completed work faster than others in the class with my previous background from an art high school. This developed both my speaking skills and my relationships with friends. It was fun and productive. Ronnie gave me motivation, self-confidence, and self-esteem, which were very important elements to be a great designer.

Ronnie, artistic director and instructor, was enthusiastic; she tried to communicate and establish good relationship with students all the time. She really listened to us to empathize with our problems. She was also a good bridge as a director between students and other teachers to make classes successful. The way she taught in the class with visual and interpersonal materials was a good start for me to take classes in English. She was very thoughtful in the way she made a low-anxiety learning environment easy to understand; she never hesitated to spend time for me to explain more after the class. She was very patient and respectful. Ronnie was an enabler teacher not only for my class but also my life. People say I have changed a lot in good ways. I am not afraid to say a word anymore. I rather ask people first if I do not know something instead of using a dictionary or website to research. I always do my best as much as I can with confidence that I developed through time with Ronnie. If I had not met her, I cannot imagine how I would be now. I definitely want to be a respectful teacher like Ronnie, and I will do my best to make my students feel the same way as I do.