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A Teacher to Remember

It was summer 2004 when I met Mr. Derek in international school in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. He was my first English and also a fourth grade homeroom teacher. The first day of school was a nightmare because I had no knowledge of English. Even spelling out my own name was a struggle, and it made me become an introverted person. Mr. Derek was my savior and he was always there for me when I was in a difficult situation. With his support and his teaching style, I learned English in a short time. By the end of my fourth grade, I was confident and fluent.

Mr. Derek’s class was always enjoyable but also challenging. We had to create our own ideas and finish the tasks with our abilities. It was obvious that he was an enabler. A task that helped improve my English was creating story books. Creating stories and making them into fiction books were challenging. Mr. Derek’s only job was to check our drafts and point out grammatical mistakes. Moreover, correcting the mistakes was our job. Making a cover page, drawing, coloring and even presenting in front of the class were the tasks we had to accomplish. At first, everyone seemed lost and they hoped some help from the teacher. However the little amount of guiding and advice surprisingly helped me and others to have better English skills and responsibilities.

Students in our class were satisfied with Mr. Derek’s teaching styles, and most of us had fun in his class. Throughout my observation, he was an effective teacher because he knew how to interact and communicate with students. He preferred modern teaching more than traditional which created an unconstrained and comfortable atmosphere in the class. Generally, a variety of activities and group studies were mainly carried out in a student centered way. Mr. Derek had us divided into groups and work collaboratively using interpersonal intelligences. His goal was to make us think and understand the topic by having discussions in groups and playing group activities. At first, some of us had difficulties in participation and discussions, but Mr. Derek supported us to overcome our problems.

One of his strength was that he seemed to understand the student levels and knew how to make the classwork effective. There was a wide range of student levels and he was well aware of his planned lessons may not be suitable for all students. Since there were different levels of students, some of us experienced the classwork easy and others had difficulties. However, Mr. Derek continuously noticed and gave us feedback so that we could correct our errors. Each of us received advice from him and it enabled us to understand and follow the classwork without hardship.

Mr. Derek made my first year in international school entertaining and comfortable than I had expected. He was an excellent teacher who brought the liveliness into the classroom and believed in his students. His enabler, modern and effective teaching styles made us possible to have our own voice with confidence. He was competent teacher who knew how to elicit answers from students without giving information directly. Moreover, leading us to have our opinion and achieve learning by ourselves advanced us in a lot of ways. He is my role model and he showed good methods of teaching students effectively.