Ji Hye Kim

September 12, 2015

First Experience with a Great Teacher

First impression of a teacher is crucial and lasting. When you get to learn a new subject, it affects you and your grades in the way that you would have or lose interest in the subject. In my case regarding learning English, I was lucky to have a right person since I had a great first impression and experience in English with my teacher, Pil Eun Yum. I started learning English for the first time when I was in the 7th grade in Korea. Ms. Yum was an English teacher having a very peculiar appearance. Students used to call her a “witch” for her appearance and sharp, distinctive voice. However, she was very giving and supportive. Thanks to her, I could start learning English with interest. Therefore, I found her a successful, influential teacher boosting student participation, applying various methods, encouraging and understanding students.

Ms. Yum was an involver in her teaching style. Activities conducted in her class were effective enough to intrigue and boost our will and interest in English. For instance, as a warm-up, she had given us a quick listening test every single day before class based on what we covered last time. She had made students, who were above average, volunteer as graders for daily tests. I was one of them, and this experience made me feel confident in English. She induced us to speak out in English as much as possible. In addition, making us approach English in a fun and easy way, she introduced us pop songs and movies. Above all, I, usually a passive learner, was able to actively involve in her class.

Ms. Yum was student-centered and refused to teach students with traditional teaching methods. She did not just end up in reading and translating the text as most teachers did. Instead, she had made us apply important grammar or vocabulary by giving assignments. Even if the assignments were sometimes painstaking, there seemed to be no one who failed to follow the class. Her class was always noisy filled with questions and conversation between her and students. She had readily given us opportunity to speak. Therefore, the student participation was very high since I had hardly seen anyone dozing off during her class.

Ms. Yum would know how to increase retention rates. She had given us reviews on what we learned in the previous lesson every day. And she implemented mentoring system as well. It helped low level student catch up what they have missed, and this, in turn, allowed upper level students to strengthen their English ability by teaching the others. In addition, she had given extra credit to those who memorize assigned page and present it in front of the class. Come to think of it, she had made the best use of her teaching techniques in order to enhance our retention rate. For instance, I still remember the Christmas carols we learned and sang altogether during the class before Christmas.

Throughout my education, I have barely met teachers who are enthusiastic about teaching. One image I still remember about her is that she is teaching with her peculiar voice with her stick holding in her hand exactly like a witch. However, she is remembered smiling all the time. Later, I heard she had contracted an incurable disease for a long period of time. Whether her passion for us was an expression of desperation for life, thanks to her, I can definitely tell that I am still fond of English. If I take opportunity for teaching English in the future, I will certainly utilize the methods in the way Ms. Yum had shown us with smile.