Tuning the English Class

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Since it’s my first try to use English only in the class for TESOL, I watched a movie about studying English as a second language to refer more information. The name of the movie is “English Vinglish”(E.V.), which is made in India. The film is about a woman, Shashi Godbole, who suffered from a lack of self-esteem to speak English. She registered for an English-speaking course and got over her troubles. She couldn’t speak English at all but finally she made it by herself. She looked just like me. We both made decisions but didn’t know what to do and had fears and anxieties, and even felt like couldn’t do anything on our own. We both couldn’t say clearly what we wanted to talk about. However, we started to study English following the similar rules. Her English class is a little bit different from mine, but we are both making efforts to study English efficiently.

There are two policies to study English more effective. The first one is English Only Policy (E.O.P.). The students in “E.V.” also spoke English only. They came from various countries so English is an important common language to improve their speaking and communication skills. It’s also a good method to use English for developing relationship between them. I also decided to use English only in TESOL course. We decided to speak English only and promised in an activity to do it. So now I am sure that I’m making much more sentences and using much more vocabularies than at the beginning. This is the effect of E.O.P. and why English classes emphasize to use English only. However, I even start questioning the relevance for it.

The second one is Attendance Policy (A.P). A.P. was not that strict in “EV”. Students can regulate it by themselves, and it didn’t effect on courses. It was just described that Shashi really wanted to improve her English so she attended the class everyday and worked hard for it without the pressure from outside. But A.P. is one of the important policies in TESOL course to pass it and students can be disqualified if they have been absented over 15% of total attendance rate.

I could arrange my thoughts more clearly by comparing the movie and my case. It was more effective to use E.O.P. when teaching fewer students, because it was easier to concentrate on class and gave students feedback faster. When the students’ levels are similar, it is easier to give them instructions. Even though the students came from different countries and the background was New York, where can use English even after class, it achieved magnificent results. However, many students in one class like my case, there are some misunderstandings between a teacher and students since many students have wide range of background knowledge. So to clarify the meanings and instructions which are misunderstood and missed parts, it’s needed to use first language. Especially, regarding TESOL has specialized course which is learned under obvious instructions in limited time, using first language is helpful and beneficial to catch up the course with other students well. But even though students can get helps by using first language, they also can fail to pass the course without constant attending. That’s why A.P is necessary to be strict. It’ll be disadvantageous to themselves and other students for throughout the whole courses if they miss a class. Absence makes additional class to follow missing parts and is needed sacrifices of a teacher or other students have to help. Nevertheless, the exceptions are regulated and prepared to allow partially. For example, recording the proceeded class can be showed as a useful visual material and guaranteeing to cross the other course when something unexpected and unavoidable is happened. Since it’s just a rule to impose a penalty, it looks like that there is no effort to enhance the classes and the courses. The Passion of Shashi(E.V.) to attend the class was not only she was goal-oriented but the warm atmosphere of the class. Students are learning and studying by interacting among other students and a teacher and this relationship will inspire them to attract voluntary participation and use English only.

There is a TV drama about an orchestra in a university, The Nodame Cantabile, from Japan. I was impressed with how the conductor managed his orchestra to make best performance. He didn’t allow any exception and behaved very strict and tough towards his players. It made players to practice hard to play perfect as he wants, but no one looked at the conductor to play at sight faultlessly and he couldn’t control his orchestra anymore because they didn’t look at him. He realized that he need to change his attitude then tried to socialize with them to understand who they are, what they want, what the problems of them are. Finally, he connected with players and performed a wonderful concert. I think English class is also can be developed by remedying and being flexible with proper condition. Strict policies like E.O.P and A.P. will be reinforced with self-motivation and faith in the class. I totally agree with what Shashi’s saying, ‘Nobody can’t help you better than you’, and the most optimal environment for English class will be formed with outside condition, policies and inside condition, hunger of students for it from inside.