**My Dream as a Teacher of English Learners**

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After I read a “Teacher’s story” in the TESOL class, I was reminded of my teachers and students in the past. Who was a good teacher for me? Was I really a good teacher to my students?

When I was young, I had a dream of being a teacher just like other children. But after I grew up, I was afraid because what if I give my students the bad impact. For this reason I gave up being a teacher and I didn’t think about a role of a teacher deeply.

Several years ago, I did a voluntary work as a teacher of fine arts and music in Uganda. I thought myself as a volunteer not a teacher at first. Because I just arrived there and I was a foreigner, I was not fluent in local language so that the classes were taught in English. Also, the headmaster and the head teacher wanted to improve the student’s English.

But the school was located in the remote place from the capital and then most students were really poor at English compared with the students in the city.

For teaching in the class, I needed to learn their local language, and some local friends and the students helped me. As I learnt and practiced the local language from the students, I could spend much time with my students and became friendly with them. It would help that students understand the lessons and kept up with the work in class at the same time.

After six months I had the class, I had a time to talk with headmaster and head teacher. I thought I just became intimate with my students, but the head teacher said “When the students went back home, they did much housework and farming. It was really hard to do for the little students but they should do for their family every day. However after you came to the school, the children’s face brightened and they tried to study and speak in English to talk with you. Also you gave them the new experience, it is easier for them to change to accept other cultures.”

When I got this feedback, I was in surprised and ashamed of myself. I didn’t really look into the role of a teacher for the students that much before I went there. By then, I worried if I did behave properly as a teacher or I might do the wrong thing. I had so much more responsibility as a teacher than before.

There was a shy boy named Kasaga in the first grade. I would watch him for weeks and then he was an introvert and very quiet in class. And furthermore, he didn’t associate with other friends well during breaks or after school.

He caught my eye while I was teaching a class, and thus I called his name and gave an opportunity to have a presentation intentionally during the class. I tried to make him involved a collaborative work with other friends and actively participated in the class. He hesitated and embarrassed to come to the front of the classroom when he was named at first. But he became active and got along well with other friends by the end of a semester.

During the vacation, I met some students including Kasaga in the school. They spent their time off working during farming season. It was time to go home after we had a few hours and I tried to pay a visit to my student’s home. The place where the students live was a small village 40 minutes away from the school on the main street by walk. No one thought there was a village if he/she may not be a local. I met their parents and talked to them about what their children did in the school. Especially Kasaga’s parents welcomed me a lot. Kasaga had a big family and he was the fourth son out of seven siblings. Because he was the middle, he had been such an acquiescent and obedient boy. His parents had also worried about his personality but they felt relieved after Kasaga changed actively. In this talk, it was time to reflect what kind of teacher I should be. Teachers do not just provide their knowledge but try to motivate their students.

I would like to teach English in non-native English-speaking countries not in Korea in the future. I should be a teacher who can understand their culture and language for non-native speakers of English. Thereby my teaching method or opinion can be conveyed to them.

I was educated in Korea so I am used to a teacher-centered class. And this is the first thing I have to let go to teach other people. As I have learned in this TESOL class, the way of teaching must be shifted from teacher-centered to student-centered. And then, I should focus on the communication through activities rather than the simple lecture method instructions. The non-native English-speakers can have an opportunity to embrace a new culture by meeting their foreign teacher from a different culture. It helps to improve flexibility to accept the different cultures.

I keep in mind that I am not a perfect person. I can learn from anyone including my students. My teaching method could not be a perfect match to my students even if I try to do. Especially in Kasaga's case, my way to cheer him up could be a bad influence if he is so much timid and passive. One of the most important things in teaching is not a theory or skill but an experience in the field. I’m always ready to learn and make a wrong right if there is.

No matter how I have a good intention, it is not guaranteed to bring the good results all the time. We can give and take the great impact or bad impact to one another. While I teach for English learners, I hope both me and my students grow up to be each other’s greatest companions in the future.