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“Taking a second look at me”

TESOL

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Owning my business was difficult for myself and I did not dare to open one because I did not have any relevant experience in any areas. However, my former company’s economic downturn caused by the global recession forced me into a corner with no other choices last year. Turning crisis into an opportunity, as a Chinese proverb, I have owned my business for one year now based on my work experience as an English instructor at an English academy in South Korea. I am now a certified academy instructor in English running a small group study with Korean elementary and middle school students. This is the main reason that I want to learn more about English teaching to meet professional qualifications.

In a position of teaching, I realized that teaching and learning is a totally different. Through my school years, I did not have that much trouble on my homework, quizzes and tests through my school years whereas I extremely had hard time to explain sentence structures or even simple grammars to the students by using English expressions. With the fact that I have an acceptable TOEIC score and an English literature degree, I came up to the point that something has went wrong with my English ability. Furthermore, I have become aware of my former English teachers’ drawbacks. On the next paragraph, let me explain why I think certain parts of the Second Language Acquisition have been failed. When I was in middle school, I first met my English teacher who was an ordinary Korean man in his 40’s using a traditional method: GTM (Grammar Translation Method). As far as I can remember, the teacher always explained the grammar and pronunciation rules to the students using Konglish (broken English used by Koreans). We couldn’t even dare to ask him any questions because of his hot temper. Then I entered high school and I met another English teacher who was a specialized teacher for a university entrance. Unfortunately, there was no such time given for any questions to ask what we didn’t know due to preparation for the college entrance exam. Come to think of it, she also taught us by one-way teaching without any speaking or writing skills. She used to use the traditional method same as my middle school teacher as well. The last school I enrolled was the university where I had to prepare for the test such as TOEIC or TOEFL in order to receive my diploma of gradation. As you can see, I seldom got to be educated to practice English. I had a feeling that there were too many students but a few teachers there at that time. I hardly remember what I learned during my school days.

As time goes by, I had an opportunity to study abroad in New Zealand with my family. I am about to introduce ideal teachers who I met there.Most of schools there had modern classrooms having many different kinds of activities such as the crosswords to teach the students vocabularies in an easier way with fun. The best part among them was a cooking class. I learned a lot of terminology in terms of ingredients. Moreover, the teachers used the four basic language skills following their syllabus and then they explained to each student one by one making eye contact gently. Two years later, I came back to South Korea and I entered a company again with these good memories getting faded. After a few years, I quit my job as a salaried worker due the recession which I explained early in the beginning. I am now teaching, more likely tutoring, mostly elementary and a few middle school students as reminding and thinking about what I learned. I sometimes ask to myself, “Can I be a good teacher without getting panicky?” I always get butterflies in my head (instead of stomach) when I stand in front of adult people. But I know for sure that I have to overcome my weakness for myself.

Nowadays, as the number of elementary school students have been shrinking here in South Korea, it is easier to apply modern teaching by using productive skills such as speaking and writing. Besides many learners are getting smarter than the ones in the past. Therefore, I believe that being a good teacher means he or she should observe students carefully and elicit something good from them. By overcoming my weakness and continuing to learn constantly to improve myself, I will always do my best to be a good teacher to my students for their bright future with no regrets!