My Dream as a Teacher of English Learners

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“Gowoon Teacher, you inspire me a lot. You have not only taught me how to USE English as a language, but INSPIRED me to be a better person.”

This is a hypothetical saying which I would like to hear from one of my students in the future.

I think many people who take a TESOL course consider it as a certificate for facilitating job searching. However, TESOL is not merely a certificate to me for I am already in the field of teaching. Instead, it is an opportunity for self-improvement and a channel to introduce myself to a new teaching style. What I would like to learn from this course are some basics; how to teach effectively, how to teach English in English, how to get students motivated.

Although I am doing quite well as an English teacher, I didn’t major in Linguistics or education in college. So at one point, I became really curious if I was teaching correctly and needed a second opinion, the third person’s view. Moreover, during my 4-year-experience of teaching, I focused on test-taking skills and how to write down a sentence using Grammar and Vocabulary. How do I have students learn English effectively and how do I improve all of their four language skills evenly?

I hope to get this question answered through this TESOL course.

In order to fully understand and learn a language, one is recommended to know the cultures of the countries using the targeted language. From my personal experience, people with international manners communicate much better than those who do not have. From the same standpoint, if I, as a teacher, know the culture and how English speakers teach language and apply it to my class, I will be more successful at teaching. I strongly believe this TESOL course will provide me with effective teaching skills and help me find some traits of mine to be improved.

While teaching middle school kids, I once felt that my presence as a teacher had a huge impact on their lives. Since they were teenagers developing their own values and beliefs, I saw so many students adopting the mindsets of mine and mimicking my behavior, sometimes the way I speak too.

I have also seen students who especially have strong attachment for me improve English a lot more than others. Seeing that, I felt so much pressure and responsibility and realized that I need more than mere knowledge and teaching skills to be a good teacher.

Because I was literally influencing their lives!

I also noticed that the closest adults in students’ lives were parents and teachers. But adolescents do not want to talk to their parents. Teachers, on the other hand, are more convenient for them to converse with and that makes a great condition to influence them.

I thought about some important traits teachers should have. Attraction has the greatest importance among them. What I mean by attraction doesn’t necessarily have to be appearance. It is the power to influence people and motivate to achieve a goal. It can be attitude, personality, facial expression, the way they speak and so on. Teachers are role models to students, which makes it more important for teacher to be good examples.

The second most important trait as a teacher to have is trust. Trust is a powerful tool to empower people and raise their self-confidence. Confident people are more prone to take risks, more likely to make a concerted effort to achieve their goals. So, I think teachers should trust their students and believe in their potential faculties. Almost every famous story about teacher and student relationship I read has trust in it. Either one trusts the other one and the other one shows trust and this cycle repeats as a virtuous circle. They finally become better people because of what they have done.

These two elements are the traits that I want to have as a teacher. Of course, I am not saying teaching skills and knowledge are not important. I just don’t want to place an emphasis on them because a teacher should be able to teach. It is a prerequisite for an educator. But those two, attraction and trust, are not something that can be learned. In order to have those traits, one should actually feel the importance of them and put them deep into their heart.

I will definitely continue my career as an English teacher but I want to have more experience. In several months, I am planning to teach English to adults and hopefully help them achieve their goals such as promotion, getting a job, graduation, and so on. It may be a very practical English lesson such as TOEIC, TOEFL and I may need to continue teaching English in a Korean way. Perhaps I won’t be able to use what I learn in TESOL class. But I do not want to limit myself and I do have a long term view.

I want to be an educator not an instructor. For me, the word instructor seems more like a knowledge giver rather than a teacher. Educators care about their students and help pave their way to success. I do want to influence students and help them be successful. I also want to improve Korean education system to be much more effective and fun in the future. There are so many people in Korea who are stressed out because of not being successful in the other people’s eyes. But getting a high score does not mean that you are a successful person. Success is a relative term to define and thus, it differs from person to person. I do not want to see people in Korea stressed out, fitting themselves to the standardized form of success.

I want to let people know the real value of acquiring a language and actually feel that language is a means to communication. I hope to become a teacher who can inspire and motivate people to live a better life. I will keep challenging myself to achieve my dream as an inspiring English teacher.