What is a goal of teaching?

Jenna (Jieun Choi)

Clay P. Bedford, a top executive of Kaiser Industries in California said “You can teach a student a lesson for a day but if you can teach him to learn by creating curiosity, he will continue the learning process as long as he lives.” As the quotation suggests, a teacher has a great effect on students even for their entire life. Looking back to my school days, I still remember some teachers who affect my learning style and want to share my story about them.

When I was a teenager, most of the classes I took were traditional classes. There were over 30 classmates in the class which was conducted in a teacher-centered environment. Mr. Seo was one of the teachers who taught in a traditional way. He taught social studies when I went to Chang-hyun high school and was notorious for being strict with students. When it comes to his way of teaching, it was somewhat efficient though to learn the subject since he was good at classifying and defining terminology as an explainer. However, the atmosphere in the classroom was not positive since he was always standing with a stiff expression on his face and didn’t accept any small noise. What I think he missed at that time was that he couldn’t create a good rapport with students, which prevented students from freely asking questions in the class.

After entering the university, I found that classes have gradually changed in a modern way. Though a size of a class was still large, a lot of professors started to use various materials such as the Internet, videos, etc and gave students more chances to talk in the classroom. Out of many professors that I met at Dong-guk university, Mrs. Choi was the best teacher I can think of. In her English translation class, I could feel involved more than any other classes. She always gave students group works and got them to give a lecture for some chapters in the class so that they could accustom themselves to autonomous learning. Now, her way of teaching became a goal of my teaching.

What I liked most about her besides the teaching skills is her personality. I could sense her genuine and sincere response to her students and she always tried to listen to each student in the class. In that sense, I think she best accords with the three core teacher characteristics which are respect, empathy and authenticity suggested by Carl Rogers, the American psychologist.

While writing this essay, I realized how significant effect a teacher has on a student. As mentioned in the first paragraph, and in light of my learning experience, the ultimate goal of teaching is to teach students how to learn by themselves. Once students can be an autonomous learner, they can learn for their entire lives in any field. In order to realize it in my future class, I hope I could learn about teaching as much as possible through this Tesol program.