

# NEVER TOO LATE TO LEARN

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There are a lot of things I want to do or at least try out, one of them being teaching. Aspiring teachers normally start out with tutoring the younger ones at their homes, then maybe teaching them in a group and eventually joining a coaching centre or school. So, when I got an opportunity to outright teach a class of individuals older than me, some even decades older, it was quite intimidating. However, this experience has definitely made me a better person in an unusual way.

Some info before I start: I teach IELTS and Spoken English. I had no prior teaching experience, not even one-on-one. Although this might seem like a recipe for disaster, it turned out just fine.

When it was my first day I was so anxious, I knew I had to fake confidence. I went into the classroom and started the introduction phase and it went well. I envisioned them to be just like all the other elders I came in contact with before – the grumpy uncles who live in my apartment complex and talk about politics all the time. My teenage mind basically took over my logical side. Once I started the lesson, however, I found out how wrong I was.

What I thought would be a boring class was far from it. They were interested in learning the content, they intently discussed and participated, and also talked about their struggles with the English language. One guy even said that studying in BUET was not as hard as learning English was for him. A stereotype I held was that elders are really concerned about their “prestige” or reputation. To see them open up like that was actually shocking. Maybe it was the bubble we were in; it's a closed classroom with students in similar circumstances and they felt safe there. Whatever the reason was, it made me relate to them and I felt somewhat closer. Young adults often forget that elders are people who have needs and struggles as well; I bet my

grandmother would love to travel to different places, it's just that her physical limitations won't let her.

As I progressed with the classes, the differences between the young and the old started to fade. They wouldn't do their homework, came late, and even requested that I finish the class early. Although, the excuses they gave were more serious like coming straight from work and having no time for homework between office and family obligations. But they gave excuses, and that's the beauty of it. A poetic

advise to at least try to talk to them once before going into hiding. During classes, I got to know so much from them. They've experienced so much more. They told me a lot about how the corporate world works, how management changes frustrate them, the struggle to get government jobs and unemployment in general. It painted a picture which was so different from the young, overzealous entrepreneur bubble we keep hearing about, a picture most of us ignore. I didn't agree with everything they said and that's fine, part of being an adult is to benefit



notion that people of my age group have been introduced to is that if we were given the chance to be kids forever, we would take it without hesitation. We want to be immature and joke around but the adult world doesn't like that. It tells us that to be a real adult we have to act a certain way, so that everyone respects us. Plus, the burden of responsibilities crushes the child inside of us.

One popular teenage ritual is to hide in the bedroom when older guests visit. I would

from the good and discard the bad.

My class comprises of university students and graduates, corporate workers, businessmen and individuals in specialised professions. All of them have a desire to study or emigrate abroad. I have immense respect for them. A lot of us will probably settle into a mediocre but safe life, yet these people are trying their best to make everything better. I wish them the best and I genuinely hope I can help them in this journey.

