Jangwon Lee (Lee)

Instructor Allen

79th WD TS Essay #1

**Experience of Learning English**

These days, most of people spend a lot of time on studying English, because it is the most useful language in the world. Also, English ability is an important part of a tight job market. Many people try to improve their English skills and get a high score for the English test such as TOEIC, TOEFL, and so on. Nowadays English holds such an important place in our life.

 I have spent approximately twenty years learning English as a second language. I think that I study English very hard until now. Nevertheless, I still feel uncomfortable to listen, read, speak, and write English. I may well think so, because it is a second language for me. I consider why I feel inconvenience to use English even though studying it many years. I try to find reasons, and I get an answer for this problem finally. The problem is an English learning or teaching method, I guess. I divide learning English into three different periods which are elementary school, middle and high school, and after graduating high school.

 The first English class in my life was deeply impressive and remained in my memory. I took up English when I was an elementary school student. I learned the English alphabet, easy words, and easy expressions. All students played many kinds of learning activities such as playing various games, singing a song, and so on. They thought that it was not study and it was not a boring class. Everybody enjoyed learning English at that time. The teacher was an involver in my experience. Her lessons were enjoyable and class atmosphere was bright. She had a good rapport with her students. She used effective teaching methods for children. For example, the audio-visual technique, which is showing picture or singing alphabet song, helps to study English effectively.

 Secondly, I thought that the ineffective English class was begun at the middle school. The teacher was an old-fashioned. He was very strict. The atmosphere of the classroom was heavy. He focused on grammar, reading, and interpretation. He always taught grammar and forced me to memorize English words. His teaching technique was only lecture. His teaching type was an exactly explainer. Nobody asked any questions and did not discuss with lecture. There was not any feedback because of none of questions. He just explained a textbook to students. I understood that those things were very helpful for getting a high score on the Korean scholastic aptitude test, but they were not a practical speaking and reading knowledge of English.

 At the high school English course was almost same as the middle school. The high school English teacher was also an explainer type. I didn’t speak English at all. I studied the grammar and he only asked about grammar rules and vocabulary. The only exception was listening practice. It was little helpful to improve listening ability. I learned the grammar rules in more detail and how to read as fast as possible. It was a long way from understanding English. Better or not I should study English on this wise. I thought that it was the best way to study English at that point.

 Last period in my experience of learning English was last five years in my life. I went to the United States of America to study after military service in Korea. When I went to the language school, I was shocked by the atmosphere of classroom. Teachers and students talked each other naturally and discussed with lecture in the classroom. Teachers attracted voluntary participation from students. Their teaching techniques were various and interesting. They used audio-visual, live demonstration, discussion groups, experimental learning technique, and so on. I thought that they were enablers. They became a guide or a counselor not just a teacher. I didn’t study English under compulsion, and learning was more effectively.

 In conclusion, I learn a lot of excellent teaching skills and methods in my foreign student’s life. I can figure out different types of teacher because of my experience. A traditional type teacher will not become a great teacher. The cramming method of teaching is ineffective and old-fashioned. The good teacher gives learning motivation to students and leads to participate by themselves. I try to become an enabler. I will understand student’s characteristics, level, and language system. And then, I will find the best way to teach them, and will become a friendly teacher and teaching professional.