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| Essay “My experience of learning English”

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| **Class** | **:**  | **87th Weekday TESOL** |
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**Introduction**

In Korea, English ability is essential these days. So many people are trying to study English constantly. But most of them are still afraid of talking to foreigners. Why is it so difficult to communicate in English even when we have been learning English since elementary school? I'm not an exception. I have studied English as a second language for 15 years. I learned English in various ways; at school, through 'Teacher Yoon's English' program, at academy, etc. However, it was not easy for me to use English before I really tried to enhance my speaking ability after I grew up. I'm sure that there are some problems in the methods I learned English. In the meantime, I concentrated on learning grammar, memorizing vocabulary and translating sentences into Korean to pass the exams. Then how can I improve the English teaching method to make the students communicate easily? I will describe my opinions in various aspects based on some theories from now on.

**Language skills & systems**

There are five elements of language systems; phonology, lexis, grammar, function and discourse. I usually learned phonology by listening cassette tapes offered from 'Teacher Yoon's English' program. I could listen to accurate pronunciation and repeat after that. I also studied lexis through the dictionaries and text books. I researched the words if I found new words. When I became a high school student, I concentrated to studying grammar to get good grades on the test. I didn't have enough opportunities to interact with other people in English in my school days. And most of English classes in Korea focus on receptive skills, because a lot of tests consist of listening and reading problems. It was not until I became an adult, I tried to enhance my communicative abilities. I think it is too late. So If I become a teacher, I will give students enough chances to communicate in English based on the 'Acquisition Hypotheses' by Krashen. I need to plan their class that can develop not only receptive skills but also productive skills.

**Teacher types**

 Three teacher types are explainer, involver and enabler. My English teacher in high school was an explainer. He always explained about words or grammar by himself using GTM. He wrote important words and grammar on the blackboard and students just took notes. Students were very passive and inactive. Of course the teacher sometimes needs to explain in detail about the subject. However I think, we also should be able to become an involver or an enabler according to circumstances. Because the involver or the enabler can be more appropriate in some classes. I had taught elementary school students last year. I realized that I need to decide the teacher types case by case. For example, when I taught about 'contour lines', I became the explainer and explained precisely. And when I taught about 'fraction', I became the involver and offered activities. On the other hand, when I taught 'drawing trees', I became the enabler and made the students observe the trees freely. In conclusion, I'm going to choose proper teacher type considering the topic for the effective teaching.

**Effective teaching**

There are many characteristics that make an effective teacher; respect, honesty, passion, leadership, goal-oriented, good listener, knowledge, empathy, authenticity, etc. The most effective teacher in my school days was a mathematics teacher who showed respect to students. She listened to students with an open mind and made them comfortable based on 'Affective Filter Hypothesis' by Krashen. So even the students who had difficulties in mathematics could actively participate in the class. Furthermore, I had good rapport with her and confess my worry honestly. If I become an English teacher, she will be influential as a role model. I will try to communicate with my students and listen to their problems passionately. Moreover, I will apply the methods like CLT or TPR in a relaxed atmosphere because I think Krashen's 'Affective Filter Hypothesis' is indispensible to improve communicative abilities.

**Learner Retention**

There are various teaching techniques but retention rates are different. I would like to compare two history teachers. One teacher explained the historical events in chronological order by lecture. And he made us read a text book. I could understand very well immediately, but I forgot most of contents that I learned after the class. In contrast, the other teacher had us make an historical story with friends in groups. So we could solve the problems cooperatively. She also let us experience historical events through role play. Some activities still remain in my mind even now. I was really surprised how well students remembered based on the teaching methods. So when I teach English, I will make an activity for students to have conversation with their friends. They can discuss the subject and make an appropriate communication considering their own experiences. It is the combination of 'cooperative learning' and 'experiential learning'. And I'll encourage students to mentor other students when they do group activities.

**Learning styles**

Students have different learning modes and different strengths. But it is very difficult to consider students' learning styles individually, because there are many students in the class. So I don't have experience taking lesson applied multiple intelligences by Gardner. I just saw the English class about 'Jobs' as teaching demonstration. Students learned about the kinds of 'Jobs' using their developed intelligences. I'm sure that students can be motivated and learn effectively if they use their full potential. In my case, self-discipline is very effective because I'm an intrapersonal learner. I think it is very meaningful to create various activities according to intelligence types.

**Conclusion**

There are many factors to consider being a good teacher. I want to become an English teacher who can help students improve communicative abilities. I want to facilitate them to use English as means of 'communication', not for a test. In addition, I will give enough opportunities to students to participate in the class actively with confidence. If they are passive in the class, they won't learn anything. I will make a constant effort to study approach, design and procedure to be professional and make a good quality class. Also, I will always respect my students and consider students characteristics and needs. Only if I do my best with passion and responsibility, I can make students do their best.