90th WD TESOL

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Essay #1

My Experiences In Learning English

 I started learning English in middle school. I learned English for about ten years

from middle school to university. In ability to communicate in English, I could not say that

it was a success. I memorized words, phrases, even sentences though, I did not know how to

use them. Thus, when I was a student at university, I went to a language institution SDS for months. It was almost 30years ago, so the institution was a little bit different from

the one of nowadays. However, I got a great experience learning English.

 Most students in the English classroom were from college as adult learners. Each adult learner was goal oriented and autonomous. He/she had his/her own purpose for studying English. To get a job related to English, prepare for and study abroad. Every one was an active participant. I also took part in the class to get some more experience in that new language learning environment especially with expressing myself. Teachers gave equal opportunities to talk and showed respect to students. So I felt comfortable in the class even though I made some of syntax errors.

 In middle school and high school in Korea, The English learning environment was a traditional classroom. Teachers talked and students wrote down and memorized. That focused on teacher- centered and receptive skills. Students asked not much questions. Students’ levels were a little different from each other. In the language institution that I took, I could participate in discuss in English with classmates and I could get more chances to present myself with role playing, using materials like audio-visual, pictures. I could speak much more than a traditional classroom. That was surely a modern classroom.

 In a traditional classroom, the English teacher was the explainer. During the class, the teacher transmitted knowledge to pass on information to the students. A lot of students focused on test learning English to get good grades in school. They had to read a lot and memorize them for exam. Explaining might be a better way for both teacher and students. In the institution SDS, I met a teacher as the involver. He divided students into pairs or group and led to participate in discuss and join activities. He made them feel free to speak out and be confident.

 I was thinking that memorizing is a nice way to learn English and most methods of learning language are how to memorize language effectively until I take TESOL. Memorizing basic terms of English is good and need for learners who learn English. However I realize I can experience more effective way to teach English. Teachers should understand who students are and what they try to achieve from learning English. Teachers have to make learning environment that students can realize their achievement and give them helpful feedback to recognize what is going on in their steps of learning English. Teachers should give a lot of chance to express themselves and wait for them to practice English they learned.

 We now focus on communication in English. After I am retired, I was thinking of what to do for the rest of my life. I decided to teach English to students. As I am a learner, I need to read more whatever I like from popular to academic. I need to meet people to use English. As a teacher, I need to create modern classroom environment and balance with receptive and productive skills. I will make an effort to balance all 3 teacher types, explainer, involver, and enabler, to help students achieve their goals.