**SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

**93rd Weekday TESOL**

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Learning other languages is not an easy thing whatever the language is; English, Chinese, Spanish, etc. It is equally applied to both kids and adults. However, the speed of second language acquisition is not same for everyone; kids tend to acquire the second language faster than adults. And even for the same ages, it could be different how they can acquire the second language according to their background like intelligence, experience, etc. So, many various teaching method should be used for learners who want to acquire the second language.

I started English learning as a second language at first in the middle school and regular English class had been finished when I was second grade at university. The English teachers who I had met for 8 years were all Korean born and bred in Korea and their teaching method was exactly same although I’d never got educated by the same teacher through the long period. The main way they used for teaching was just explanation. Even they didn’t test a speaking ability for their students. They were all ‘explainer’ in a traditional teaching class at school. They tried to give their knowledge to their students as much as they could by ‘chalk and talk’. [[1]](#endnote-1)Such traditional teaching style sometimes characterized as ‘jug and mug’, the knowledge being poured from one receptacle into an empty one. It could be efficient for lecturing a large number of people. But the method would make students board and not get enough information as much as their teacher hopes.

My second experience for ESL was done at an institute attached to a university in Australia. I met some kinds of teacher there; some were very helpful for my English improvement and some left a bad impression.

The teacher when I met firstly was an ‘involver’. She provided many various interesting activities in the class such as word game, songs, ice breakers and even we visited a museum, and let her all students join it; even she made shy guys enjoy the activities. Her teaching method was very effective for the class which was organized by ESL beginners. And many teachers who were responsible for basic course prefer to use this method not to make their students get bored while make them be familiar with English.

The teacher who I met in the higher course was a nearly ‘enabler’ rather than ‘involver’. The members of the class were high leveled and they needed more academic studies. The class was done mostly by group working, presentation, free discussion, high-quality essay, etc. Although such working would be tough and sometimes boring, it seemed that most students in the class were satisfied with the teaching method.

All the teachers in the institute tried to provide such modern teaching environment to their ESL learners mixing various teaching methods. However, it would not be considered that those teachers are best for students. The most important things for teaching and learning are respect, empathy and authenticity, I think.

When I was in a basic course at the institute, there was a little girl in the class seemed aged 14~15. She had a lower intelligence rather than others and even was very shy. Sometimes the lesson was drooped due to her late mission performance and it made other students feel bored. Unfortunately, we didn’t have an enough good teacher who could improve the circumstance, but only lazy and rude one. She was not patient with the little girl and got angry whenever the little shy girl made a mistake. She even shouted on her and it made the class atmosphere be in fear.

One other teacher I experienced in the institute gave me another bad memory. One day he recorded our presentation with a video camera and he promised us not open it in any other classes. The next day, however, I had to hear that someone who was belonging to another class was talking about my presentation played on the video camera. What a disappointed teacher he was!

That’s why I think respect, empathy and authenticity are the most important element for a good teacher. [[2]](#endnote-2)When a teacher has these three qualities, the relationships within the classroom are likely to be sure strong and deeper, and communication between people much more open and honest. The educational climate becomes positive, forward-looking and supportive. The learners are able to work with less of fear of taking risks or facing challenges. In doing this, they increase their own self-esteem and self-understanding, gradually taking more and more of the responsibility for their own learning themselves.

1. [[Learning Teaching – The Essential Guide to English Language Teaching]] 3RD Edition by Jim Scrivener, page 15 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. [[Learning Teaching – The Essential Guide to English Language Teaching]] 3RD Edition by Jim Scrivener, page 17 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)