**Educational solution through child-centered class**

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**“You travel faster alone, but farther together.”**

-Michael Benanav, Men of Salt: Crossing the Sahara on the Caravan of White Gold

If somebody asks me what it is like to live as a student in the Republic of Korea, I would say “Never easy” thanks to everyday efforts to be “The Best”; inevitably followed by keen races to beat and defeat one another in various areas of education. Our society, however, tends to attribute its fierce competition to the lack of natural resources and unavoidable need for being better off, not to the entire and essential problems in our educational system, which is both distorted and misunderstood in many ways.

I was kind of a student who tried to pay attention to what teachers communicated during the class. I had no choice but to understand those circumstances since teachers had to deal with more than 40 students in a class as well as focus on the progress not to lag behind the standard set by the educational authority; in most cases, no questions and no interactions were allowed, which caused classrooms deadly quiet - It was no wonder that I met teachers with behaviorist approaches. Until recently, I have thought that teachers should be at the center of class and that repetition would be the most effective way to learn languages.

I have come across a family from the United States these days and found it amazing that their kids could speak Korean even better than their parents. Their kids have been in a Korean day care center for 3 years and the parents also have worked here in Korean IT company for the same period. Setting aside the differences between these two language environments, I wondered how come the kids have learned Korean so much faster than their parents. One day, I went to the day care center to pick up my son and had a chance to take a look at the American kids playing with their Korean teachers and friends. The kids had no fear to make a mistake when they talked to their folks, and the teachers kept playing and talking with the kids patiently and mildly. Today, writing an essay, I realized I had missed some very important thing as looking back the day I went to the day care center; we don’t learn language in order to communicate, but we try to communicate, and in the attempt, we learn language.

When learning language, Eastern people are more likely to highlight on relationship while Western people focus on objects. I guess this will make a critical difference in developing an approach for children in Asia. They might be afraid of making an error because it would bring them stupid or clumsy impression. They would mind asking a question since it might make the other students think that they are showing off. Through having more careful and cautious correction time, they could feel safe even if they already made a mistake. By decreasing teacher’s talking time (TTT) and increasing student’s talking time (STT), we could make it natural to ask a question in class.

To reach the highest point of learning and teaching, we have a lot more work to do. And still, here in Korean society, we concentrate too much on standardization and consequentialism. Of course, it would be easier to take care of only active learners because they had more possibilities to be better off and it looked more cost-effective in war-torn country. However, it is time for us to keep an eye on our educational system again because it has been more than 60 years since the Korean War was over. And we should remind we might leave some essential things behind while keeping running toward rehabilitation. To be more specific, we should recognize that the classroom have been teacher-centered, not child-centered, which caused too much attention on the quickness and effectiveness in our education and society. Now, we have to look around not just active and successful learners but also the other students that we have painfully ignored for last half-century. Let them be active and kinesthetic in class. And let them interact with teachers and let them know that each of them deserves to be recognized as a unique, not the same kind of student. Maybe we can find a solution for this stagnated educational environment since we are now to have power to move farther.