Jiae Lee

November 05, 2015

My Worst Teacher

 I had a Female English teacher whose name is Junghee Lee when I was a middle school student in South Korea. Even though it has been 10 years since I graduated from middle school, I remember not only her name but also her face as clearly as I can find her if I see her even now on the street because she is the worst teacher I have ever met. In my opinion, her class was a big failure because of her teaching style, teaching techniques, and ignorance of retention rates.

 First, Mrs. Lee can be considered as an explainer because she was the only person who could talk in the class. In other words, no one was allowed even to ask one single question while she delivered a lecture. For instance, there was an incident that led me to hate her class. When I asked a question about a certain verb’s conjugation, she answered my question by saying “Just memorize the list I gave you!” After experiencing the incident, I indeed lost all my interest in learning English because memorizing without understanding was difficult for me at that time.

 Second, she used several traditional teaching techniques that actually made me consider her class as unsuccessful. For example, her class was so teacher-centered that she only looked at the blackboard behind her and the textbook in front of her while teaching as if there was no student at all in the class. It means that there seemed to be no relationship between the teacher and the students. In addition, she highly emphasized the necessity of reading and memorizing the textbook. On the other hand, she seemed to ignore the importance of productive skills, which are speaking and writing. It is hard to insist that all the techniques that she used are what teachers should not use in their classes; however, it is true that the techniques did not work well, especially for me since I remember her as the worst teacher and her class as a failure.

 Lastly, her class was a failure since she did not know anything about learner retention rates that shows which technique is more helpful for students to remember what they are taught in class. Although the two least effective ways of teaching in terms of how well students remember what they learn are lecture and reading, Mrs. Kim heavily relied on the two methods. In other words, she was ignorant of learner retention rates. As a result of being taught by the techniques, I felt that I wasted one year for no reason because nothing remained in my head.

 Even though her class can be described as a big failure, it does not necessarily mean that she was such a bad person; however, the teaching style she applied to the class as an explainer and her traditional techniques that forced me to be a passive student were as bad as I could not enjoy the class at all. In addition, the fact that she was not knowledgeable about the retention rates is the biggest reason for the failure since her ignorance of the rates can be interpreted in a way that she was interested in teaching the students comfortably rather than teaching them effectively. In conclusion, I do not want to teach students as the teacher did because her class was unsuccessful. Therefore, what I want to do when I become a teacher is to teach students as an enabler who encourages them to create their own ideas and deliver an effective lecture by using the techniques of teaching/mentoring others and experiential learning, which are the most effective ones for students to remember what they are taught.