**My English Learning Experience**

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**Class: 133th/WD**

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As the trend of globalization grows and many countries use English as an international communication tool, the importance of English has increased significantly for decades. In Korea like other countries, many people are able to use English at works or at private places. Actually, English is one of the most important subjects for students for a long time and most of Korean students start learning English as a second language when they are young enough to understand the concept of language. I, as a typical Korean who go to school to learn many valuable subjects, have learned English since 7h grade. Even though I have learned English for more than 30 years, I still have difficulty in using it fluently and accurately when I use it to native English-speakers. Maybe because I have learned English ineffective way or I have been taught by ineffective teachers, or I haven’t understood the language systems/skills fully. It is not easy to find a clear reason for my unsuccessful English learning experience, however, it is a good time to recall my memory of previous English learning experience and analyze it in order to obtain some ideas to improve my future language learning process.

During my middle and high school periods, my English teachers have often used comprehension checking question (CCQ) and the grammar translation method (GTM) focused on reading, grammar, lexis, frequent testing, and constantly being asked “Do you understand”. This teaching method has been used at most of schools of my generation in Korea. This teaching approach is called traditional teaching method like teachers acting as an explainer. In the class, teachers spent most of time in talking and writing something on chalkboard (chalk & talk) while they tried to transfer their knowledge to students’ empty brain (jug & mug). Students barely had a chance to speak or present any opinions on subjects. TTT (teacher talking time) was more than 90% of whole class time. Due to this chalk & talk and jug & mug method, I have learned a lot of English systems of grammar, reading comprehension, and lexis.

In my university years, I haven’t learned English much because I have spent most of time studying my major, Chemistry and I have forgotten my English proficiency for a while. However, I have faced a serious language problem when I entered graduate school in USA because I applied a part time job as a TA (teaching assistant) in the University. Thankfully, university recommended me to enroll an ESL program while I was working as a TA. In the ESL class, the English teacher knew what adult learners needed to learn and how she could teach adult learners effectively. As an adult learner, I preferred to be autonomous and self-directed to actively involve student in lab activity. Also I had some foundation of life experiences and knowledge relevant to the topic. At that time, I was pretty goal-oriented to be a competent TA. ESL teacher has taught us effectively by focusing on practical language skills such as speaking, writing and discussion/presenting. Initially, I had a trouble in following her instruction. As time went by, I had learned a lot of productive and practical English skills. I think she was a very effective teacher as an involver who made learners actively involve learning process. Finally, I felt like I have learned all important language skills through her integrated skill approach by practicing reading, listening, speaking and writing all together. Learning foreign language is not easy, especially for people like me who lack of verbal/linguistic intelligence. Therefore, when I communicate with people, I always try to utilize my bodily/kinesthetic intelligence, which is my strongest intelligence, using proper gestures and face/hands to express my feeling/emotion/opinions effectively.

Based on my English learning experiences, I found that there are a few effective ways to improve learning foreign languages, 1) utilizing an advanced technology for visual, auditory and tactile approach, 2) learning from a teacher who is an involver or an enabler, 3) learning from the balanced integrated skill approach, 4) using more effective learner’s retention approach such as teaching/mentoring, experiential learning, and discussion/cooperative learning. By doing so, we can learn any languages more effectively and efficiently and we can be very effective teachers who possess good characteristics of EAR (Empathy, Authentic, Respect).