Student Centeredness

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Class:#142 Evening class

My first experience of English was when I was in middle school. For three years’ learning, our teacher was an explainer teacher with no concept of involver or enabler type of teaching. In high school, I was obligated to work toward college entrance examination. The English test consists of simply reading comprehension, grammar and vocabulary with just a few questions of listening comprehension. For the entire 3 years of high school times, I just was memorizing machine. School classroom setting was traditional way that teacher faced students sitting in 7 or 8 rows. It was not learner-centered STT high TTT low style teaching and learning. It was jug and mug style, and no motivation for learning or rapport and empathy for students. I kind of rejected the classroom learning from the teacher and I just studied for myself. I could say that was self-directed learning then. However, I had a successful experience when I went to college I went to Europe to learn with a proper program. It made me learn English by using the language with more student participation and motivation.

When I travelled to Europe, as backpacker and I had to communicate in English with locals as a traveller, I knew lot of words but I could even not speak any one proper sentences. That was because previous learning was focused on only reading of four language skills. Then in London, England where I enrolled language institute, all my classmates were much better than me in terms of speaking and listening. I was better than them in terms of grammar and lexis because previous learning was focused on such sectors. The very first day I experienced icebreaker, which was totally new to me. In traditional classrooms, we don't see such activities. It was great help for me to get to know other students. Our schoolteachers are very professional. They had authenticity and were aware of student centered teaching.

Our classroom setting was horseshoe shape, which was different from that of my previous school classroom. I could interact with teachers better in that setting.

Teachers are vey well organized in teaching four language skills and taught step-by-step language system such as phonology, vocabulary, grammar and conversational skills. They were enablers. They created some conditions in which students freely participate in learning. Students would be divided to three or four groups and did activities in which we participated more, speaking more. I never had done group work during my high school times. It was new and interesting. Teachers always asked me various questions during class as concept checking question.

Also for language exposure, they encouraged students to join to Friday pub night activity. It offered a chance I could meet locals and classmates outside school to talk and use English. I had to order my drinks and talked to random person sitting next to us. It was like listening and speaking practice in real world. And I spoke a lot with my friends from school even though it was broken English. That Friday night activity enabled me great increase in my English ability. After three-month course, I became totally different. I could communicate better with friends in school and my homestay family. I could make full sentences.

It was a good experience as language learner. And I realized teaching should be student centered, and activity oriented and keep balance in four-skill teaching. When I become an English teacher, I will use my knowledge and experience gained from London in my classroom with authenticity and empathy for students.