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Teaching Methods That I Experienced

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Looking back my experience, teaching methods are important things to make successful classes. I have been studying my second language, English for about 15 years. Most experiences of learning English were neither a failure nor a success. As a result of many English classes in my teens, now my English competence is pretty fair. I had different interests of English according to how teachers did in class because I was influenced by English teachers very much. In other words, I was a sensitive student who spent a lot of time on study as I liked teachers’ teaching methods or who rarely studied as I didn’t prefer them . I have various experiences learning English from elementary school to University.

When I was an elementary school student, most English classes were composed of interesting games and chants. Teachers usually tried to make classes with CLT(Communicative Language Teaching) and TPR(Total Physical Response). Teachers always use Korean in class and sometimes English. They were not facilitators, but nearly managers or directors. Because students are too young to do everything, teachers had to handle the direction of the class. Teachers highlighted interaction not only between a teacher and students but also among students. They tried to lead students to talk a lot and participate in class to perform actions. Most of students enjoyed the class with various activities..

When I was a middle school and high school student, most English teachers had classes with GTM(Grammar Translation Method). Students always tried to improve reading and listening skills. Students read lots of passages and solved many questions about them. Teachers were just explainers and translated reading passages line by line. So it was obvious that students were passive like soldiers who just memorized vocabulary and grammar concepts. The test usually consists of closed-questions which had correct answers, not open-questions which can accept various answers. I think this atmosphere was occurred by competence for Korean SAT. GTM was obviously not an interesting method because that is not student-centered, but teacher-centered.

Now I am a university student and I am majoring in English language and Education. For about four years in university, I have been experiencing many kinds of teaching methods. Actually most classes in university are also lectures which learner retention is low. But the professor of English Education is always trying integrated approaches and diverse techniques like jigsaw, PBL(Problem Based Learning), information gaps, discussion etc. She usually applies CLT to classes. She gives students authority to progress class and students do cooperative activities. Unlike this, during Phonology class, I learn pronunciation of words with ALM(Audio-Lingual Method). Students listen audio files at first. And then we repeat and try to imitate them like parrots.

Summing up, I first experienced TPR and CLT to learn English easily. But when I was teens I learned with GTM and now I am undergoing GTM, CLT again and also ALM. I think the teaching method that I experienced in teens was close to traditional classrooms. Because those classes were made up of teachers’ chalk and talk. In contrast, CLT is rather a modern-classroom method because there are different activities and communications with group works. I think both traditional teaching methods like GTM and modern methods like CLT are valuable according to which objectives of classes are. So I cannot say my English learning experiences were success or failure. Instead it is definite that teachers have to use proper methods for students’ effective understanding, learning and also their motivation.