When I learned Chinese in Chia, I took two core classes. One of the classes I had was “General Chinese”, however, it was more likely “Chinese Grammar”. The teacher of the class knew grammar is important to speak Chinese. But the thing is no one would study grammar with ease. The class consisted of four parts. First, she introduced the day of grammar. Second, she gave us examples. Third, we worked in a group. Finally, we worked in pairs in order to make a short conversation by using the day of grammar.

The first stage she did is to explain, however it is not the same as “Explainer” type of teaching because there was the next stage coming. If she had given a speech like “Explainer” during the whole class, I would have been disappointed and have felt like sitting in another traditional classroom. The second stage is about having time to give students more understanding about the day of grammar. And she did this with some students. For example, if the grammar is about comparative sentence, she pointed a student and let him/her to make an example using his/her own personal or relevant experience. A student sitting behind me told “the more she spends time in China, the faster she gains weight”. And apparently she did not look like slim, so we laughed. Doing this stage is to make the teacher “Involver”. And I personally think when young inexperienced teachers start their teaching career, this “Involver” teaching style at least would be very helpful for them since they have no relevant teaching experience. After individual activity, it was time for group work. She gave out well-prepared handouts with lots of blanks. And we started to solve the problems, each group was scored, and she complimented the best group for the task. Of course, she gave other groups positive feedback as well. So we all felt like “Did a good job”. Final stage was not easy because I and my partner had to face students without our “Guide/Counsellor”. During this session, she stood behind the students and took some notes about students’ performance. Even though this stage was quite challenging, however it was sure to be the best “fun” part of the class. During the performance, we laughed and laughed whenever we heard our native language coming naturally out of our mouth without realizing. After this grand session was over, she encouraged all of the students with mentioning additional points that she had checked our errors through the performance.

I think that these four stages can be related with higher learner retention rate such as discussion group, live demonstration. Having this “Enabler” teacher, we were sitting in the students centered classroom and she definitely has the following qualities; knew the subject matter well, communicated clearly, was well organized person, always gave clear and positive feedback, really listened to us, enthusiastic, patient, and had a good sense of humor.

Ineffective teaching I have experienced was also happened when learning Chinese. When we had a speaking class, there was an individual presentation time every class. During the presentation, students talked about their personal life in China. So it sounds like quite nice individual activity. However, it was not like that at all. The reason was because the instructor was standing next to the presenter, so whenever a student needed a help for words and grammar, he/she looked at the teacher asking for advice. So it felt like we had no confidence. Besides she instantly pointed out a student’s mistake/error when the student was still standing at the podium.

The first day of TESOL class, I learned that students are all different, some are visual learners, or auditory learners, or some learn better when teaching relates with body movements. Also I learned that we have at least seven or eight distinct intelligences that can be developed over a lifetime, so clearly one of the effective teachings is to know how to approach these intelligences with various group activities when teaching students.