Traditional & Modern

English learning experiences

TESOL 163th WK

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No. of word: 659 words

Now I could understand what methodologies my teachers used for my previous English courses. As my first experience of studying English was when I was 9, I believe I was exposed to quite several types of teachers and methodologies.

My first English course was telephone English and the course started when I was very young as I mentioned above. The course was about practicing reading a book and every in the morning teacher phoned me and checked whether I practiced. He was very strict and it made me very stressful and uncomfortable. Thus, what I could do was memorising all sentences from the book by listening audio material supplied. I do not think the course was for beginners but it was designed for a lot higher level of students. According to Stephen Krashen’s input hypothesis, input should be comprehensible and clear to students but it was not and the course was not even followed formula: L+1. While I was taking this course, I could only practice listening skills.

What I want to share next is my experience of studying English at High school.

Korean English education system was only focused on two receptive language skills, reading and listening, for university entrance exam. And I do not think it is really changed much.

My English classroom atmosphere was much tensed and teachers took all control of the lessons (TTT only) without interactions between teacher and students, just “chalk and talk”. Teacher was very traditional and multiple intelligences were not concerned. Of course no realias were used. What we had done in the class was ‘memorising vocabularies’, ‘reading textbook’, and ‘translating English to Korean and vice versa’ individually.

This traditional methodology was deteriorating average learning retention as types of learning were mostly lecture and reading which have below 10% of learning retention rates.

What I could find interesting was the course I took in New Zealand.

My first English course in NZ was totally different from what I had experienced previously. There were many questions from teacher to elicit students’ answer. If students were asking for help, he asked us to find answers together. Through this group works, students had more chances to practice speaking. It was also the way he make the classroom more active and elicit active participation of students.

Teacher was preparing a lot for students’ multiple intelligence and individual differences. He was using many realia, puzzles, visuals, musical instruments and sometimes we could go out to the park, art center or museum for field class.

When I learned new vocabularies or grammar, there was a short explanation from teacher about functions. After teacher gave us some examples, we were asked to make new sentences in pairs or in groups and he was helped us a lot whenever we asked. Teacher was not just giving us a lecture but he was actively involved with the class. Teacher always tried to show his empathy, authenticity and respect to students and his no.1 priority was respect among EAR as he asked us to respect and help each other. This helped to improve rapport in our classroom and learning atmosphere. Because of his kindness and easy-going characteristic, we could keep our anxiety of leaning English low and I did not felt burden or hesitation to talk and ask.

I also prepared IELTS after Basic English Course to enter university and studying this exam was very helpful to improve not only receptive skills but productive language skills as the exam is testing students’ Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking.

Based on my English learning experience, I would say it is more efficient to use modern way of teaching.

I believe students need to be more actively involved to the classroom activities for learning Language and they need to be practically experienced how to integrate 4 language skills. To make Students more active, Teacher need to concern and prepare the lesson with many aspects such as Krashen’s hypothesis, multiple intelligences, Language systems and EAR.