**Being a good teacher.**

Learning second language is not easy for everyone, and it was same for me. For me, English was my second language, and I had to spend tremendous effort on it to reach current level of reading, writing and speaking English. This could not have been possible without the educations I have received for long period. Since when I was young, I was lucky enough to experience various ways of learning the second language. Some of them were effective, some were not very effective and some were total failure. Instead of just talking about one experience, let me talk about pros and cons for each and every one of the categories.

First, let’s start off from the least effective way of studying second language. Unfortunately it was my high school English class in year 2005. As it was first year of my high school education, I was expecting higher education for English as well, but the class proved me very wrong. Amongst five basic languages system, only part we focused was vocabulary and grammars. None of the classes had anything to do about phonology, function and discourses. I could understand what teacher was trying to do, but the way he approached and the method was not very appropriate. Teaching environment was very traditional – very teacher centred, teacher writes on the board and students copy it down on the note and teacher was the only one that was talking. As it could be told from the description above, teaching style of our teacher was “explainer”. Most of his teachings were composed of lecturing and reading teaching techniques, and these two are usually the ones with the least retention rate. So overall, only thing I really gained from the class was partial knowledge of few vocabularies.

Second, was in one of the English Schools in 2006 summer. I was getting ready to fly over to Australia, so I had to get my basic English skills back up to where it was before. The class was had very different from what I have experienced in high school. First of all, the class was very small. There were only 8 students per class, and the seating was arranged so that we could look at each other. Also most of students were university students and adults, so we were treated as adult learners. Each class, there were specific materials that we need to learn - goals – in each session. Also the class was based on discussion and activity, and teacher was more of an involver than explainer. Even though the class environment was very well set up, there were couple of problems that I found. The teacher wasn’t very well prepared and experienced, and also class was lacking energy. So even though this could be very successful experience, it was not very effective.

Third, was the ESL class at Indooroopilly State High School in Brisbane Australia. It was October to early December in 2006. This time it was very different for me, because everyone in my class was all foreigners, including the teachers for every subject. Even though each class was not very long, every class was very effective. We had science, biology, math and couple of other subjects, but interestingly, every subject’s goal was getting used to English. Class was more of a modern classroom, where students get to contribute to the class, and lots of class involved discussions and activities. Most of teachers were enablers, rather than being explainers. One thing that teachers in ESL were different from any other English teachers I had before was, that they were very focused at giving feedbacks and mentoring one by one to improve our English. Also they had lots of experience at teaching foreigners, so they could aid our spoken English really easily, and lastly they were very enthusiastic. By looking at them we, or at least I could feel how much they wanted to help us and teach us. The materials they used to teach us were very creative and new for me. During the three months of ESL class, I have made more progress than I made in more than 5 years in Korea.

From my experience, I could really tell which method is better for teaching second language to students. First is being close to students. Even if teachers have the best lesson plan ever, it would not be very effective if students are not attached to the teachers. Second is to be well prepared, and give lots of feedbacks. Being prepared for each and every class is very important. There should always be something to improve from current lesson plan. Be creative so students can enjoy the class, and at the same time gain knowledge from the class as well. Giving feedback is where students can gain the most, so giving feedbacks is one of the most crucial thing that teachers should do. Third, teachers should be the enablers, but maintain control of the class. This sought of goes with my second experience. Giving control over to the students can be effective, but teacher still should have the overall control of the students. Lastly, teachers should be enthusiastic, enjoying the class and trying to learn from teaching. These are the basic traits that I believe teachers should have to conduct a good class. Being a teacher doesn’t mean that they don’t have anything to learn. =]

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