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EFFECTIVE TEACHING METHODS

It is safe to say that even though Korean students study for more than 10 years, they are not good at speaking, writing, reading and listening. I have tried to figure out why this is so? I had studied English grammar for ten years. However, I found myself frustrated about what I had achieved. After a lapse of a few years I decided to be an English teacher so I started studying English grammar by myself. Ironically it took just 6 months to get all of the grammatical structures. We know that something wrong is going with our education system here. The second language environment that I had experienced was a failure.

As you can see and feel, traditional Korean education systems are flawed. We had been affected by only traditional teaching skills and taught by explainers. We struggled to listen to the lectures and stuck to reading and listening without even thinking about it. We should have made groups in class so that we could teach each other and research many things related to what we were supposed to learn. By the way, how can we change the education system? The following must be implemented to achieve improvement.

For one thing, we need to have an experience based class not a lecture based class. And we don’t have to focus on receptive skills like reading and listening. What we really need is to study something and practice it with the others. We can absorb facts into our minds and think “those are mine that I can explain”, instead of letters on our notebooks. There used to be only input but we need output as well.

Secondly, teachers must be considered being involvers and enablers. If they keep explaining as explainers, their students won’t improve in their English skills especially in second language acquisition. Judging from my experience, reading and listening for ten years in Korea is even worse than studying abroad for 2 years.

Thirdly, efficient and effective learning must be visual, auditory and tactile kinesthetic. And for the adult, they should be aware of which characteristics of learners they own intrinsically. But the methods we used to learn remain in just reading and listening. The teachers served only indirect experiences. It means we didn’t have a chance to speak out. Therefore the facts that we learn in the class will fade away little by little.

To summarize, the second language environment that I experienced is quite ineffective. A reading and listening-oriented education should be abolished. I know teaching methods and techniques in Korea are changing dramatically. We just need to accelerate the process and create an active atmosphere in the classes. If we constantly try to reach for a better second language environment, I believe for sure that change will come and we can certainly hope for a better future.