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Teacher: Benjamin Valencia

Course: Sat/Sun Tesol 75

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**Learning is Part of My Life**

*“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever”* - Mahatma Gandhi

Speaking “English” has become a global language. As a result, many people are more focused on communication skills rather than other factors when they learn English as a second language. Those people who are learning their second language (English), might have different experiences and different ways to learn. Which methods can be effective, but also ineffective is the question. Based on my experiences in learning English, I’d like to talk about the differences about teacher’s teaching style. I will also share those experiences which might help for the better teaching technique in the future.

First, I would like to talk about my personal experience in learning English with Korean teachers. I started learning English since I was first grade of middle school. The only opportunity that I could use English was in public school and private institute, but there was not many opportunities to talk in English. At the time, most of the teachers went by chalk-and-talk teaching, and students just listened to the explanations and how the components are put together to make sense and translating texts. The teachers were mainly explainers who explained about reading and writing skills. Furthermore, the teachers mainly focused on grammar and vocabulary which I totally lost the interest in English. In this typical traditional classroom, the chances of students involving themselves into practical activities became lower, as more explanation had to be written on the board.

In contrast, the circumstances of traditional learning changed when I went to the United States after graduating high school. During my ESL at Durham Tech Community College and College life at Texas, I met wonderful teachers. It was a modern type of classroom where the classroom was student centered. Some teachers made students work in groups or pairs to discuss the topic and give a presentation in front of the class. In addition, the class was engaged in activities where students could actually use English. According to American teaching type, the teachers were enabler. They use lot of demonstrations, pictures, and various activities by allowing students to use English actively in the class. This was the first time that I found an interest in English and a reason for studying it. At first, I was a terribly shy student in class and it was tough to do a presentation in front of the whole class and do a research paper especially in English Literature class. Every time I found some difficult in doing assignments; the teacher encouraged me to do my best and giving it up. Since then I became more of an independent learner and goal oriented.

As a conclusion, I realized that my experiences of both traditional and modern classes of languages suggest me the best suitable and successful method of learning. Even though I didn’t get an interest in English at the first time of learning for the classic style of learning on grammar, it seems to me important to know the basic grammar to learn verbal communicative skills. I believe those experiences of learning English will support me to be more an effective teacher in the future.