English Learning Experience

TESSOL CLASS 87 Cindy Yang

When I was a middle school student, I started to learn English. At that time, I was not interested in studying at school, and my score was very bad. My first English teacher forced me to memorize the textbook, and she slapped my hands with a whip every time I misspelled a word. I was a slow student, so I couldn’t learn at the pace the teacher wanted. So, I was whipped many times. The class was extremely stressful and I hated English.

After I got into high school, I met my amazing English teacher, “Kyoung Sook Kwon”. On the first day of English class, she just read the textbook and sang an English song. She wanted to show students how beautiful the sound of English is. Even though I didn’t know much about English, I felt that her English class was fun and doable. My thought about English class has changed from that time. She affected my learning English positively.

Kyoung Sook Lee, my second English teacher, was an explainer and also an involver. She was very good at explaining. She always started with making students understand. She made it clear what she would teach at the beginning and why we learned at the end. Then she read sentences and made us repeat after her. She showed how to do it first, and directed students to do it later. For grammar, she wrote many sentences on the board and taught us how to apply rules. Her way to teach really worked for me because I learned in a logical way. I often felt uncomfortable when not having clear objectives.

I could learn English through the relaxed atmosphere based on affective Filter Hypothesis. The class was very comfortable and I could have confidence because she kept encouraging me. I felt that I really wanted to know English. I bought the audio tape of the textbook at the bookstore and practiced to make similar sound of my English teacher. I waited for my teacher to call my name in every class, and I was really encouraged by her good words. I practiced what I taught in class all day long, and my English improved.

Since I had very little knowledge of English as a beginner, her way to teach English was very effective to me and was a positive influence on me. Kyoung Sook Kwon taught me how to sound the English and what the meaning was, and explained why we learned the subject. Also she taught grammar by cards and conversation. I was excited when I learned grammar by a card game. After I learned from my teacher, I could apply the grammar easily with a game.

My retention of English was mainly through audio visual and discussion group. I got permission to record her lecture, so I could go over it with the audio material at home. English pronunciation was very soft and attractive to me. I kept listening to the tape and it helped me to absorb what I learned. Also she formed students into groups. Every group had one of the smart students, so we could study together even when our teacher was not with us. I learned through her lecture first, and I went over with audio visual and discussion group. It was effective way for retention of the lesson until now.

Now I dream to be a good teacher, and Kyoung Sook Lee is my role model. She always believed in me that I can do it even if I got a low score on the test and she inspired me to learn English. She didn’t force students to learn, and she didn’t just ignore students who didn’t want to learn. She helped students to be ready to learn considering all students needs. Based on my experience of learning from her, I want to give hope to students and teach in an effective way that I have learned in TESOL. I will inspire and wait for students to be ready to participate in class, and I want to make the class comfortable for all students. I learned that both teacher and students are responsible for classroom management. I will respect students and have empathy and authenticity. My experience of learning English as a second language and being respected from my second teacher will help me to think about the students’ point of view. Also I believe that my experience that affected me negatively will also help me to be a better teacher.