Eun Jin (Ellen) Kim

Word Count: 740

The Importance of Versatility in Teaching

 “Teaching should be such that what is offered is perceived as a valuable gift and not as hard duty. Never regard study as duty but as the enviable opportunity to learn to know the liberating influence of beauty in the realm of the spirit for your own personal joy and to the profit of the community to which your later work belongs.” ― Albert Einstein

 As the need of acquiring high English proficiency increases due to globalization, awareness of effective English education seems to escalate as well. The variety of English teaching techniques and principles exist as resources for instructors. In my opinion, the teachers’ continuous efforts to gain various teaching knowledge is essential for helping students to experience the efficient learning process. To demonstrate the importance of a teacher’s capability to adapt the particular situations, the specific educators’ courses throughout my English learning will be examined. Also, by contrasting and comparing each experience, the successful or ineffective ways of the second language teaching will be mentioned based on the module one topics.

 First, my middle school English teacher, Jane Doe demonstrated Explainer teaching style within the traditional classroom setting. In 1998, the class duration and size were the outside constraints of typical Korean middle schools. For teaching sixty students within the forty five minute duration, the explainer style seems to be reasonable. The majority of the class time was lecture based on the jug and mug approach which focused students their receptive skills: reading and listening. Although, in the given situation, the teaching style was practical, the shortcomings were apparent. The main drawback was the learning quality. The high quantity of lecturing left no time for students to ask questions which in turn led to the poor understanding on the part of the teacher. As far as I can recall, the class content was not challenging enough for many students because the students were getting outside help from private tutors or supplementary educational institutes. The insufficient class content made it impossible for students to solely rely on the school English curriculum. Honestly, it appeared to me that the goal of the school English class was assessment instead of the learning.

 In contrast to the middle school teacher, the college ESL instructor from Seattle was an involver using the modern classroom style. I was in Seattle from October 2002 to December 2010 and the lessons were held in 2002. The class size was relatively small with frequent meeting times which led to the feasibility to employ the different learning techniques such as lectures, pair activities, and team projects. The instructor’s interesting teaching point was that on the top of the extensive grammar lessons, she introduced the learning strategy training specifically geared towards advanced organizations. By the fact that the instructor taught the learning strategy, the teacher seemed to be well aware of the Malcolm Knowles’ adult learner characteristics. For instance, Jane Doe tried to emphasize the relevancy of English proficiency with different fields of study. Also, she regularly reminded the students that the ultimate course objective was attaining the English aptitude as a means to comprehend the college level academic materials. Besides the administrative angle, the instructor’s attempts to set the positive learning atmosphere reflected her teaching principles as well. For the students who were falling behind the class, the instructor took empathic approaches by persuasion and encouragement such as offering extra credits and making times to advise the students, rather than putting on the pressure or scolding In fact, my most productive skills especially writing skill seem to attain from the ESL course.

 Finally, the epitome of enabler was a native English speaker from one of the Jung –Ro English learning institutes in 1999. The purpose was mainly to improve the English conversation. In order to achieve the course objective, integrated –skills were carried out using textbooks, newspaper articles, audio, visual aids, and group works. The class was modernized with the diverse groups of learners: young students, housewives, and company employees. In fact, the student variety led to successful cooperative learning experience. Especially, the positive interdependence among students took place by exchanging feedbacks and life experiences. The conversations with partners were a large part of the lessons and the students determined the discussion topics. The students ran the class autonomously whereas, the teacher guided the class. Back then, the enabler style was quite different than accustomed explainer style so I doubted the teaching effectuality. But now I realized that his teaching style contributed to lower the Krashen’s affective filter variables by making students comfortable environment to talk in the second language.

In conclusion, the teaching styles, the classroom types, effective teaching methods were learned in the TESOL first module. Since each method has its own fortes, I hope to establish a strong foundation in many teaching techniques and principles with an open mind and flexible attitude. So, ultimately, principled eclecticism can be executed to design the effective and appropriate lesson for student’s specific needs.