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TESOL 01: Second Language Acquisition Assignment

(826 words)

TESOL 106

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I have decided to write about a second language environment that I experienced while attending Bucheon University about five years ago. This was a regular Japanese class, and in my opinion this experience was a complete failure. Honestly, this was the worst course I have ever taken in my school life, and I completely regret enrolling in that course. Throughout this paper I will describe why I feel it was a failure based on my personal perspective of effective teaching, the concepts learned so far in module one of this TESOL course, the basis of ESL teaching and Malcolm Knowles’ characteristics of adult learners.

 This course was a traditional class and I would describe my professor as a traditional teacher who never changed his method of teaching. Also, this class was taught with high TTT: during every class, he would tell us to open our textbooks and lecture to us about grammar rules. I didn’t have to do anything in the class besides sitting in my chair and listening to him. This was very boring and even frustrating for me after a few classes, because I realized that he had an opinion of what “successful” teaching was and I knew that he wasn’t going to change. In my opinion, the class should have been high STT, and the teacher should have used a balance of input and output in his lectures.

Secondly, he was an explainer, and he never did any activities with our class. Also, he never gave us any group work, and just assigned us way too much homework and expected us to have it done for the next class. As I mentioned last week, group work has greatly benefitted me in this TESOL course, because it has given me the chance to hear my classmate’s opinions, so I feel this would have also helped me learn Japanese more effectively. Another negative factor was that he never did any demonstrations, and I feel this was because he didn’t have anything to show us. All of these factors didn’t help me understand or remember any of the material we covered in class and I quickly lost interest. I really think that he should have been more of an involver like in modern teaching, guiding us in our second language acquisition, not only dictating to us. He could have given us some activities which would have been a great way to involve the students.

The third point I want to talk about is his lack of ICQ. He never asked any questions to check for students’ comprehension, he just assumed we understood. I watched the YouTube video by Stephen Krashen, in that video he talked about comprehensible input, and when I heard that I remember this course. My professor was just giving us a rule, expecting us to understand it, and testing us on it. He was never checking to see if we actually understood how to use the rule. I think this was a big problem for everyone in my class, and I think this showed that he didn’t care about us.

Another negative thing was that he never tried to find ways to use multiple intelligences in his teaching. There were thirty people in our class and we all had different abilities, strengths, weaknesses, and different ways of learning. However, he didn’t recognize this or try to adapt his lectures to fit our unique needs. I consider myself a musical, visual, kinesthetic and interpersonal learner, but because he was always lecturing from a textbook, I wasn’t given the chance to meet my full learning potential. It is very important to try to recognize the uniqueness of every student in the classroom, or at least give them a fair chance.

Lastly, there was no rapport (EAR) between him and I. When I incorrectly answered questions in class, he mocked my answers and embarrassed me in front of the class. These actions caused my affective filter to be very high which negatively affected my ability to be productive in class, and it caused me to feel low self-esteem and a lot of anxiety. He was very unprofessional and disrespectful and also caused me to lose all motivation for learning. Respect is one the most important characteristics Knowles talks about for adult learns, and he lacked this important quality. This caused me to lose all interest in the class, avoid my professor as much as possible, and begin to hate Japanese.

Everything mentioned above is a contradiction to what we have been learning in class about effective teaching. Classes should be more student centered, and teachers should be more of an involver rather than an explainer. The classroom should be a modern one, meaning that there should be a nice balance and use of receptive and productive skills, more focus on the multiple intelligences, better use of ICQ, and consistent respect shown to students. If my professor had followed this system, my class would have been successful.