**Those Were The Days**

**(650)**

**TESOL 106/WEEKDAY CLASS**

**TEACHER: JAYME**

**STUDENT NAME: PAUL**

I have two different experiences of learning English. First was very traditional

and Explainer type teaching during my middle and high school days. And second

was comparatively modern and very Involver type teaching during my freshman

days in college. The first Explainer type teaching helped me learn vocabularies

and idioms, grammar and reading and comprehension. The second Involver type

teaching helped me develop speaking and listening skills, and writing.

Unfortunately, however, it took so many years, maybe more than 10 years to

reach the level I was on at 27.

Teacher comes in the classroom (One class was normally composed of 60

or more students). Class monitor stands up and shout “Salute”, and students

response together “an-nyoung-ha-shim-ni-gga”. During the whole lesson hours,

classroom remains silent except for the explanations and instructions from the

teacher and on rare occasions students’ answer to teacher’s question. Teacher

always carry cane and used it to draw students’ attention. I preferred learning

English by myself to devoting myself to teacher’s lecture in the class. And I

often came to the victim of the cane.

Knowledge of vocabularies and idioms, and reading and comprehension

skills were essential to pass the entrance examinations of colleges. Therefore,

middle and high school teaching was concentrated on the above-mentioned

fields. I had one classmate who had 2 elder brothers. They mentored studying

independently and in advance: studying reference books and memorizing good

sentences, paragraphs, and essays. I followed their advice, and it helped much

improve my English, especially in reading and comprehension.

In freshman days, English class was consisted of 20 students. We had to

memorize various situational dialogues everyday. And in class each

two of us came to the front and exercised the situational conversation in front

of the other 18 classmates and the teacher. Following was to move to Lab and

listen to audio and video tapes of native speakers’ conversation and various

lectures. From time to time, we had English class on campus grass or in taverns.

We once had English class even at Buddhist temple on Buddha’s Birthday,

drinking all night after class with the teacher, who was Catholic father.

At 26, I started working overseas for 8 and half years consecutively. First

in London for one year, in Frankfurt, Germany for 3 and half years, and in Bahrain

for 4 years. My job was buying building and construction materials and equip-

ments, organizing transportation to move them to sites in Middle East countries,

like Saudi Arabia, Iraq, UAE and etc. The language we used in carrying out the

job was English and we employed English clerks, some of whom told me that

they thought I were native English speaker. I did not know at that time how I

came to reach such high level (Of course, it’s different story now). The good

sentences out of reference books I memorized during high school days and the

situational dialogues I memorized during freshman days lied in my sub-

consciousness and came out of my tongue when given a stimulus!

Looking back at and evaluating the experiences of my English learning, I

find both pros and cons of both Explainer type teaching and Involver type

teaching. From the first experience, I came to know the vocabularies, grammar

and structure of English, and to practice reading and comprehension. From the

second experience, I learned conversation – speaking and listening, and practiced

writing. If I were a English teacher, I would employ both Explainer type teaching

and Involver type teaching methods, depending on what subject or field to

teach. And what are most important in learning English (same for teaching), in

my opinion, are affluent reading, memorizing good sentences, paragraphs,

essays and whatever, and jump into English speaking world. Then you will

gradually get to think in English and find it easier to talk in English than in your

native language. Those were the days!