**The Experiences**

**I’vd learned the Second Language**

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That I started learning English was when I was in 5th grade at an elementary school. At that time, there were some English institutes only for middle and high school students, so I had to have the class with middle school students. I was excited and nervous to learn English, but I didn’t care that I was the youngest student in the classroom. For the next 8 years, I had no problems learning English.

When I went to my University, which was a Korean University, I had a chance to attend an English conversation course. The course made me notice that my English skills were very low because I didn’t understand what the teacher was saying. I didn’t even know how to answer a question if the teacher asked me the question. I wanted to speak English, but I could only think of the answer in my mind. The way I learned English was trying to understand texts meaning of words, and grammar to solve English problems. My old teachers focused on pronunciation, grammar, and lexus. The teachers gave us some grammar problems and examples to practice, but the main point was to help us memorize key points so that we could do well on our exams. The teachers always had books and papers in their hands, and it always surprised me to see that they never had any materials or tools to explain what they were teaching the class. I became accustomed to the learning style that I was taught. We read texts, memorized grammar skills, learned a lot of vocabulary, and worked on reading comprehension questions. Although I learned grammar, vocabulary, writing and comprehension, one thing was lacking – we didn’t practice speaking and pronunciation and that is where my English skills were not improving.

Five to six years later, I found myself learning how to speak English at an institute. The institute didn’t focus on a lot of grammar, but they made me keep repeating various sentence patterns and we also did a lot of role-play in class. The method of teaching seemed to be simple, but amazingly it gave me the confidence to speak English. I felt I had more of a chance to have conversations with foreigners. Whenever I speak English, I try to come up with the sentence patterns that I learned and practiced, and I found what I had learned was effective. I could communicate with foreigners and it felt great.

Working at an English institute, I encountered new language barriers, “Function”. I didn’t know other cultures very well, besides Korean culture, and so sometimes I would have difficulty talking to foreigners. I couldn’t understand the exact meanings of what they said. Right now, I still have this problem, but I keep trying to understand their own cultures, thoughts, and feelings.

As of right now, I am working for an English academy which includes elementary and kindergarten students. At the academy, I am learning how to teach so that students can learn to the best of their abilities. Compared to the past, the methods of teaching are different. Now, we use many kinds of tools or teaching methods. We play games, do art and crafts, sing songs, do activities, go on field trips, watch videos or performances, do role-play or musical performances, and various other activities. We decorate the classrooms with English sentences and pretty pictures on the wall, make flashcards of English words to create comfortable atmosphere, and try to have lessons that students be involved in and learn English naturally. I think I’m teaching with better and more modernized teaching methods. I think these methods are helping students learn to the best of their abilities.

However, I needed to think of creative ways to have students constantly speak in English. I think a great way to speak and think in English actively is if a teacher gives a word problem to a group of students, then the students can discuss how to solve the problem. As a student of a TESOL class, I have had the opportunity to think of teaching topics by myself and with others, and present topics in front of other students. To improve our language skills, I want to try and use these teaching methods with my students. Also, I’m looking forward to learning more effective teaching skills which will improve my English skills in this TESOL class.