

My Experience of Taking 'English Conversation Classes'

I started taking English conversation classes right after my high school graduation and I would have to say that those classes have changed my life. First of all, I became more confident about myself and open to new experiences. I realised there are many things, that I did not know existed, out there. I learned to be more patient when it comes to learning new language. When I look back, I truly enjoyed learning how to express myself in a language that is not Korean even though there were painful and frustrating moments along the way.

I remember the first day at the language center. It was level 1 class and I had butterflies in my stomach. I think I was excited but at the same time, I was very nervous. I was a shy person and my life was only about friends and family. I was sitting with about 10 strangers and I did not know how to connect with them. I was pretending to skim through the book so that I did not have to talk to them. When the instructor came, I remember I was relieved that instructor was a nice Korean lady. She made us introduce ourselves one by one and when I was waiting for my turn, I tried to use what I knew and repeat the sentences in my head, trying to memorise so that I did not embarrass myself. After the first class, I felt better as all the people there seemed to be at my level, some were better and some were a little behind. I realised everyone who was sitting in the class was nervous and that made me feel like I have something in common with them. I tried to tell myself there is nothing of which to be ashamed.

Even though I did not have many chances to practice English conversation back in school, I was feeling a little better as I still had fresh memories of all the vocabulary I had to memorise at school. I remember, at level 1, the instructor made us repeat after her a lot rather than making students talk to each other. We learned basic structures of the sentences and I gained a bit of more confidence because I learned all that in school already. As I reached the upper levels, students had chances to talk more and more.

The instructor was changing almost every month and even the class size got smaller as some

of us stopped coming. I was stressed because just when I finally became close to everyone I had to start knowing new people all over again and it was not easy for me. When I reached about level 5, no one I knew from level 1, was coming to the class anymore. There were all new faces and they all seemed way better at speaking English. I was having a hard time catching up in the class. I gave myself a break for a month. It felt so good, not going to the class everyday and I could go out with my friends or watch my favourite TV shows on time. However, I remembered what my first teacher said in the first class. She said she is sure that it will be only one or two who reach level 10 which is free talking class. I hated that all 10 of us gave up and we were only on the half way. I could not give up so I went back. This time, I enrolled level 4 again since level 5 was too difficult for me I thought I better conquer level 4 with confidence. I did go on without stopping. I sometimes had to stay at the same level 2 months in a row but I did not stop. I remember my first day at level 10, I was nervous and had butterflies again in my stomach again. I met many people and experienced so much and yet I was still nervous. It gives me a smile now that I am looking back.

Taking English conversation class has changed my life so much. I was able to get my degrees abroad and work with foreigners. It made me become who I am today. My English will never become perfect but I know for sure that I will always try to find the way to explain what I want to express. My learning experience, 10 years ago, taught me not to give up.

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