

Drawing Out My Linguistic Intelligence

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Word Count: 750

There was a young girl who loved and respected her English teacher ever. She studied a lot to make her teacher happy but she always got low grades. Now there is a woman who loves to watch American TV series like 'Sex and the City' and 'CSI: MIAMI'. Though she didn't study English that much recently, she wants to find a job which is needed to use English for it.

These two persons are actually the one person, it's me. English was my weakest subject when I was in high school, but it became my advantage later when I worked at the trading company. So I would like to share this interesting change of English acquisition.

My high school English teacher was a typical explainer and here are three ways to describe his lesson. First, he always started the class with vocabulary quiz which were used in the last class. It was very easy to pass the quiz because I only had to memorize few words before the class begins. However, it was also easy to forget soon. Even though I used to pass the quizzes every time, there was not much things remained. Second, we listened to the English tapes and repeated them all together. Since there were over 40 students in a classroom at that time, we had not enough chance to repeat and practice English individually with teacher. It meant that the students couldn't get his feedback well. Big group of students like us were easy to be bored, and it was hard to keep paying attention when we had to do something together like listening or repeating. Third, to help self-study, my teacher handed bunch of worksheets out to students who want to get them. The contents of worksheets were mostly for reading and vocabulary learning. I also got a lot of worksheets to study more but it didn't work well.

Looking back on it now, it was definitely hard to manage the limited class time efficiently for many students. I think the explainer teaching type was one of the best teaching methods for that time.

After graduating from high school, my English level was not improved even in the university. So I registered for the English academy. The teacher was an explainer, involver and enabler. She followed the curriculum of the academy very well. Here are three things to describe it. First, she used various tools for the class like video clips, audio files including self-training version, cards for the role play, and other well-made teaching materials. With fewer than a dozen of students, both young and old in the same class, it was good to concentrate to the lecture. The classroom was small but modern type to use diverse materials well. Video clips helped to understand the usage of English and audio files were used for listening, repeating and the test. Each student practiced using audio files to listen and repeat aloud by themselves. Students played the rolls in specific situations as the book instructed by using cards and other materials. Then, they filled in the blanks of important sentences in the book by remembering the last role play. Second, the teacher showed students a few demonstrations and instructed students to demonstrate them. In this process, students helped others to strengthen their English speaking like scaffolding. When the students totally finished their demonstrations, the teacher kindly informed errors and corrections. She didn't interrupt students during their demonstrations. So students could try their demonstration first without nervousness. Third, most of the students were adult learners who are goal-oriented, relevancy-oriented, autonomous and self-directed. The teacher treated students as equals in experience and knowledge, and allowed us to speak our opinions and ideas in class. So there were an atmosphere of mutual trust between students and her. That's how I learned English in early adult age. It still has an impact on my English skill.

Without proper understanding of teaching types and learning types for language acquisition, it's hard to get it. Since conditions are also important factors in learning, the types of classroom, individual motivations and the relationship in the class must be considered together. Howard Gardner who is best known for his theory of multiple intelligences said quote, "A gene is that there's nothing you can do, but all you have to do is try to change your environment." In the quote, the environment means organized modules for teaching and learning. I'll approach teaching English with these methods I've experienced and develop it with fun.