Title:

Learning the Language: The First Step of Communication.

Gavin Kangwon Go

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There are so many different ethnicities and countries in this world, yet there is one thing that help us to become unified as whole, which is a “communication”. In order for us to communicate with one another, we may need to learn their languages. I’ve lived my life in many different locations, which were usually located in U.S.A and South Korea. They were all located in different continents and I had to learn different languages in order for me to communicate with one another. The way I was learning each languages were different from each other and I wanted to share my experience with you.

First language that I have encountered was Korean. The way I was learning Korean was very simple. It was a very traditional way of teaching. I learned from my parents who were helping me with phonology (pronunciation), Lexis (Definitions of Vocabulary), Grammar (Structure of a sentence), Function (Purpose of Sentence), and Discourse (How Sentences relate to each other). When I started going to school in Korea, They used methods such as Chalk and Talk, Jug and Mug, which means teachers are usually just explaining while expecting students to understand right away, also known as explainer. Teachers were pouring their knowledge and important things to remember, but it was not as effective, because I could not relate any of them to me and it did not interest me at all. Lecture is just only 5% retention rates compared to other teaching techniques. In South Korea, Teachers are usually using TTT, Teacher Talk Time, instead of STT, Student Talk Time. Teachers are not letting students to explain themselves but limiting students to express what they think and shutting their market of ideas. Carl Rodgers mentions that teachers need to have these three characteristics to be effective, which are empathy, authenticity and respect, but most of the teachers in South Korea are focusing on respect, which creates bad rapport between teachers and students. While I was getting used to this system, I immigrated to North America, which caused me to learn my second language, English.

The way I was taught English in North America was very different compared to the way I was taught in South Korea. There were different levels of classes in my school, so I started in a class called ESL, English Second Language, which was a class for those students who cannot speak English. My ESL teacher’s teaching styles were mostly involver, a teacher who involves students in his or her teaching, and enabler, a teacher who creates an environment for students to solve problems on their own. Through these styles, I was more focused and able to express my thoughts, which made me remember what I learned and wanted to learn more. When I was learning English, teachers used three different methods for learners, such as Visual (Learning from Looking), Auditory (Learning from Listening), and Tactile- Kinesthetic (Learning from Feeling). Powerpoints, Sing-Along, and Moving activities were usually used when we were learning English and helped students to learn better. We had more STT than TTT.

When I was out of ESL class and took an actual English course, I realized that teachers were using multiple intelligence theories with students. Howard Gardner explains that there are eight distinct intelligences that can be developed over a time and those are the ways that teachers approach their students to learn effectively. Those intelligences are Verbal (writing), Logical (Problem Solving), Visual (Pictures), Musical (Music), Kinesthetic (Moving), Interpersonal (Engaging with People), Intrapersonal (Critical Thinking), and Natural (Natural World). Writing Essays, Solving a Puzzle, Drawing, Rhyming, Playing Charades, Having Discussions, Having Journals and Having fieldtrips helped students learn more effective compared to traditional ways.

I have learned languages in so many different ways in different locations, which helped me adapt and able to figure out which ways are more effective to me. The methods that I was learning from Korea were not too effective, because I was too overwhelmed and teachers were expecting too much from me. The methods in North America were more effective, because I was able to acquire more knowledge and made learning more interesting to me. The way teachers teach can effect students’ lives.