Language Learning Experience

Essay Assignment

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My first experience learning English was at Browns Language School when I went to Australia at the end of 2008. My level of English was a ‘False Beginner’ at that time so I stated in the elementary class and graduated from the intermediate class. For this assignment I tried to look back at that time, and I found one thing in common between all the teachers at school. I can say all the teachers who taught me pretty much used the ‘involver style’. They explained first and gave us things to do or made us play games together. Since I’m a student who learns best with an equal amount of each learner mode, which are Visual, Auditory and Tactile-Kinesthetic, ‘Involver’ style teaching really worked for me. Also, it was fun and new for me who was taught by ‘traditional’ and ‘explainer’ teachers in Korea.

I’d like to talk about what the differences between effective and ineffective explainers and involver teachers are. I remember one of my English teachers during my school days. She was young and very passionate about teaching. She usually stood at the front and explained the material. She sometimes used a cassette player to let us listen to pronunciation or when we needed to listen to some English conversations. At other times she picked one of us to read from the textbook. Our classroom was mostly very quiet and she was the only one speaking. The effective part of her teaching was I could focus on the subject and it made me understand our textbook better. However, when it came to speaking English I felt unprepared because she didn’t make us speak English with each other to practice. Also, she didn’t try to build our interest and I got bored very often. I found it ineffective. On the other hand, there was one teacher I liked at Browns in Australia. She was always happy and cared how we were and even when we had personal problems, she always tried to help us out. She always tried to find a topic we were interested in and got us involved in the class. She usually put us in groups and gave us assignments to solve together. For example, she made us make a word to match with the first letter of our name, so my name was Amazing Aeri. I thought she wanted us to remember each other’s names easily and care more about our classmates. Then one day she asked us to make groups and talk about the topic, ‘what were the different cultures and customs of weddings in your country?’ Since we had students from several countries it was very interesting to talk about. This was very effective in creating a fun discussion that was enjoyable for the class where everyone got to share their culture’s knowledge.

I really liked her class but now I look back at those times and maybe I enjoyed it more than students who didn’t talk much and had less confidence because I was the person who was not afraid of talking even though my grammar or pronunciation was wrong. I remember when we worked in groups, usually the same person did the presentation all the time and the quiet students always talked and joined in discussions less. This was ineffective because the shy students got less practice. Also, it is difficult to find out who is participating and contributing in each group. Some students may feel shy or awkward and not be able to fully participate, letting the more advanced students take over.

In my opinion what style of teacher or teaching one does depends on many variables such as what the subject is, what kind of students you teach (age, gender, character, etc). I think I would use parts of each style to develop my style. However, as you know it is not easy to teach and make every student happy in class. But I am sure I can find the best method for my students. As teachers we shouldn’t stop studying to teach more effectively and use trial and error. I am glad I had different types of teachers because I know those experiences will make me a better teacher in the future.