Angela Han (149th TESOL Class, Teacher: Tim Wellman)

As a language learner, I have had dozens of teachers in my classes. But every class had different effect on me. Some classes were very helpful for me, but some classes were very not helpful at all. So, I would like to introduce my language learning experiences with the subjects that I learned in my first TESOL class.

When I was in 2nd grade of middle school, I took special English class for the summer vacation. It was full of exciting activities such as singing pop songs, English bingo and small quizzes. The most effective thing for me was role playing with my classmates. Teacher showed us a movie with English subtitle and then we watched it again without subtitle. After watching movie, she gave us a script of some scenes we watched just before so that we can make role playing in pairs. Most of time, we practiced our role playing with our classmates and performed that role playing in front of classmates and teacher one week later. It was quite effective in 2 ways. First, she encouraged my visual strength. Whenever I study with vocabulary, I tend to write it down on my notebook. Because I remember words better if I write it down as a visual learner. She let us watch the movie with English subtitle and gave script for that. Even if I couldn’t hear what the actors says, I could understand what they said by reading the subtitle and script. Secondly, role playing activity was very effective for me as an interpersonal learner. I enjoy interacting with people and doing something together. When I memorize the script, my partner answered on my question and I kept having a conversation by asking her again about what she had answered. So it helped me to remember all dialogues in that scene. Eventually, role playing activity reinforced my interpersonal intelligence by working in pairs. After finishing my summer vacation, I was able to utilize most of vocabularies in various situations. I could picturize words in my mind and tried to use them to express my thinking. Also, my teacher encouraged autonomous learning style. While doing role playing with classmates, she was invisible and waited until our conversation ends. She was more like facilitator and guide by giving feedback at the end of role playing.

On the other hand, Japanese class in my university showed totally different result. The subject of that class was “Business Japanese”. My teacher picked our textbook from bookstore where anybody can buy and study. He explained new vocabularies by giving definition and then read dialogue. And all the students did was to listen his reading. We didn’t have much conversation and didn’t have to say some Japanese for the class. Evaluation for the class was carried out with 35% mid-term, 35% final exam, 20% reading presentation and 10% attendance. It did have presentation but it was very individual activity. I find that class was very ineffective for me for 2 reasons. First, He chose teacher-centered teaching style. He spent his time mainly for reading the textbook and that made me so bored. As a lecturer, his communication was one-way communication and the information and memories that I studied for the class didn’t last for a long time. Secondly, reading activity didn’t function as a real activity. We brought Japanese article from the online news and introduced to our classmate for 20 minutes. All we have to do was to read Japanese first and translate into Korean for our mates. Even I could have presentation by memorizing sentences without understanding the article. It would be more effective the teacher let us discuss about what students find interesting. His teaching method relied on reading and listening which is receptive skills. I believe that is why I can barely remember what I have studied for that Business Japanese class.

There are a variety of ways for teaching languages. When I organize teaching plan for classes, I can adopt suitable method based on the student’s personality and strengths to develop and maximize their learning effect.