Choi Sung Sik

I started learning English when I was 8 years old. So it has been about 17 years since I met my first English teacher. My first English teacher was a "Enabler", which means he was familiar with teaching methodology. I think he was really wise teacher to make almost all of the students participate in the class. For this reason, if I look back on 17 years of learning English, my first English teacher is the best teacher for me.

I guess my first English teacher knew well about an experiential learning cycle. Also his teaching techniques were really effective to beginners and his class was far from traditional classrooms. For these kind of good memories of learning English, I think his teaching methodologies and teaching style was very helpful for me to learn English when I was beginner.

He was very much good at making easy game related to English so that almost all of the students in his class were fun to participate in the game he made. As a result, that participation to his game led every student to actually 'speak' English including me. For this point, as I learned the three categories of teaching style, I can categorize him as a enabler. He knew teaching methodology well and also he knew subject matter well too. Especially, he had excellent people skills that he made all of the students to concentrate on his talking without compelling his students to concentrate on his saying. When he taught without games, he used to teach at the middle of the students rather than standing in front of the students and his position was really effective to make us concentrate on him. Also, he hardly forced us to write anything at all but he was really trying hard to make us understand the grammar by telling lots of examples of English sentences. As he was really good at making lots of examples using students stories, most of the students talked and asked a lot which means he shared control of the class with students and it was really helpful for students to keep speaking English.

Unfortunately 10 years later, I met the worst English teacher when I was 18 years old. I think he was a explainer according to three categories of teaching style. Actually he knew the subject very well but he was absolutely relying on just explanation on lecture to convey information to students. He was talking alone all the time that nobody even tried to participate on his teaching because the tone of his voice was so boring that made students put to sleep all the time.

I think he made students to perform none of the 5th steps according to an experiential learning cycle. He skipped first, second, third, fourth steps in an experiential cycle that we have never done something or recalled what happened or any other steps except for writing the conclusion what he taught in the class by compulsion. As a result his teaching style in his class was not helpful in learning language.

It is no use to most of the students how the teacher is smart or how he knows the subject matter well if the teacher doesn't listen to students. I think that attitudes just made us not to participate in his class. Sharing controls of the class with students and sharing talking time with students is essential for modern classrooms which means my English learning class at that time was not a modern classroom even though it was 2010. I guess that he did not have enough time to have conversation with us because he was always focused the mid-term and final-exam so that he was always in a hurry to cover all the materials that he prepared for the exam.

Exam is essential in South Korea and I do not have that much complain about this reality but I think teaching language only to take exam is absolutely unhelpful for learners. The largest difference between two teachers and the main reason why I chose them as a best teacher or worst is very much related to their attitude to their students. In my opinion, communicating with students is one of the most important part of teaching.