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My Best English Teacher in Iran

My best English teacher in Iran was Mr. Bahram Mowlaei. He taught English at the Kish Language Institute in Iran. Kish Language Institute is the largest English and other languages education center in Iran with the highest number of students in comparison with other institutes in the country. Kish has applied modern teaching methodologies. Teachers in the institute have been trained to be facilitators and enablers. Mr. Bahram Mowlaei was one of those teachers that I admire the most due to his personal character, teaching style, his enabling approach, and his effectiveness. He was well acquainted with modern teaching concepts; and he was able to use the modern teaching techniques properly. My classmates and I liked and respected him much. During his class our English was improved significantly. Also he inspired us much by his integrity and insights.

My teacher’s style of teaching was in sharp contrast with the traditional style that I had already experienced before going to the Kish Institute. Mr. Mowlaei’s talking time as the teacher was significantly less than the traditional teachers that I had before. The students talking time was reasonably more. His classes were student centered. We did a variety of activities to be able to communicate with one another. Mowlaei did not master the class; rather he was a good facilitator. We as learners enjoyed the modern techniques that he applied in his teaching; role plays, back to back, and face to face conversations, games, storytelling, and group works are just some examples of those techniques and activities. The class was interactive; and when necessary the teacher explained the language points clearly and concisely. The teacher did a great job in integration of the four skills as well.

Mr. Bahram Mowlaei was an enabler in terms of his teaching characteristics. He strongly encouraged the students to create and share their ideas. He helped us help ourselves in the learning process. I remember in his first class he told us that teacher is not a walking dictionary; he taught us how to use our dictionaries. The class atmosphere was lively and everybody participated in class activities. Pair work and group work were really fun. The teacher walked in the classroom and oversaw our activities. When needed he participated in the abilities to a limited extent, just to activate us to communicate with each other. Though he was explicitly an enabler, whenever necessary he gave us the proper and prompt explanations. In the beginning of each class he did a warmup. He engaged our minds with the related language system that was going to be covered in the session. After that we had a study time; then he instructed us for the related class activities. Engaging, studying, and activating was the procedure of his class. I think his method was Communicative Language Teaching (C.L.T.). When each term finished, we as learners were more confident, fluent, and enthusiastic about English.

Mowlaei was a very effective teacher. Though he had a sense of humor, he never crossed the norms. Though he was a very passionate teacher, he never showed an aggressive attitude to correct the students. He had a great respect for us as learners and we respected him much. Also he could connect to the students’ needs and feelings well. He established an unforgettable rapport with the students and his colleagues. He had a deep empathy with people around him. What is more, we did not feel that he was acting or pretending to be a professional teacher; he was who he was. He was original and genuine. He gave us new information by motivating us to find it; when necessary he corrected us; and when needed he challenged us to create ideas and communicate them in English. He was authentic. The teacher was a good motivator. He reduced our anxiety by icebreaking activities, and by his gentle character. He did not speak Persian (or Farsi, the national language spoken in Iran) in the class. He was quite strict about using English in class activities. He gave us reasonable extra assignments that built up proper input for the following sessions. In this regard he carefully applied the Input Hypothesis.

I analyzed my best English teacher’s teaching style in the light of the insight offered by J. Scrivener in his book of ‘Learning Teaching’. As conclusion I found that my teacher Mr. Mowlaei followed a modern methodology and style in his teaching profession. In terms of his class performance he was an enabler rather than explainer; also he was an effective teacher utilizing the Input Hypothesis well for the good of the learners. He was of good character and conduct as well. He loved teaching English, and he made us love English as well. He was well updated in his field; he kept training himself. He set a good example for the younger teachers who assisted him. Like a pastor that his Bible is usually is in his hand, Mr. Mowlaei had his Oxford Dictionary always with him. Kish Language Institute was proud of having such a great teacher.