

1. What was a challenging moment during your time as a Helper? How did you overcome this challenge, and what did you learn from it?

When I first heard of P2P exactly one year ago, I never would have thought that 12 weeks of teaching 4th grade math and reading would have taught me so much. Yet, I was shocked as to how P2P honed me into the person I am today. Tutoring for P2P opened up a world for me. It was my first time tutoring young students, and it was invigorating. I was able to work on my own skills while honing the abilities of my buddy as well, and I gained varied skills through this experience. My buddy was lovely to work with as well, as most of the time we were able to work productively and maintain a positive zoom-environment. However, the 12 sessions I had tirelessly worked through weren't all smooth-sailing. In fact, while tutoring for P2P, I came across a number of issues. They ranged from minor inconveniences to sometimes difficult complications. However, the one problem that posed a particular struggle for me was my inability to communicate with my P2P buddy.

When teaching, it is important to be able to capture a student's attention, communicate well, and motivate them to learn. My buddy, however, was a 9-year old boy with a hearing impairment - Bob*. Bob and I would end our study sessions each week, drained and exhausted after struggling to communicate with one another. However, working with him, I learned something important: The significance of authenticity. To me, authenticity is both empathy and honesty, truthfully communicating with others about how you feel, and listening to and understanding their point of view. Instead of using the same teaching methods I used with my other students, I needed to proactively make adjustments that fit his needs. Yet, what I deemed as most important was making sure not to treat him as a "disabled kid". I knew it was important to treat him as a person, rather than a lab experiment, and that meant doing extra to make us both feel comfortable during our weekly lessons. That involved expressing my honest feelings to Bob , and encouraging him to do the same

From this challenge in P2P, I learned a variety of new or reiterated lessons. The prime of them all, however, was the importance of leadership in environments outside of classrooms and school clubs. When people think of leadership, the image of a powerful executive giving orders to other people might pop up. However, it's important for us to push the narrative that "leader" is a term that fits anyone - not just a person who commands followers, but someone with a vision and plan to realize it. Although my experience with Bob was not the ground-breaking achievement some might expect from a so-called "leader", the job called for the qualities of a confident and communicative person. To me, being a good tutor means being someone who can use "leader-like" characteristics - communication, authenticity, vision, etc. - outside of classrooms or school clubs.