

As a helper for the P2P program, I learned a lot and gained a lot of skills from this experience. I remember first signing up for this program in hopes of helping a younger student reach their best academic ability, just as I did. I was signed up as a buddy for two seasons before the pandemic had started and I remember enjoying the experience because I was able to connect with my helper and get the help that I needed on my school work and studies. Being honest, I was expecting a student who I'd click with immediately considering I'm usually able to get along with a student right away and successfully help them with studying or homework. This is why I was a bit surprised when my buddy and her parents first reached out to me in Korean.

My buddy had recently moved from South Korea, making Korean her first language. This caused a bit of issues in communication sometimes. The language barrier during our sessions was difficult to work with sometimes. Even though I am fluent in Korean, I didn't know that I would have trouble teaching* in Korean until this experience. Throughout my life, I have been successful in Korean writing, reading, and other opportunities considering I used and practiced the language consistently. But teaching in Korean was completely different. I definitely had thoughts that would've clarified my responses to questions my buddy had a lot better, but I didn't know how to express it clearly in Korean. We communicated throughout the sessions mostly through English, because her mother requested for me to teach in English, but at times she didn't understand my responses because sometimes I'd use words or phrases that were difficult for her to comprehend.

I didn't let this stop my main goal to help my buddy experience the same bond I had with my helper when I was a buddy in this program and fulfilling her mother's wish of improving her daughter's English. Luckily, my buddy really enjoyed drawing. I used this hobby of hers to help both of our experiences in the program. During breaks, she would show me different drawings of favorite characters and interests, which would connect us and strengthen our bond together. After our first time drawing together, I realized that maybe using a drawing software could help me teach her more efficiently. So, after that session, I downloaded a digital painting software, and instead of just explaining to her on how she should respond to her homework questions, I went with a visual-learning approach. I would highlight important parts of the text, annotate, and sometimes draw pictures to describe what the key points were. I saw results instantly when I started teaching this way. Our sessions would run much smoother, she'd understand nearly right away, and we were able to get so much more done in just a 1 hour session. Other than the obvious positive result of our sessions becoming much more successful, I felt successful myself that I was able to come up with a way to overcome the obstacle.