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An ESL Student Becomes an ESL Teacher

I believe that becoming a good foreign language teacher not only requires a high level of proficiency in the language, but also the understanding and tolerance for the diversity of the cultural and personal history of the students.

I started learning English as my first foreign language when I was a middle school student in South Korea. When I moved to the United States, I was shocked how my two years of studying the basic grammar and structures of English in South Korea was not much helpful. It was the confidence that my ESL teacher gave me that helped me to get over the embarrassment of speaking broken English. Once this was done, I was more interested in learning the grammar and words.

The cultural difference also contributed to difficulties in learning the language. Every culture has different use and meaning of the language by its translation. Only by living in a particular cultural environment, one learns the actual contexts for the use of the language. Just like British and American has slightly difference in use of the language, the exposure in the culture is significantly important in learning the foreign language.

            Only after having been in a student’s shoe, teachers will understand and will be able to think from the student's perspective.  Without knowing the difficulties and weaknesses of the students, teachers will struggle to improve their language.