

While I was volunteering in a classroom, I learned that some students didn't speak English. I wondered how I could help them even though I didn't know a lot of Spanish. I saw how others would help them. Some students spoke both English and Spanish so they would translate for them, some adults would use a translating website to communicate to them, and other times there was a multilingual helper. While it was convenient, I felt as though it wasn't benefitting either side of the conversation.

I started taking Spanish at Evergreen because I wanted to have a little bit of knowledge in the language to communicate a little bit with people who don't speak English. In the classroom, I was able to work with small groups, and I saw how beneficial it was to put students who didn't speak English next to their bilingual friends. I was able to help the students with math, and I found it easier to have someone there who could translate for both of us while still doing their work. I tried hard to ask the translating student questions like "How do you say this number" and "What does this word translate to?" I wanted to know what to say to speak one-on-one with the students without relying on the translating student to just sit there and talk. I made great connections with the students even with the language barrier, but I felt like I needed to rely on a bilingual student.

I felt like those students who only knew their native language when I started taking Spanish at Evergreen. My professor would speak almost entirely in Spanish and a few words in English. I felt like I was in the shoes of the students who didn't know the language they were hearing. I could make out a few words, but it was difficult to know what to do without asking my bilingual friend in the class. I have learned a few activities to help me learn some words and how to create sentences. I want to practice more with activities like that when it comes to numbers and mathematics.

I want to learn in the Multilingual Learner Pathway program because I want to benefit the students as best as I can. I want to help give them an equal opportunity even if I am not fluent in their language. I don't want it to stop me from giving them an equal education as I would with a student who only speaks English. My biggest goal when it comes to the Master's in Teaching program is to learn and practice helping everyone and providing equity to the students who would benefit from more help. I believe that helping any student is the right thing to do, and I also believe that not needing to get my phone out to open a translating website or involving another student and taking them away from their studies is easier and more powerful for the student and their learning.