



# September Interviews

**Interviewee:** Moonie

**Capacity:** Mentor

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**Hello Moonie, how are you today?**

I am feeling great, just very nervous.

**We are here to interview you as a mentor for the yearbook. To start, could you please introduce yourself?**

Hi, I am Moonie and I am 24 years old. I have been a mentor since 2020, so from the very beginning.

**How long have you been on the server?**

Since the beginning. I remember Dani messaging me on Twitter saying “Do you want to try and help us build a server on Discord”. I didn't even have Discord so I was like “haa sure” Yeah, pretty much since the server was a fetus.

**The server anniversary is coming up and you have been there since the start, how do you feel?**

Oh gosh. I think it has come along so far. In the beginning, it was just a few of us and we were not very organized since it was the first time we were doing this. We started organizing clubs and other things. It was also the time I got very busy. A lot of things happened that year so I distanced myself for a little bit. When I came back, wow it had changed a lot and it was amazing to see. I think Nae and Ka did a great job in transforming this server into what it is now.



### **What does a mentor do?**

We do a lot of things, well not as much as organizers. We create materials, we don't use our imagination to create things out of the blue but we search for content. We always check things like if other staff struggle because they are learning as well and if they are unsure of what the right answers are, they ask for our help. We are kind of on a pause right now because it's vacation time or working time, so we are not doing as much but that is what we did before. In the beginning, we would correct so much homework because we had homework at the time. We sent out homework and we had so many things to correct. Now we have our staff that goes over it for us, it's a bit easier and takes a lot off our shoulders. We also train other mentors and mentor helpers so there is that. There are a lot of things.

### **Is there a system mentors use?**

We do. We have something called 'mentor quota'. So we have to keep track of everything we do like if we answer questions on the subject channels or if we correct something from the Twitter crew and textbook, our monthly writing and speaking activities, if we bring out new quizzes, if we create new questions or if we find something that we can use for lives, if we attend lives or if we host lives like we did before. We used to do those a lot. When we are a bit busy, that's how we keep track of everything. And we have points, so if you do this much, you don't have to do this again. Just let someone else take over and do another task which will also gain you points.

### **When did you decide to become a mentor?**

Well first. When Dani said on Twitter, let's create a group and learn Korean together. I said yes because I needed to learn Korean and compared to the people who were on the server, I was a bit more advanced. Not the beginning level, some of them didn't even know the hangul characters so Dani just



picked people who seemed to know a bit more than the others. That was me, Ka, and 2-3 other people who are not here anymore. That's how I became a mentor. Not that I knew more than them, it was just when the server was starting so it's not like I knew a lot of Korean.

**And how do you find your experience?**

It has been fun. It was a lot of hard work in the beginning, as I said before. Because we didn't know what we were doing, people started coming in and it became much easier. I didn't do as much last year. Like I said, I got busy so I didn't do as much as a mentor so I try to compensate for when I left before. I always try to help but sometimes I can't. But it's fun, it's fun. I like helping people and sharing what I know. Even if I don't know, I search it up for hours to make sure I'm right before I say something. So yeah, it's fun.

**Mentors are responsible for creating materials, what's your favorite material you've made?**

I liked doing particle text before. I do not do as much creating now, I just search for them. Before we used to make PowerPoints and Google documents about it. I remember searching so much because I was in charge of the particles and I had to make sure everything was cordial and organized. Make sure everyone understood what was being said. Also, the numbers, the big numbers. It was so confusing but when you got them right, it was very fulfilling. So yeah I like doing those. I don't think the big numbers were ever shared though. I think Ka shared it in a live, but I don't think it was given to everyone.

**You've been a mentor for quite some time now, what do you think the best part about being a mentor is?**

I think the best part is watching everyone, the members of the server evolve. For instance, as I was saying when Ka began her reading lives. Mentors would



be too nervous and they would mess up their speeches or they couldn't read what they were seeing. But the last one, back in June - the ones that continued doing it -. They wrote so much, to the point that we don't have anything to point out. So I think seeing their progress is very fulfilling. Not only that but we also learn with them.

### **What is your favorite task to do as a mentor?**

*I like reading, that is actually a lie. Before I start reading, I get anxious to the point where I can't read sometimes when I am reading. I really like to read because we do these funny texts during our lives and it is funny to see how everyone comes up with their interpretation. I like doing comprehension. For every comprehension, I created a website because I was bored. Where there is all the grammar they need to know. I started doing that and it requires a lot of time. I also like questions. The members ask difficult questions on the subject channels. Because I sometimes don't know how to answer them, I go to the other mentors. I do not have a clue about this and ask what they think, and I think it's this and they also think it's this, I go search and they go search. So we also learn a little bit from their questions.*

### **What are some of the challenges you have faced while being a mentor?**

I think in the past there were a lot more than now. We used to have little groups and sometimes people would ghost us. We would try to make them engage with everyone or just try to engage 1-1 with people but they would not tell us. We used to have a specific time when they would ask us a question or we would go over the homework but sometimes people wouldn't show up and they wouldn't tell us anything like "we are not coming so you don't have to waste your time". We would spend an hour waiting for no one. It was really hard but now not so much, now the struggle is trying to find more staff.

### **How have you managed to deal with or overcome these challenges?**



By laughing it off. Ka and I used to get ghosted so much that we just started calling ourselves clowns and that is how we got through it. We just laughed it off, there was nothing else that we could do anyways. We did warn them and the people who continued to not show up, we just had to let them go because they were being quite disrespectful to us.

**You mentioned in the staff introduction channel that you are doing a master's degree in microbiology. How is that going?**

Hard, It is so hard. Sometimes I get out of classes at 10 PM and I arrive home around midnight because of traffic. It gets so exhausting because sometimes we are doing lab experiments where we have to wait for a certain time and since one of my group members is also working we used to be the last group to do the experiment, so we had to wait for 2 or 3 hours for the results which was quite annoying. It's not her fault sometimes but it's also her fault for being held up, we didn't want to say that to her, so. I'm ranting here [laughs], it's a bit hard. A lot of memorisation and images I don't like to see. It gets pretty difficult.

**Do you feel like your duties as a mentor impact your studies?**

I think it's actually the other way. As I mentioned, I always put my studies above the server. I have said it to the other mentors, mostly Nae and Ka. I put my focus on my studies before I put my focus here. That is why I could not participate last year, even at the beginning of this year. I was too tired to do anything. I tried my best to help but sometimes I just couldn't. There were times when I had to get up at 7 am and Ka's lives were usually at 3 AM. Sometimes 'No I am not doing it' and sometimes 'eh I'll do it, I'll help don't worry'. So my studies did not impact my mentor's life, it's most likely the other way around.

**How long have you been studying Korean?**



This is the million-dollar question. I started studying Korean in 2016. The thing is, I was so on and off about it. I studied, I learned how to read in a day, I was very passionate for a week and then I stopped. Then a few months later, I would get the urge to learn again and I would pick up from where I was. I would start again and I did this for around 3 years. In 2019 I felt 'omg just get a grip, you can't be doing this forever', so I started studying properly by the beginning of 2020. But I didn't follow books or anything which I regret because I should have. What I did was consume a lot of Korean Media so everything I saw, so I would just look at it. If I was looking at lyrics, I would analyze the lyrics and then just see what pattern it is and what word it is. That's how I studied Korean so my Korean was beginner, intermediate at best. Beginner again etc. it was all over the place. That's why I decided to join the server, so I could just have a starting point and somewhere to go.

### **How did you get into learning Korean?**

I have been a K-POP stan for a long time, since around 2007 or 2008. I consumed a lot of media too but I did not think of learning it because it has English translations so I can live with it. Then a friend of mine got into K-POP in 2015 and said "I started learning Korean and it's fun and easy". I felt quite competitive, what do you mean you started learning Korean just after a month of getting into K-POP... Hello? \*laughs\* So I started learning Korean, that's how I started. I also really wanted to know what they were saying without me having to search for translations because translations were so hard to find back then. So I guess it was a win-win situation.

### **How do you manage to juggle learning Korean and mentoring on top of a master's degree?**

I do not haha, it's so hard. So for example when I was doing my master's degree, which I still am. During my first year, I did not study Korean as much. I would spend 1 or 2 months without studying Korean and I kept going back.



'Oh I don't remember this anymore, I have to study it again'. I went back to the on-and-off thing again which sucked but I tried my best. This is the good thing about being a mentor, when you try to help others you have to keep on studying for yourself. So every time I answer something or help with something, it makes me study and that's why I like being a mentor. It kind of stops me from not studying. I don't study regularly and it makes me not completely stop being away from Korean which is a plus. Bottom line, I don't juggle it well.

### **How do you find working with the other mentors?**

I think it was hard before. It's good, some of them are really helpful and some of them have their own lives but they help with what they can. I'm always grateful for them because they answer a lot of things that I can't. We always try to help each other with what we know. We say "Could we have this by the end of the month", they will say "Sure" and they will give it to us. And that's good but sometimes there are times where they can't do this right now, it would be nice if someone could take over. So there are struggles and there are good things, I'm not going to mention the struggles. There are struggles but there are also many good things too so I can't really complain.

### **I believe you guys work with org staff too, how exactly do you and org staff work together? How is working with them?**

It's nice, I think there are times when they might be frustrated because sometimes they ask us questions and we can't answer immediately, so they have to ask again. They are really nice. They are very willing, it kind of makes me want to be as willing as them. As they are very passionate about what they are doing. They are very very nice, very hardworking and they do a lot of stuff behind the scenes that the members don't know which is a lot. I don't even know sometimes, I have to find out through someone else about what they go through. Wow, that's quite amazing. I like our staff.



**I don't believe there are any mentor trainees currently, however, there have been previously. Have you trained any?**

You're right. There aren't many trainees right now but Nae actually joked that I am the official mentor trainer so I have trained Clara and Dio. Dio was a trainee but he quit. Not because of me, I did my job perfectly \*laughs\*. I think the main person that I trained was Clara and it was really fun since Clara was very willing and excited to do some of the things. Yess this is exactly the energy I want. We just go through what we do, then they do it and we have to tell them yes you did this perfectly or you could improve here - if you could explain a little more on this part so they can understand it better then it would be perfect. There isn't much we do, we just tell them what we do.

**Keeping mentor trainees in mind, what advice would you give to anyone wanting to apply to be a mentor?**

When I first approach people who want to be mentors. I create a simple list of what we do, not everything. I mention that it seems like a lot but it isn't when you actually do it. When someone wants to apply to be a mentor, we do make the person go through a little bit of training. It does seem like a lot because one is doing everything in a week or two but we don't do everything at once. I think people might think it's a lot because you are doing so many tasks in just a week and after you finish one I'm already telling you to do another one. That's just so we can quickly go over it. That's not something you are going to do every week of the month. It's a little bit of work, yes you have to keep track of what you are doing so that our organizers can keep track of what we are doing and keep everything in a steady place but I think it's worth it. You also get to meet new people and just experience new things which is also good. Don't be afraid to do it. If you think you're not capable of answering stuff because you are not sure you can always ask us, no need to be afraid. We are all here learning and helping. We're also learning, we also





don't know some stuff, so we search for it and make sure we're always on the same page. So come talk with us, join the cult. *[laughs]*

**Were you a mentor for Soundcheck?**

Yes, I was a mentor for Soundcheck. I created some materials, the mentors would be assigned to a task like a lesson, homework or something else and then the mentees would go over what we had created during our private sessions. As I have mentioned before, I was not involved as much because I was busy with not only my university but life in general. So I couldn't keep up as much but I did enjoy helping as much as I could.

**Do you miss Soundcheck? Do you wish it could come back?**

I do miss it a little but I'm so used to how it is now that going back probably will feel a bit weird. Although, I know some people would prefer that so I go with the flow.

**Lastly, do you have any final suggestions regarding the courses?**

You see, I'm not the creative type so I don't have any specific suggestions at the moment but I guess participation is all it takes. As long as there is participation from everyone then everything can be included and ideas can be exchanged to make it better

**Thank you for attending the interview Moonie!**