[Crystal Medina](https://blackboard.pace.edu/webapps/discussionboard/do/message?action=email_user&MF=true&course_id=_83145_1&conf_id=_97239_1&forum_id=_118887_1&message_id=_2727563_1&nav=cp_discussion_board&thread_id=_2727563_1&nav=cp_discussion_board&user_id=_147148_1" \t "_self)

Learning through Someone Else’s Eyes

Prior to this class, I was a bit apprehensive about this course. I didn’t know what to expect except the fact that I’d be teaching the elderly how to use computers. I remember being puzzled as to how this was a required course for credit, how does this pertain to my major of communication studies so why do I need to take this course. I was wrong. My thoughts and feelings have quickly changed as for the past two months, this partnership between myself and the Hallmark has been one of the most rewarding and humbling experiences I’ve ever had. I feel that I’ve grown throughout this experience as I’ve been able to not only teach and help someone else, but learn through someone else’s eyes. Every week I’d learn something new about the way others learn as well as watch as my older adult discovered something new.

My older adult was Bebe Feld and she was the sweetest woman with a bit of a sense of humor. She is a retired school teacher from Long Island who prides herself of family and doing what you love in order to reach true happiness. Her reason for being interested in the computer course was for her to keep in better contact with her family as phone calls would be missed and not returned. Our first session and last session was like night and day. The first couple of weeks it was difficult for Bebe to feel comfortable sitting in front of the computer, dealing with the mouse but most of all operating the computer in general.

I’d stress the importance of being patient with yourself and with this new “thing” that you now must get to know because the computer is something so foreign to their generation. I’d also remind Bebe that it was ok to not get everything in one sitting, to take her time as it’s like learning a new language the more you practice the better you get. First, Bebe was able to get re-acuainted with the mouse, dragging it through the mouse pad and learned when to click once and when to double click. Because her typing skills were no problem, she was eager to get started with the internet. Bebe’s existing email account hadn’t been used in months and I promised that at the end of this course that wouldn’t be the case as she’d be an email machine!

Every week, Bebe would write and receive more emails each day. As her face lit up each time her sons, grandchildren or nieces would email her the more I realized that this was much more than a three credit core requirement, but that this was about helping someone stay in tune with the changing times. That this experience was about learning from one another - putting myself in someone else’s shoes for once. One session, I learned from Bebe that Shop Rite no longer sends weekly specials/coupons through the mail but strictly via email or by browsing them on their website. Bebe now has learned how to receive her coupons instantly by printing them out and I’ve never seen anyone so thrilled like she was that day in a long time, it was almost child like.

As the weeks past, Bebe became more comfortable with the computer each week quickly sitting in her chair eager to check her mail or have a task already written down for me to help her learn. I looked forward to beginning my school week sitting with Bebe and not only helping her learn more about the computer and the internet, but hearing her stories of her life or little jokes she’d share with me. It was refreshing spending time with someone who had lived a life I feel I have yet to begin. As Bebe learned, so did I just as I taught, Bebe taught me as well. This entire experience showed me my capabilities in teaching someone else besides my own self. I got more out of this class than I expected. It also gave me a better understanding of older adults and rid every stereotype I ever had. I learned the importance in working with your local community partners because not only do they take something away from it, but I do too. The graduation ceremony was beautiful as I heard each senior share their experiences, I realized how truly rewarding and great it is to step back and learn through someone else’s eyes for once.