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Intergenerational Computing

Final Reflection paper

Over the course of the past semester, I was afforded the opportunity to not only help another person learn, but to learn a few new things as well. This course opened my eyes to a whole new world of information and technology and allowed me to share my newly found knowledge with people who would really value it. Those people were none other than the wonderful residents at The Hallmark of Battery Park City. These residents really welcomed us all with open arms and were ready, willing and able to learn anything and everything that we had to teach them. That’s what really made this experience so wonderful; having students who appreciated what we were doing, and being able to listen to their stories, help them learn a new trait and even learn a few things from them along the way.

My student, Jean, is one of the most amazing people that I have ever had the chance to meet. She is kind, funny and completely understanding. She has the heart of a lion and the motivation to match. When I first met her at orientation, I noticed her want and need to be involved in every conversation that was going on. She was as quick as a whip and she really knew what she wanted to hear from everybody, and had no problem asking a few questions and demanding a few answers along the way. Right then I knew that I had to work with her because I saw something in her that I loved right off the bat. Perhaps it was because I saw something in her that reminded me of myself, but whatever it was, it made me run up to Alison immediately, and request to work with her. And after getting to know her, I’m glad that I did.

If I learned nothing else from this experience, I have learned that listening to what people say is the most important thing. It is only through listening to the needs of another person that will allow you to truly help them succeed. For me and my resident, as I’m sure with many other groups, this was an absolute necessity. Jean and I quickly grew to like each other and form a bond that I’m sure many of the other students were able to form with their students as well. Because of this bond, we were able to work nicely with each other and accomplish a lot of things in each one of our lessons. The main problem that we faced was that Jean’s memory isn’t as great, and she has problems remembering things from week to week. So my job as her teacher was to listen to her concerns, have her explain to me what she remembered, and then have her tell me what she would like to learn. As I mentioned, listening to each other is key. And it was through this listening that we were able to accomplish so much while still being able to form a friendship.

I was happy see that the “listening” went both ways. During our few weeks at Hallmark, I had to skip a lesson because I was sick and in bed and didn’t want to take the chance of getting anyone sick at the Hallmark. Jean was happy just to hear that I was doing okay and that we would make the session up in the future. Because we talked a lot and got to know each other pretty well, I couldn’t go a day without her constant appraisals and her understanding of how thinly spread I was this semester. It made me feel as though she really appreciated the time and effort that I spent with her and the time that I put into planning out our lessons each week. She knew how hard my schedule was and because of that, she always put in one hundred percent because she wanted to prove to me how much she appreciated me taking out the time to help her. And even though she saw it as a chore for me to come see her, I constantly reassured her that it was one of the more pleasurable things that I had the chance to do every week.

Teaching somebody something that they want to learn is a very rewarding experience. I never really felt that way about teaching before. I always love to help my niece and nephews with their homework but that’s nothing compared to what we were able to do at the Hallmark. Jean, like many of the other residents at Hallmark, don’t have the opportunity to see they children or their grandchildren on a daily, weekly, monthly or even yearly basis, and that’s why a lot of them wanted to learn how to use the computer: to keep in touch with their families. Being able to communicate with their loved ones more regularly is a really amazing thing and I feel as though this class has provided them with the necessary tools to accomplishing that goal. Using the internet and email has really opened up a new door to Jean and I’m really happy just to see her smile when she opens up her email and gets to read an email from her daughter every week. Now she can receive pictures and videos that she otherwise might not have been able to see, and that to me, makes everything completely worth it. And not only that, but now Jean can email me as well and keep in contact with me once this semester is over, which is really incredible.

I cannot begin to stress how great this opportunity has been for me. Not only did it give me something to look forward to doing on Monday afternoons, but it allowed me the opportunity to get to know a wonderful person. I can honestly say that this is the best course that I’ve ever had the chance to take at Pace University, and I will definitely try and convince as many people as possible into taking it in upcoming semesters. I think that helping people learn new things is an important thing in life. And, this course has given me a newly found appreciation for all of my teachers and professors of the past and also for the ones whose classes that I’ve yet to take, because having the love, compassion and patience to teach on a daily basis is a nothing short of a gift.