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Final Reflective Paper

For the past month and a half I have been going to the UHGC Center with my class to teach Senior Citizens how to use the computer. When I first went to the orientation I was very excited but also very nervous. I live at home with my 85 year old grandmother. I know how senior citizens can be when they don’t understand something. But I feel I was a little prepared with being patient with them because of the fact that I live with my grandmother.

The senior citizen I taught is Lian Fan Zhang. When she first came into the room for computer class I was a little nervous to ask her if I could be her teacher. She wasn’t speaking much English so I knew it was going to be a challenge. Instead of waiting for the next senior to come in, I accepted the challenge and asked Lian if I could be her teacher.

Our lessons weren’t going as quickly or smoothly like the others. She wasn’t just learning the computer, but also new English words. Lian was very dedicated to this course. This wasn’t as easy for her as it was for the other seniors, but she worked very hard. She would bring a notebook to class to write down all the steps for each lesson and the new words she learned. I can be a very impatient person sometimes, but I learned patience with Lian. Older adults need the extra time to learn something. And being patient is definitely a lesson everyone will learn with working with the seniors. For future students, learning patience is something that can they can personally gain in there everyday life.

The first lesson I did with Lian was how to use Google. The only thing Lian knew before was how to play computer games. Lian had never been on the internet before. I taught her one time how to use Google and by the end of the class she was on CNN looking up news. I was so amazed. She was so excited and it made me very happy to know I helped her learn something new. Knowing I helped her felt so nice.

 The next step was to teach her E-mail. I knew this was going to be very difficult so I went very slowly with teaching her how to create an E-mail account. I never touched the keyboard or the mouse because I wanted her to do everything on her own. I know sometimes people can get impatient and do the steps for their seniors. But I feel it is very important for the senior to do everything on their own. Setting up the account took the whole class time because she was nervous about privacy and her name being on the internet. I talked to her about it and explained everything. This is something a future student should be aware of. You need to inform the senior everything that is going on.

I assigned Lian homework to E-mail me, but unfortunately she wasn’t able to do so on her own yet. But then the next class she was so prepared and from then on things got a little easier. Lian can now E-mail and attach documents and pictures. She was so happy and excited that she learned how to use the computer. She kept thanking me. She would write me E-mails during class with me and tell me how much I am helping her and how much it means to her.

It felt so rewarding to know that I had changed someone else’s life who is older then me. Usually the older person teaches the younger person something. Her smile and excitement made all of the hard work and trying to being patient worth it. Lian has family in other countries that she can now communicate with. She kept thanking me over and over again because this really meant a lot to her. And it meant a lot to me that I could help and was apart of this experience.

This course has made me think about how else I can help others, especially the senior citizens. They are changing with the times and are trying to keep up with the new generations. This class was a really good experience and I am happy that I was apart of it. I think it is so good and beneficial for college students to spend time with an older person outside their family. This class not only helped the senior citizens but it helped us college students’ mold a little more into mature adults.