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CIS 102T

Professor Coppola

Reflection Paper

My experience with service learning

My experience with service learning has been fantastic and fun-filled in CIS 102T. From the beginning it has been interesting to find out various things in one course. Not only did I learn things on the computer and about parts of the computer, but also I learned about senior citizens and became a part of their lives. Professor Coppola was a joy to work with. She made things stress free and was very accommodating. There was a lot of work that went into this class on her part and I appreciate the result of her hard work.

When I first started this course, I had no idea what to expect. A friend of mine recommended it, and said it was enjoyable. During the first class, I was nervous for meeting my seniors for the first time and also I wasn’t sure if I was going to be fully prepared to teach them, but Professor Coppola kept me at ease. She was always so very calm and ready to take action. Over the first five classes I learned a lot about the class, shortcuts on the computer, and about the community partners.

I really started to understand the lives of senior citizens during our 5th class. Also, CBS was coming by during this class to start a story about our volunteering. It was a great experience to be in front of cameras while using props to get a feel as if our bodies were aging. Hindered sight, lowered hearing, decreased dexterity, and foot pain are just some of the examples that we went through in order to increase our empathy towards older adults. Getting interviewed by the reporter from CBS was awesome. I’ve never been on the news before so it was a great experience, but it was just the beginning.

Orientation at the Hallmark was when I finally was confident enough to take on the challenge of helping these older adults. I was paired up with Marilyn Amdur and Marge Watson. I didn’t know really what type of work ethic to expect from them, but they both seemed genuinely excited. The past seven classes haven’t just been about the computer, it was about bonding with someone from another generation. I got to hear stories about typewriters and different countries such as Peru, Ireland, Italy, and Chile. Marilyn was once a teacher and Marge worked in the library at Rutgers. I can go on and on about there stories and the experiences I’ve had with them.

Marilyn had an email set up and was pretty familiar with all the buttons on the computer. Her goal was to be able to send emails in Spanish to her family and friends in Latin American countries. I figured out the keyboard shortcuts for accents, the tilda, and upside down punctuation. Every time we did something new, Marilyn’s face would light up with joy. I showed her how to delete emails, set up her contacts, search on Google, and find videos on Youtube. CBS come into her apartment to film us while we fixed up her Gmail contact list. We both loved answering their questions and just telling the camera our story. We were also both thrilled when we finally saw the story air on television. Our families were both very proud. Marilyn has a great foundation of computer skills and I plan to enhance them with her in the future.

Marge was very new to the computer. Although she could type very well, she had a lot of trouble with the mouse. We did change the double clicking speed as well as the speed to help ease her troubles with the mouse. Also, after every session, I had her play around with the “little guy” (that’s what she called the mouse) on a mouserobics website. Be as it may, we still created an email for her, as well as find customer service stations and telephone numbers for her to fix her steamer. Marge had two big goals of being able to shop online and researching genealogy from the 1850s and immigrants from Ireland. We accomplished them both. I even left her on the last lesson and she was still searching for her grandmother all by herself!

Finally, the hardware team was my term project. I had a lot of fun with the group we had and met some really awesome people. It was great to hear Andrew and Kori talk about the technical part of the computers because they definitely know more than I do. It was nice to be fixing and setting up the computer rooms at the community partners because it was all selfless. I feel as if our group really did care about these rooms especially after working with the seniors.

This class was a great experience and I will recommend to everyone who I feel fit to socialize with the older adults. I learned a lot while meeting fantastic people. It was something that I wouldn’t have done on my own and for that I am greatly thankful.