

Spring 2013

Personal Reflections from ePortfolio: AHRC New York City

Olivia Bustos
Pace University

Recommended Citation

Bustos, Olivia, "Personal Reflections from ePortfolio: AHRC New York City" (2013). *Community Action Forum: Seidenberg School*. Paper 17.
http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/forum_seidenberg/17

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Ivan G. Seidenberg School of Computer Science and Information Systems at DigitalCommons@Pace. It has been accepted for inclusion in Community Action Forum: Seidenberg School by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Pace. For more information, please contact rracelis@pace.edu.



by [Olivia Bustos](#)

Image



[My Biography - What I Am Bringing to AHRC New York City](#)

My name is Olivia Bustos and I am a senior at Pace University studying Marketing with a concentration in Global Marketing Management. I was born and raised in San Francisco, California. Prior to Pace University, I studied Graphic Design at San Francisco State University (SFSU) for 3 years. While attending SFSU, I was working full time for an E-commerce jewelry company, Stella & Dot. Initially, I started as a Tier 2 Customer Service representative and gradually worked my way up to a Stylist Relations- Field Development Associate. After visiting New York for the first time to visit a friend who attended Pace, I knew I had to make changes and move to New York, which is how I ended up at Pace University. Currently, I intern for Tarte Cosmetics in their Digital Marketing Department. I am overly excited to graduate this May. Aside from school and work, I enjoy painting, hanging out with friends, and attending concerts. I am a hip-hop, rap, and r&b junkie but enjoy all types of music.

While living at home in California, I volunteered at a local community center. I would attend the daycare facility and help children with their homework. I have helped at food banks and worked with local nonprofit organizations. I can bring to AHRC my school education and passion for helping people. When others around me are happy and content, I am happy and content. I love painting and would be ecstatic if I can help bring out the artist in various individuals amongst AHRC.

A drawing by Marisela.



What is the ACC device?

What is InterAACt and how does it support communication and self expression?

Language is the foundation of communication and expression and in order for it to be truly useful, language must have a framework and structure. Language is much more than a random collection of words and phrases. The language framework used on an AAC device should be appropriate for the communicator, meaningful to the recipient and relevant to the environment within which the communication is occurring.

It is because of this principle that DynaVox has combined a range of clinical evidence with powerful technology to create the most complete language system available on AAC devices today. InterAACt is the language framework used on all DynaVox devices and it allows individuals with speech and language disabilities to successfully communicate, develop high level language skills and express themselves, in everyday activities. InterAACt provides the communication messages needed to say what you want, how you want and when you want. InterAACt uses familiar communication settings that are natural and easy to use. Many language systems provide the tools for basic communication, but InterAACt provides the tools for complete communication and self expression.

(News Story) of 1/31/13

In class blog comments:

Today's class was really interesting. I enjoyed the presentations and the films of members from AHRC. The voice technology was really interesting and intriguing. It's amazing that someone for so long was unable to have a voice and with technological developments, this individual can now express himself/herself. We were told that our AHRC partners are going to be adults amongst the AHRC community. Once we meet our partners, we get to decide what we want our project to consist of. I am really looking forward to having fun with my partner and finding a way to express ourselves within our project.

"People are experts of themselves." The only way to get to know our partner is to talk to them directly. Asking questions is going to be key to communicating with our partners. Working as a team is going to be huge in the process of helping one another. Everyone has something to offer and everyone can learn from one another. Most importantly, being positive will make this experience exciting and fun! I was excited to learn that I will be paired with a person who uses an ACC device. I am excited to learn everything I can from my partner regarding this device.

The question presented is whether or not it is fair to let disabled individuals play sports.

Many years of my life were spent inside gyms, on soccer fields, and running around a dirt mound. Sports were my life for 10+ years and while playing sports, I never once came across an individual with a disability. If I did, this person's disability was not easily noticeable on the surface. Although I never came across a disabled individual in my sporting days, I do believe it is fair to allow disabled individuals to play sports. However, I can understand why some people would be opposed to this and the main reason being a safety concern.

In the article, "Young disabled athletes forge an accessible path to starting lines", Mary Kate Callahan is proving wrong, the people who told her she cannot compete in statewide swimming competitions because she does not have use of her legs. I don't believe it matters how a task is accomplished as long as that task gets done. My point is, people overcome amazing personal battles every day through strength, training, practice, and determination. The article called out some good questions such as, "Should a starting light be used rather than a starting gun for a deaf athlete? Should a swimmer with one arm be allowed to touch the wall with his head instead of his hand? Should a track athlete in a wheelchair be allowed to use arm strength rather than leg muscles to propel toward the finish line?" These simple changes would not affect anyone in any of the mentioned sports.

In the article, "Feds: Schools must Open Sports To Kids With Disabilities," the U.S Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights stated that children with disabilities have the right to participate in their school's extracurricular activities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. It is only fair to allow the same opportunities to people with disabilities as any other person. Why exclude someone from something they are determined to do? A key point that the article mentioned was having a certain standard or ability requirement in order to join sports team. Although this does not seem right, the reason I feel they are implicating such standards is for safety reasons. You wouldn't put allow a high school basketball player to play on an NBA team unless his skill level was up to the standards of the professionals. Such instances are similar in middle school sports. The more advanced players underwent "tryouts" and were divided in teams with similar skill leveled individuals.

Two other articles I found online relating to this topic were, "Disabled to get fair shot to play" and "Students with disabilities have right to play school sports, Obama administration tells schools." In the first article mentioned, the Federal Government is asking that all schools give people with disabilities a fair shot to play on sports teams. This article states that, "Education officials are insisting schools cannot exclude students from participating in sports based on disabilities. It says that students should always be given the opportunity to try out

for a sport." It is important to point out that these new implications do not guarantee a spot on any sports team. However, it does guarantee the equal opportunity to try out and participate. The second article I mentioned discusses this issue regarding to school extracurricular activities. A 13-page guidance was sent out to various school districts insisting that all individuals have the right to play in school sports. This article mentions that any required aid that is not an advantage to the disabled person is by all means allowed and offered.

It is only fair to give everyone the same chances and opportunities to play in any sport offered.

Blog (and News Story) of 2/21/13

Today I met my partner Marisela. She has difficulty speaking and is deaf. When I first met her she had a huge smile on her face, as did I. I waived hello and immediately she used her ACC speech device to ask me "how are you doing?" and "what is your name". Marisela taught me how to say my name in sign language. I am very excited to be partnered with Marisela because she is teaching me so much sign language and in return I am helping her use the ACC speech device. Through the help of her device, I learned that she loves to draw, cook, and take pictures. She has two brothers, Oscar and Elvis, and one sister, Linda.

For our semester project, we decided to make a movie of her life and the things she likes to do. We are going to highlight her amazing ability to draw and her photos that she has taken. During our time together today, we both realised we had our ethnicity in common. She and I are both Mexican. Marisela seemed very happy about that and I was told that she takes great pride in being Mexican. I look forward to learning more about her life and the things she likes to do.

There were three articles on disabilitycoop.com that I thought would be interesting for Marisela. The first article was, "Apple puts spotlight on disability offerings in Apple store." This article talked about all the applications offered on an Ipad, Iphone, and other communication devices. Another article was, "Researches look to make Ipads more accessible." Communication devices hold such a great impact on Marisela's life because it gives her a voice. Without her device, she is unable to say all the things she wants to say. Lastly, the article, "Dispute Erupts As Ipad App for Nonverbal is pulled" was very eye opening. Two businesses care more about patents then giving someone with verbal disabilities the chance to have a voice in the world. It is actually very sad to believe that common sense situations are often over looked and misunderstood by businesses.

Blog (and News Story) of 2/28/13

In class blog discussion:

Today in class, Marisela and I started to add more buttons on to her ACC device. We were able to make a "Pace" button. Along with the Pace button, we talked about our Pace semester project together. We decided that we are going to make a movie about her life. She seemed to enjoy watching the movies that were prerecorded on her Ipad device. We realized that we are the exact same age, 22 years old, and our birthdays are within months of each other. Another exciting characteristic that we have in common is that we are both Mexican. I was able to help Marisela add buttons to her device that allowed her to tell people she is Mexican and that she is working on making a movie about herself. The direction of the movie that we are going to make is about her being Mexican, her family, and the things that she likes to do. In addition to making a movie, we are eventually going to add buttons and more vocabulary to her device, which will allow her to order food from local fast food restaurants, such as McDonald's. I am really excited to start making the movie with Marisela and getting to see her outside of class. I was given her schedule from Alena, Marisela's friend and AHRC partner, and I plan to visit her at the AHRC community.

News Blog Story: Robert Saylor's Death Ruled A Homicide.

I was very saddened by the article stated above. I believe the article made a very valid point about police officers (and people in general) not having special training to handle situations where a person has intellectual and developmental disabilities. In some aspects, I feel that police officers are taught to treat everyone they encounter the same or else they will be seen as being bias and unfair. However, in many situations police officers must respond to calls in the proper manor and form because all circumstances are not the same. In Robert Saylor's case, I believe the employees did not understand or know they were dealing with someone who had intellectual or developmental disabilities. I do not think calling the police was the right option at all. Every theatre (most of the time) has it's own form of security. I feel that the security guards working for the theatre could have dealt with the situation better than a police officer. One reason I feel this way is because handcuffs were not needed to remove someone from a movie theatre. Especially when they are not causing harm to others around them. In situations like this, it is always interesting to see the outcome of what will happen to the officers who handled Robert's situation. Recently, there have been many incidents in the news where a cop is involved in a victims death. Majority of the time, you see the decision's leaning in favor of the police officers. Overall, I believe what happened is very tragic and police academies/training programs should learn how to handle individuals with intellectual and development disabilities

Blog and News story 3/7/2013

In class blog update:

Today, Marisela and I added more vocabulary to her ACC device. She is now able to tell her friends and family that she goes to Pace on Thursdays. Alena (Marisela's partner from AHRC) had informed me that her and Marisela have been working on the buttons on her ACC device so that Marisela can have confidence to go up to her peers and speak to them. She said that Marisela is still getting use to what the buttons mean and what they tell other people. We have also added the types of pictures she likes to take. Sometimes it is hard to add the new vocabulary because my sign language is not up to speed with hers. We downloaded ASL dictionary on her Ipad in order to learn sign language at a fast pace. Next week, we are going to start filming. I thought it would be a cool idea to have footage of her walking around Pace and using her ACC device in class. I think it would be nice to bring in some drawing materials, so that we can draw together. She told me this was one of her hobbies. Lastly, I plan to visit Marisela at AHRC and film her during some of her classes.

News story:

The video I found inspiring for Marisela was titled, "Deaf Women in Film." I believe Marisela would like this because her partner from AHRC tells me that she loves to act. Marisela will pick up a microphone and pretend to sing during some of her acting classes. I think this youtube clip would be motivation for her to learn more sign language. This would allow her to communicate more with her friends and family. It would also give her the confidence she needs to go up to someone and start speaking to them through sign or with her ACC device. Another great article I found through this website was regarding the ABC show Switched at Birth. This article was posted two days ago regarding the recent episode that was all ASL based with no captions. Viewers had to pay close attention to the TV in order to understand clearly what was being said. This is very inspiring because people who communicate through ASL are recognized. These individuals are being incorporated with nation wide television programs. The show has multiple cast members who are deaf. The episode was about budget cuts for schools which hits home for a lot of us. I think Marisela would find this show entertaining and educational.

Blog of 4/4/2013

News Story for 4/4/2013: Books of Hope, Found in Newtown Gunman's Home

Sandy Hook elementary school is a very tragic and heartbreaking story. I remember when the news reports were starting to come out and they kept emphasizing that the young man who murdered the students and faculty members had Asperger's disease. They kept associating his wrongful and appalling act to him having Asperger's. They questioned what led him to do such a volatile act and whether or not Asperger's was the key reason. In the article, I believe the author of the book, Mr. Robinson, has an amazing point. His point was trying to explain how easy it is for someone to be mislabeled and how words can often mean a lot more when addressed to a particular individual. He makes an evident point in his blog to state that people who have Asperger's are not prone to becoming murder's. (This is what some people thought after the Sandy Hook elementary tragedy.) It is wrong to label people with words that are invalid to who they are as a person and to those who fit under the same category generalization. I believe every individual is different for a reason no matter how many things they may have in common. Yes... Mr. Lanza had Asperger's. But this **does not** mean that all people with Asperger's are one day going to snap and become murderer's.

In class blog:

Today, Marisela and I got to review the videos we have been taking on her Ipad. There are a lot of clips from her at AHRC, which is very exciting to watch. The video I watched today, had Marisela making a dream catcher. When talking to Alena, Marisela's partner from AHRC, she explained to me that Marisela could not grasp the concept of the word "dream". They were unable to explain to Marisela what a dream was, what it meant to have a dream, and what was her dream in life. I can imagine this would be very hard to explain with sign language. I tried to explain it to Marisela in class myself (although my sign language is very bad). It seems she understands the word dream but when you try to ask her what her dreams are, she cannot properly respond to the question. (Either because I signed incorrectly or she does not fully understand my question.)

As for her video, I plan to go to AHRC tomorrow to visit her for the second time in her art class. It is really cool to see her in action and see how her picture has come to life since the last time I saw her. I added more buttons to her device, which will help her in everyday life. During class, we took the time to walk around pace and take photos/videos outside. Marisela really enjoys working outside and I would love to be able to take her around the campus during our next class time

Marisela and I are both artists. Here is my drawing, which Marisela got to see.



My Mid-Term Reflection Journal on [Book] *Miracle Boy* and on My Project

When I first enrolled in this class, I did not know what to expect but heard through the grape vine that it was a very rewarding course. I was selected to partner with an individual from AHRC who is hearing impaired and cannot speak. In addition, I was informed that she could not read well. I was given a packet about her ACC device she uses to speak. A brief introduction was given to me and two other classmates to view a demonstration of how the device worked. As the demonstration was happening, I couldn't help but think how frustrating it may be at times to depend on someone else. Especially when you cannot voice your opinion without having the vocabulary programmed into your device. When I first met Marisela, she had a huge smile on her face and she was excited to come to Pace. I do not know sign language and I was unsure of how to communicate with Marisela. Within the first few minutes all that fear went away because she was teaching me how to spell out my name in sign language. I was so impressed and so intrigued to learn more. Marisela's helper, Alena, told me about the site life print and during the first few classes, I used life print to see if I can learn words to communicate with Marisela. When reading the book, *Miracle Boy*, I noticed that he mentioned how people treat him like a child sometimes because he physically shows signs of being disabled. People oftentimes do not know how to treat individuals with a disability so that communicate to them in a childish manor. Marisela and I are the same way and I cannot imagine someone treating me differently if I had a disability.

During one of the weeks, I discussed with Marsiela that we are going to be making a movie together about her life. We walked through her device and I learned about her family and things she likes to do. This project is important to me because it is a way for her to show her independence and express whom she is. Just like in the book, *Miracle Boy*, he stated, "...a mission to give people with disabilities the means to control their own lives, have full and equal access to everything society has to offer, and live outside of institutions, in their own homes, with the assistance of personal aids they hire and control themselves." This quote was very touching because it expresses how all people deserve the opportunity to become whatever they want and do whatever they want. For individuals with disabilities, this may require the help of an aid, which is okay. But being able to be independent is very important. Marisela has the ability to make her own choices in life. Having choices is having freedom. No one should feel trapped within his or her own body or mental state.

I have been adding buttons to Marsela's device regarding her daily routines. I began filming her in class using her device. I taught her how to take pictures with the Ipad and how to record videos. She is very intrigued with learning new applications on the Ipad. Technology helps Marisela in so many ways. In the book, Ben makes a vow to never feel sorry for him because someone may be in a worse position. Instead, he should feel grateful for what he does have. While creating this project, I have learned that there is always going to be someone who is in a harder predicament than I am.

When I went to Marisela's art class at AHRC, I got to see her classmates and the facility. Everyone was very happy to be there and each person had something to say about him or herself. While watching Marisela draw in her art class, I got the pleasure to meet a man who was extremely smart. They called him the "walking encyclopedia" because his mind is filled with so much information. I went to AHRC to record more videos of Marisela in action. Although her video is not complete, I am excited to start making edits and

voice recording over the parts that we do have. It is very hard to communicate with Marisela at times because her reading comprehension is limited. She understands words but entire sentences can be difficult to comprehend.

Miracle Boy was very enjoyable and exciting for me to read. Ben took his situation and turned it into something great. He didn't want to be looked at as a pity- case nor did he want peoples sympathy. Ben is a model figure for people who feel trapped within their own circumstances. In comparison to Marisela, I believe she has all the power in the world to accept her disability and do something amazing. Her sign language is very impressive and she is an amazing teacher. Marisela would be an awesome sign language teacher because she is patient and she makes sure you understand the hand motions perfectly. I hope her video portrays to the viewers who she is and how she is able to communicate with other people.

My Final Reflection Journal on My Project

This class has impacted my life and I hope my partners life. I learned so much from working with Marisela. Prior to meeting her, I was nervous about how I would be able to communicate with her. The reason for my initial feelings were based on the things I was told about her advisors: Marisela cannot hear nor speak. Also, she has a hard time reading sentences and understanding words. I do not know sign language and was nervous I would not get to say as much as I wanted to say to her. I am now overjoyed to say, I was wrong. I was able to communicate to Marisela because she was able to teach my sign language.

During the semester, I began to help Marisela create more words and phrases so she can communicate more efficiently. At times, I noticed she did not know how to spell words. My observation was based on the fact that she would type on the Ipad but her typing did not spell out a correct word. I realized that utilizing the internet and her Ipad would be helpful for her if she was able to see pictures of what someone meant. Pictures would allow her to get an understanding of what someone is trying to explain to her. As the weeks went on, Marisela learned many new words, phrases, and was able to navigate around her ACC device without any confusion.

Now that the semester has ended, I can truly say I gained a friend in this experience. Marisela is an amazing girl and we realized we have a lot in common. She is always smiling and ready to have fun. When I visited her at AHRC, we were able to hang out in a different environment other than the Pace classroom. I was able to see how her day is and what she does in her program. She is super talented when it comes to art and being that I am a painter/drawer myself, it was a nice commonality that we shared. I was able to show her some of my paintings and got the chance to give her some tips in the AHRC art class. I felt that Marisela and I grew a trust for each other. She knew that if she had questions or any problems that she could come to me and ask.

Through this class, I learned that everyone has something to offer. Everyone is talented, gifted, and special in their own way. Each person has a story and I think everyone should be able to tell that story to world. Marisela got to tell her story to the entire class and I believe people who did not know her so well were able to get a sense of who she is and what her life is about. I believe the film impacted my partner tremendously. During the presentation she was very excited to show her film. Her facial expressions showed excitement and I believe a tear was shed. But this tear was a tear of joy. It impacted me a lot. I was very honored to help Marisela get her story out into the world and be another form of communication for her. I would not have changed or missed one class with Marisela. Every week, I couldn't wait for it to be Thursday. I will truly miss seeing her. Hopefully, I will see her again soon and maybe continue to work with her through the program.

Thank you for a great class Professor Lawler.

My Certificate of Recognition by AHRC New York City

