



## Internet and iPad Technology Help Student Reach His Goals

Gene Debusk, an adult student at the Rhea Valley Elementary School class in Meadowview, Virginia, set his goals the first day of class when he said, "I want to learn to be a better reader and I also want to learn how to use a computer and the Internet." Gene has definitely reached these goals and more.

He initially began using the computer to write sentences I was pleasantly surprised to find out that Gene was quite the creative writer! He was extremely proud to print his sentences and take them home to study and share with friends and family whom he referenced in his work. Then I encouraged him to write poems and stories, many of which were funny and entertaining. He loved adding graphics first from the Microsoft Word program and then he learned to go on the Internet to look for one (a tractor, cow, or barn) that would exactly match his story.

As his confidence on the Internet and his reading skills progressed, he set another goal, which was to play a banjo. He was so excited because a friend had let him borrow a banjo, but he didn't know how to tune it. Again, we turned to the Internet. At that time, Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program had purchased an iPad for my class and Gene had been the first student to use it. He was truly engaged by it because Gene thought it was easier to use than a desktop or laptop computer.

In just a few minutes, we found a website that offered tutorial videos ([freebanjovideos.com](http://freebanjovideos.com)). Gene could listen to the directions, watch the finger placement, listen to the sound of the note, and then try to match it on his banjo. I was very excited to see technology inspire this interactive and hands-on learning. The entire class and I were thrilled to encourage and cheer him on. When it turned out that his banjo strings were worn out and wouldn't remain in tune, a fellow student surprised Gene with a set of all-new strings.

Gene is truly one of the most dedicated and ambitious students I have ever taught. At the age of 61 now, he has a full-time job and a working farm and no reason to come back to school except his desire

to learn. In two years, he has never missed a class except for a doctor's appointment and when he was hospitalized for nine days. When I visited him in the hospital, he had his book bag next to his bed and asked me if we could read together before I left. We ended up working for almost 2 hours!

I am so proud of what Gene has accomplished. He has truly met all his goals with the use of technology and has expanded his learning experience inside and outside the classroom!

Submitted by: Kit Bieschke-Baker,

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