STAMFORD, Conn. — If it’s a Wednesday afternoon, you can bet Stamford’s Cristina Vernazza is counting down the hours until her class that evening.

This is her first semester taking classes through University of Bridgeport’s accelerated adult IDEAL Program, and she is studying child psychology, general psychology and even Buddhism. Vernazza said that for the first time in a long while, she is excited about learning.

“I love going to school and I look forward to going to class. Going back to school was the best decision I ever made.”

One of the reasons she is enjoying the program is the close relationships she has been able to build with her professors. All students have access to their cell phone numbers and email addresses in case they have questions, and the class sizes are small, which allows for better focus.

“Everything is so personalized,” Vernazza said. “I’ve been able to absorb so much information because of that.”

Before she started the IDEAL Program this year, Vernazza earned her associate’s degree in criminal justice at Norwalk Community College. Her plan is to earn her bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of Bridgeport and complete her master’s after that.

“I’ve always been fascinated with how we as people work, and what drives our behaviors and how we think,” she said.

After just a few classes, Vernazza joked that she has become the unofficial spokesperson for the University of Bridgeport.

“My brother’s girlfriend is studying psychology, too, and I’ve been saying ‘You have to go to the University of Bridgeport!’ ” she said.