

### Carlos from Mexico

Carlos was a high school math teacher in his country. Currently, he works in a manufacturing company as he improves his English. He needs to work with his state to see if he meets licensure requirements. He most certainly needs to take some education classes and pass state teacher exams, but he feels like that is a long way off. Right now, he is in a high-intermediate-level English language acquisition class in a large, urban adult education program. He hasn't scored high enough to be placed in the more advanced college bridge courses, but he thinks that's what he needs to get ahead.

#### Personal/Professional Goals:

- Return to a job as a math teacher
- Move out of a lower-wage job in manufacturing to a job in teaching
- Navigate the licensing processes for teachers in his state

#### Academic Goals:

- Move up to the advanced college bridge course
- Enroll in courses needed for teacher licensure to become a math teacher
- Prepare for state teacher tests

#### What language and skills do you think he needs to meet these goals?

Carlos comes to class with a college degree from his country. He has the advantage of having experienced and most likely developed some academic language and skills in his first language. Carlos needs intensive practice with these skills *in English*. He needs to learn how to navigate the state licensing system. Most likely, the information he needs and the tests he needs to take are all online, so he needs to be comfortable in the digital world, something that can become a barrier for someone like Carlos (Warschauer & Matuchniak, 2010).

Carlos has reading and writing needs similar to those outlined in the other two vignettes in the unit. Let's concentrate here on some of Carlos's other needs:

#### Navigating Systems Towards a Career Pathway

- Identify and utilize resources (print, electronic, and human) to learn about the state licensing procedures
- Recognize, develop, and maintain relationships that may provide further or future assistance, for example, a local math class (Carlos may be able to find a math teacher mentor in the community)
- Use appropriate documentation processes for tasks (filing forms, writing emails)
- Choose appropriate processes for communication with others (e.g., scheduling a meeting with a math teacher, emailing a state office)

**NOTE to teachers and administrators regarding re-credentialing:** As professionals working with English language learners, it is important to be aware of issues related to **re-credentialing**. For example, it is

important that a student like Carlos not be directed to a high school equivalency course. See *Supporting Skilled Immigrants: A Toolkit for ESL Practitioners* (<http://www.globaltalentbridge.org/toolkit/>) for more ideas.

### **Advanced Listening and Note-taking**

In addition to the reading and writing skills outlined for Aadan and Inez to help them meet their high school equivalency diploma goals, Carlos needs practice with advanced listening and note-taking strategies:

- Employ listening skills appropriate to the content and task at hand (listening for gist, specific information, signal words)
- Practice with note-taking while listening
- Employ multiple strategies for organizing information (graphic organizers, outlining) to show the relationships between concepts

### **How can instruction in his high-intermediate-level English language acquisition class begin to lay a foundation for these skills?**

- Carlos needs to learn academic language and skills *in English*. While he may have practice in a classroom setting, practice with reading and listening strategies, note-taking, and classroom expectations/routines that are common in a U.S. classroom will benefit him greatly.
- He needs exposure to and practice in the digital world. Within his language class, he can practice these skills often and through rich experiences for problem solving in today's world (**visit Module 2 for instruction and guidance in this area**).
- He will also benefit from practice with effective communications strategies so that he can more easily interact with potential mentors in the community. Because of his interest in math, any classroom activity that incorporates numeracy will be a bonus for him (e.g., working with and analyzing real-world data).

**What strengths does he bring and what challenges does he face in meeting his goals, based on the information provided?**

#### **Strengths:**

- A transferable credential
- Resilience: Working and attending school at the same time demonstrates that Carlos is committed to his education.
- Experience in the workplace
- A professional goal he feels passionate about

#### **Challenges:**

- Even students with prior formal schooling may not have acquired the academic language skills needed to meet their educational goals. Given his current work situation and enrollment in a

program that may be focused primarily on life skills, Carlos may not be receiving instruction that is adequately rigorous or challenging for him.

- Demands of work
- Managing his expectations: He has a long road ahead of him, but with time and the right supports (**rigorous instruction, career-focused content**), it can be possible for him to attain his goals.

Reference:

Warschauer, M., & Matuchniak, T. (2010). New technology and digital worlds: Analyzing evidence of equity in access, use, and outcomes. *Review of Research in Education*, 34, 179-225.