

The Learning Connection WINTER 2015

Literacy Network teaches reading, writing and speaking skills to Dane County adults and families so they can achieve financial independence, good health, and greater involvement in community life.



Puguh, Juniarti, Yeshi, Dolkar, and Carlos practice asking 'Could you help me'

Improved Skills Mean Greater Opportunity for UW Hospital Staff

Carlos Sierra knows that English is vital to his life and work. He is determined to improve his skills to do well in his job. "I have to speak English every day," he explains.

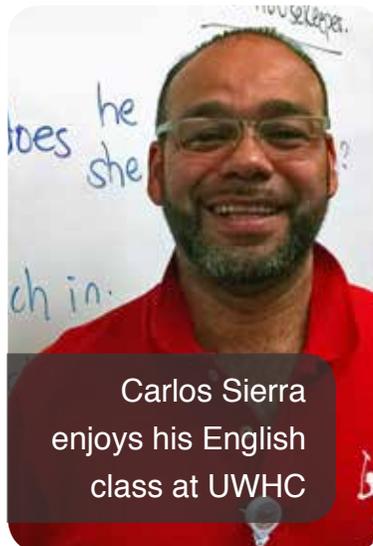
Carlos works in Environmental Services at UW Hospital and has recently joined Literacy Network's on-site English class in partnership with UW Hospital and Clinics.

Carlos and his co-workers study English to improve their communication with patients, visitors, coworkers, and supervisors. They practice explaining their job duties in English and asking polite questions such as, "Could I come in to clean?"

Carlos is enthusiastic about the opportunity to take classes at work. "The

class is good," Carlos says about the Workplace Literacy class. "Now when other people talk, I understand more."

Carlos also benefits from Literacy Network's free citizenship tutoring program. He is planning to apply for U.S. citizenship next year, and has been working with a Literacy Network tutor on his citizenship goals since March 2015.



Carlos Sierra enjoys his English class at UWHC

Two classes, one in the morning and one in the late afternoon, accommodate employees from different shifts. Each group meets twice a week, and while they work hard in the class, they can often be heard laughing, too. The sense of community in class is beneficial to language learning. Carlos notes: "Being around more people, I learn more."

Classes are Opening New Doors to Stability for Salah!

“When the professor at MATC asks a question, I think of something I learned at Literacy Network and it helps,” says Salah Kheder proudly. Salah takes two to three classes a day between job assignments. Because of his opportunity to take free English classes at Literacy Network, Salah has learned quickly. After arriving in Madison last year with no English skills, he has advanced from Level 1 to our Level 2 ESL classes.

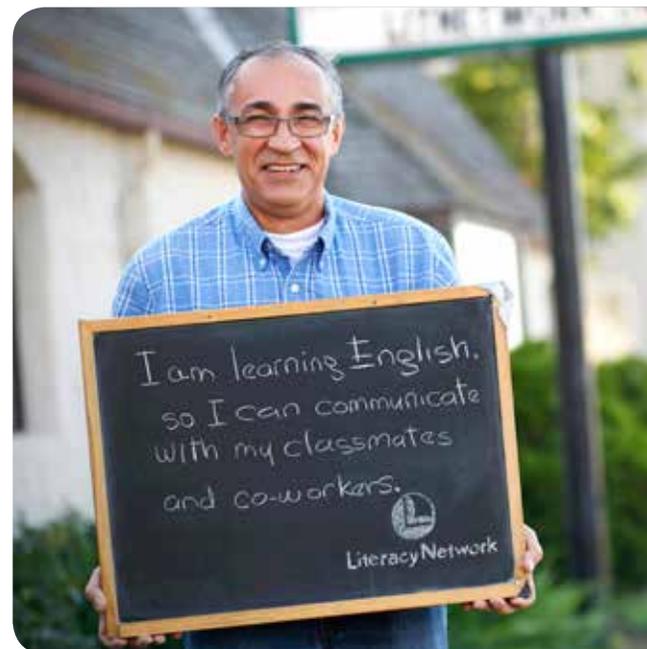
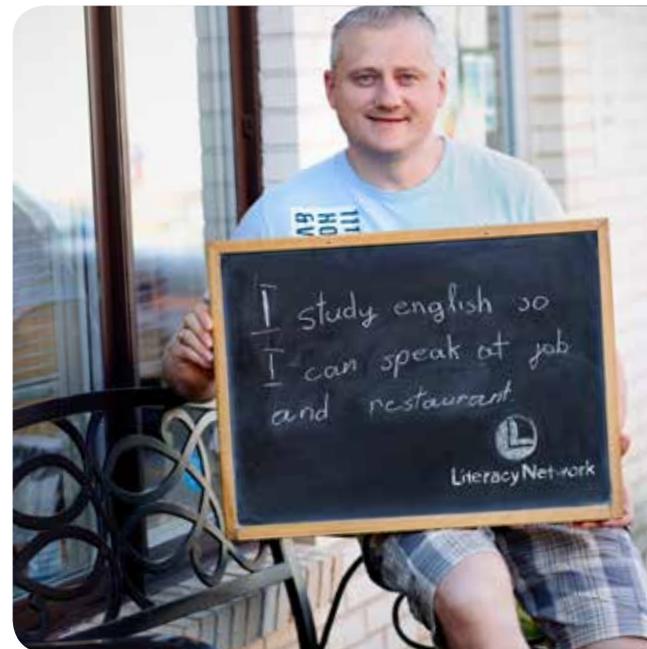
Throughout his life, Salah has juggled multiple languages. In addition to his native Kurdish, he mastered Arabic while growing up in Northern Iraq. As a member of the minority Yezidi religious community, learning the language of the Muslim majority was essential for work and daily living. Despite his linguistic versatility, learning English has been demanding.

Salah recently found a new job through a staffing agency. His interview for a shipping/packaging position included personality questions along with the standard job history and education queries.

“There were many questions,” Salah says. “Do I like to work with people, do I like to work alone?” The interview also included a math test – the universal language of math was no problem for Salah. “I got 90%!”

Although he has made great improvements, job-hunting remains a challenge. He estimates he is able to handle about half of the questions or requirements of a typical job application.

Salah’s short-term goals are simple: get a steady job and a better apartment. As his grasp of his third language steadily increases, his chances will only improve.



Photos by Kim Keyes



How You Make a Difference: A to Z

Angel wants to communicate better with his grandchildren.

Beatriz wants to find a job.

Carlos wants to get his GED.

Demetria hopes to better understand her coworkers, her children's teachers, and her baby's doctor.

Edith is currently a welder, but would like to move into a job in the health care field.

Felipe hopes to improve using his English with people at work and his children's teachers.

Greg's aim is to read, write, and use the computer better so that he can go to tech school.

Harka wants to improve his overall English and continues to apply for jobs with better pay and benefits.



Imelda hopes to communicate better with her customers at the restaurant where she works.

Jazmine wants to be able to read multi-syllable words, read for her job, and read books.

Linda's goals are to understand recipes and read to young members of her family.

Malik wants to improve his English so he can attend a 4 year college and get a degree a business.

Noemi wants to feel more independent at places like the grocery store, and to communicate better with her children's schools and teachers.

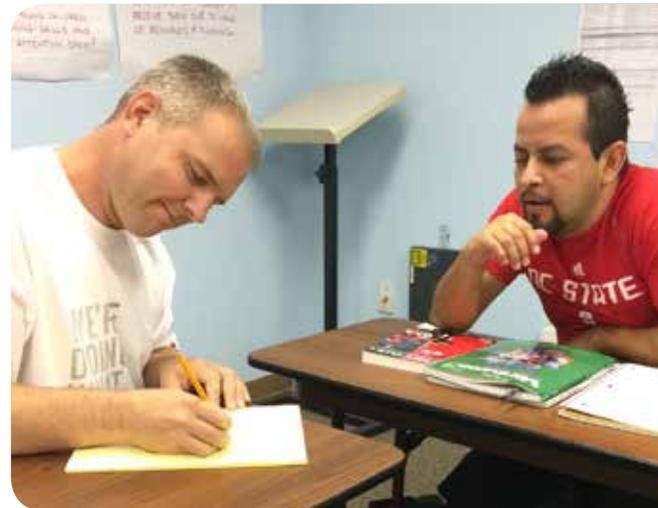
Oscar is working on academic English so he can get his GED.

Rita hopes to be a medical translator and work in a clinic.

Sancha wants to improve her English and have more employment opportunities.

Tamala's goal is learning how to use a computer.

Ubaldo needed help studying for a forklift certification exam to get licensed -- and he passed!



Vameej wanted to work on his resume.

Xiao needs help with everyday English, like asking about prices and for directions.

Young hopes to improve his reading and writing so he can apply to school.

Zhijian wants to be able to read every night before bed.

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