

Interprofessional Education for Inclusive Schools  
May 7, 4pm-6pm  
Burk Hall 170

## Case Study Discussions

### Case Study #2: Adolescent in Transition

Carlos is 15 years of age and recently immigrated from Guatemala with his parents and younger brother and are living in a suburb of the SF Bay Area with relatives. His mother and father were both physicians in Guatemala and are currently working on becoming licensed to practice in the U.S. However, this will require more schooling for his parents and they both currently work in restaurant jobs to make ends meet. Upon entering school, Carlos was placed in the eighth grade in the middle school in his neighborhood. His teacher, Ms. Sanchez, is a native Spanish speaker and has been able to assist Carlos in acclimating to the English instruction in the classroom through individual sessions at lunchtime and after school. Initially, Carlos spoke minimal English, as Spanish is his first language and most often spoken at home. His parents reported to his teacher that Carlos struggled with learning English and yet communicated better in conversations with his friends in Spanish. His school performance at home in Guatemala was also described by his parents as “full of difficulty” as he struggled with reading, both in Spanish and English.

In the past year, Carlos has made some progress in learning English and receives weekly support from an ESL teacher who helps him with learning the vocabulary needed in his classwork in all subject areas. In addition, his parents have employed an after-school tutor for a few hours each week to assist him in completing his homework. Carlos often stays up until midnight to complete his assignments, particularly in social studies and English. His parents often translate for him so that he can understand the basic concepts in his assignments and this appears helpful, yet causes stress for him and his family due to the extensive time involved. He has experienced success in completing his math assignments on his own, as minimal translation is required and he has always been strong with numbers.

Recently, Carlos’ teacher, Ms. Sanchez, has brought up to his parents some of her current and future concerns for their son. She has noticed how difficult it is for him to learn English in order to complete grade-level work. She has had to adapt curriculum extensively for him to complete the basic content in each of his assignments, in most subjects. He particularly struggles with writing in both Spanish and English. Due to her concerns, she referred Carlos to the school psychologist. The school psychologist completed Carlos’s evaluation and she thinks that he has auditory processing issues specifically related to memory and attention.

Further, Ms. Sanchez is concerned that he may have an underlying learning disability and would like to refer him for special education evaluation. In addition, Carlos will be facing transition to high school in the coming year and Ms. Sanchez worries that he may not be

prepared to enter a regular high school classroom. Carlos' parents are very worried also, but are hesitant to have their son identified as a student with a learning disability, as they fear the stigma that might involve. In addition, Carlos has also been telling his parents that he does not want to go to school and would rather work with his parents in the restaurant.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What are the key opportunities to identify the underlying difficulties that Carlos is experiencing in learning English and succeeding in school?
2. How could plans for coordination of Carlos' upcoming transition to high school be developed for optimal outcomes for him and his family?
3. What factors of quality, outcome, or cost are obvious considerations to achieve an inclusive school placement for Carlos in high school?
4. What professionals need to be involved to achieve coordination and inclusion with his classmates for Carlos?
5. What strategies could improve the situation for Carlos and his family?