



Student Profiles

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Manuel

Background information

Manuel is in 10th grade and is 17 years old (he was held back in third grade). His family moved back and forth between the United States and Mexico, where his grandparents live. While in Mexico, Manuel generally does not attend school. When he returns to the U.S. he does not always return to the same school and has often changed schools mid-year as the family moves between jobs.

Home language skills

Manuel speaks a combination of English and Spanish at home with his family. When he is in Mexico he has to communicate in Spanish with his grandparents. His conversational speaking and listening skills in Spanish are at an intermediate level. Because he never attended school in Mexico, he has not learned to read or write in Spanish. He has had no exposure to academic content taught in Spanish.

Disability

In the third grade, Manuel was identified as having a learning disability. He has received special education services in math and reading since that time. Manuel's decoding skills are well developed, but he struggles to read text quickly and with ease. He also struggles to comprehend topics presented in text. However, he can understand concepts that are above his grade level. His teacher often asks a classroom aide to read aloud Manuel's assignments so he can complete his work. Sometimes she reduces the number of math problems of one type that he has to complete.

English language development

When Manuel is in the U.S. he uses English in class and communicates easily in social situations with English-speaking staff or students. (He will use a mixture of Spanish and English with other Spanish speakers.) He appears to be a fluent English speaker and listener in conversations that involve everyday language. He can speak in detail about topics of interest to him. Still, he continues to score at a low-intermediate level on academic English tests of reading, speaking, and listening. He scores slightly higher, at an intermediate level, in writing. He loves to write. He has been in the ESL program since kindergarten but any gains in proficiency are offset by his lengthy absences from school and his inconsistent use of English.

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