

BILINGUAL BUSINESS GOALS

ESL student plans to become language interpreter for businesses

By Jill Spear

In Guadalajara there are a lot of opportunities if you speak both English and Spanish,” says Brayan Smith Enriquez Diaz. With that in mind, he has his eyes on a particular prize. He’s studying to become a language interpreter for companies that need bilingual employees.

Given his academic success in Vista Adult School’s Advanced English as a second language (ESL) program, he’s well on his way to his goal.

Enriquez, who was born and raised in Mexico, singles out his family as one of the driving forces in his success. “My mother encouraged me to learn English. She told me that if I want to learn something, I can.”

Other family members played equally important roles in motivating him. When Enriquez graduated from high school in Guadalajara, his grandparents encouraged him to come to Vista and learn English. He researched schools online and discovered that Vista Adult School has an accredited ESL program that’s close to his new home and free of charge.

He enrolled at Vista in 2019 and advanced from ESL Level 2 to ESL Level 4 by 2020, at which point the COVID pandemic arrived, bringing virtually everything to a halt. Enriquez stopped going to classes for the year and didn’t resume his studies until 2021, when he began taking online classes.

“That was a challenge because it was difficult to ask questions during the online class without stopping everything. You have to practice your English outside class, too, and it was hard to wear a mask and understand other people,” he says.

Enriquez was glad when in-person classes began again. Now that he no longer had to wear a mask, his English began to improve once more. “It’s good to have a



Brayan Enriquez is improving his English skills at Vista Adult School and hopes to return to Guadalajara to work as a language interpreter for businesses. Photo by Charlie Neuman

native speaker in front of you and be able to ask questions.”

As his ESL teacher can attest, questions are one of his favorite ways to learn and a valuable tool in moving him toward his goal to be a language interpreter. He says she offered a lot of positive encouragement by regularly acknowledging his patience, curiosity and strong work ethic.

Curiosity is a quality that comes naturally to him. “Since I was a child, I’ve loved learning everything I can,” he says. Enriquez has a passion for reading both fiction and historical books from around the world. His teacher brought books about Martin Luther King Jr. and Amelia Earhart to class, along with the Dickens’ classic, “Great Expectations,” and he devoured them all.

Though he’s a newcomer to the U.S., Enriquez says he’s nevertheless felt comfortable in a different place and different culture. “Everyone has been so welcoming here. The people work a lot more, but they are also more open and friendly.”

In particular, he singles out those he’s gotten to know at Vista Adult School. “I really like my teacher,” Enriquez says. “She helped me overcome my obstacles and face my fears about talking with an American in English.”

“My fellow students are from all over the world: Ukraine, China, the Philippines, Japan and Brazil. They’re really friendly and want to know about the future of Mexico, and I’m just as interested in their countries,” he says.

Once he finishes his classes at Vista, which include business courses, Enriquez plans to return to Guadalajara and enroll in college to complete his studies. “Your education is what tells people about you, your family and your country,” he says.

 Vista Adult School
To learn more about Vista Adult School, visit www.vistaadultschool.org