

Khaled

Khaled is 53. He came to Canada from Lebanon in the 1970's with the equivalent of a high school education. He did some schooling when he arrived, but his English is fossilized. He can be understood but he continues to make most of the same grammatical errors that he did when he first moved to Canada.

His brother is moving to Ottawa from British Columbia now that their parents are both dead. He hopes to buy a taxi in about a year's time and share it with Khaled so that they can cover most of the day and night. Khaled knows that if he is to be successful doing this he needs to work on his spoken English and map reading.

Khaled has seen the Employment Services centre in his local shopping mall and he goes in to make an appointment. At the meeting, the employment counsellor asks him to complete an intake form. The counsellor notices that he is taking a long time to do this and when he hands it back she sees that he obviously has some problems writing English. This is confirmed when he explains his reasons for being there. The employment counsellor discovers that Khaled has his own car and has been driving for twenty years. He is currently working as a part-time baker but is finding that the hours he is given are not sufficient for him to be able to support his family. The employment counsellor recognizes that Khaled is not a candidate for an English as a Second Language program as he has been in Canada for many years and can communicate in English at a Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 6 level¹. She suggests that Khaled might like to join a one-on-one Literacy and Basic Skills program where he will work with a tutor to improve his writing and learn how to use a map. The employment counsellor arranges for Khaled to meet with an education counsellor the following week.

Khaled meets with the education counsellor who does a detailed assessment. They look at the skills that Khaled will need. He decides that he would also like to join a small group of learners who are learning how to use the computer and his tutor suggests that he should also work on his speaking skills, as well as working on his reading skills, using a map book to learn about indexes, grids and identifying street names. They agree that he will work on some conversational English and vocabulary that he is likely to use as a cab driver. All this information is noted in Khaled's training plan. When he is feeling more confident, he will apply for his Class G driver's license.

Khaled gets on well with his tutor and together they work on the skills outlined in his training plan. Khaled passes his driver's test and there is a big celebration in the program. Then Khaled gets the bad news that his brother has found a good job in Victoria and won't be coming to Ontario. Khaled is very upset and saves up the money to visit his brother.

The literacy program hears nothing from Khaled for the next few months then they get a call to say that he is back in Ottawa. He was unable to get his brother to change his mind and at the moment they are not speaking to each other.

Khaled has just met with his employment counsellor at the Employment Services centre, and although he is not going to be able to be a taxi driver, his counsellor has been able to work with him on job search skills, including writing his résumé and interview skills and he has got a full-time job as a delivery driver where he will receive on the job training. He tells her that in time he might try for his Class C driver's licence so that he can become a bus driver.

Khaled thanks the education counsellor and says that none of this would have been possible without the support of the program staff and his tutor who gave him the skills and confidence to move forward. The next day his tutor receives a beautiful bunch of flowers from Khaled and a short note, with no spelling mistakes!

¹ **Canadian Language Benchmark 6**

Speaking

- communicate with some confidence in casual social conversations
- communicate facts and ideas in some detail
- provide simple narration
- use the phone to communicate on familiar matters
- experience stress during phone exchanges with strangers
- considerable stress affects performance

Listening

- can follow main ideas, key words and important details on relevant topics at a slower to normal rate of speech (face to face formal and informal conversations, audiotapes and radio broadcasts)
- can follow short, predictable phone messages
- may need repetition
- may have frequent problems following unknown details on the phone in unpredictable conversations and messages when context and topic are not familiar