**Past, Present and Future:**

Matching Career Expectations to Past Experience, Present Situation, and Future Goals

Do you plan to be a doctor? A teacher? A nurse? A business person? Are these career expectations *realistic*? In other words, will you be able to *achieve* this goal? Could you really do it? How many years will it take to achieve that goal? What are all the steps? Do you know anyone who has the job you want?

To have high career *plans* is a good thing. But to have *unrealistically* high career plans can be a bad thing. You should think realistically about how much time, money and *effort* you want to spend to achieve your goal.

Maybe you need to start making money *now* because you have a family. Or, maybe you don’t want to spend the next eight years of your life becoming a nurse. (Yes, you heard me right! Three more years in ELL classes, one year getting a GED, and then four or more years of college getting your nursing degree. Is that something you can really do?)

If time and family responsibilities are a problem, the best option would be to look at some career alternatives like jobs in the same field that require less education or experience. You can always continue your education and keep moving towards your goal, but it is best to start with a more *achievable* goal. That way you won’t get feel bad and end up with a job that doesn’t interest you at all.

Read the following examples of students who need to match their career expectations with their current situations.

**Jorge**

Jorge in interested in being a doctor. He really likes to help people. He helps his sick grandmother and his younger siblings. Jorge finished high school in Mexico and plans to be a doctor. His English is not very good and he is currently in ELL 2 at a local adult school.

1. What should Jorge do next?
   1. Finish ELL classes until his English is much better.
   2. Apply to medical school.
   3. Apply to college.
2. Jorge has trouble speaking and understanding English. Should he try to get a job as a Home Health Care Aide now or after he has taken more ELL classes?
3. He has had a custodial job in the past at a local school. Where could Jorge apply as a custodian that might lead to another job in the line of work he wants?
4. Hospital
5. Health Clinic
6. School
7. Department Store
8. Urgent Care Facility
9. What other jobs will Jorge be able to do which are on his path to being a doctor?

(Write “yes” or “no.”)

a) Custodian in a health clinic \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

b) Cashier at a convenience store \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

c) Stocking supplies in a hospital \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

d) Working as a Home Health Aide \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

e) Working at a parking ramp \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

f) Becoming a CNA \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

g) Becoming a nurse \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

h) Teaching computers at a local school \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Hung**

Hung is from Vietnam. He never studied English in his country. He has only been in the U.S. for two months. He was a farmer for many years in Vietnam and used wind turbines to pump water to his crops. Hung sees many occupational prep classes at the school where he is now studying English. He does not know how to plan his future. He needs to find a job to support his family now.

* 1. Which job best suits Hung’s background in farming?

1. Working in a cafeteria.
2. Working in landscaping.
3. Working at a convenience store.
   1. Should he continue ELL classes? Why or why not?
   2. What would be a good occupational prep class for Hung in the future?
4. Carpentry
5. child care
6. CNA (certified nursing assistant)
7. renewable energy
   1. Why?

**Mina**

Mina is a young woman who studied English for 3 years in her native country and 2 years in a school in America. She graduated from high school, but did not apply to any colleges because she was too busy working at a parking ramp.

She really wants to be a nurse, but she did not do well in science classes in high school. She is married and her husband works full time, but more income would be very nice. They have 2 children and are planning to have more. Her sister and mother help her take care of her children.

* 1. What should Mina do first?

a) Apply to nursing school at a local college.

b) Continue learning English at school and sign up for the pre-CNA class.

c) Get pregnant soon.

d) Go back to working at the parking ramp.

* 1. If Mina becomes a CNA, will she still be able to be a nurse if she wants?
  2. What job could Mina try to get right now to help her family *and* also help her on her path towards nursing?