

# THINKING OF THE FUTURE

## Improved English skills opens door for Afghan student

By Jacob Peterson

**W**hen Noman Hamahang and his family arrived in the United States last year as refugees from Afghanistan, he realized that they'd need to improve their English skills to live full and productive lives in their new home.

"Our main purpose was to learn the basics of English for communication," Hamahang said. "It's the common things we should do for people who we don't know how to communicate with."

Hamahang was connected with the Lincoln Unified Adult School through his family's caseworker. He said this caseworker was incredibly helpful in getting him registered at the school.

"He informed us about the adult school and gave us information about it," Hamahang said. "It was so hard for the first time, we couldn't speak any English."

Lincoln Unified Adult School is a member of the San Joaquin Adult Education Consortium, a partnership of adult education providers aimed at improving adult education in the region by coordinating resources, programs, and services to help adult learners achieve success.

Hamahang says that learning a new language was difficult at first, but he knew he had to persevere, as without being able to communicate he and his family wouldn't be able to do basic things like go grocery shopping or speaking with a doctor.

"The country that you are living in, it is so important to learn the language," Hamahang said. "That's very important, I think."

Hamahang notes that one thing that has made learning the language easier was his teachers, whose patience with students he praised.

"In my opinion, I think other instructors should be friendly and patient like my instructors" Hamahang says. "It's because of that that students are able to learn the language."

The importance of learning how to communicate is something Hamahang says



Noman Hamahang found help to improve his English skills at Lincoln Unified Adult School. Photo by Bea Ahbeck

his teachers at the Lincoln Unified Adult School impressed upon him. He remembers one teacher pointing out how beneficial sharpening his English skills would be in the future.

"I discussed my [future] career with my instructor," Hamahang said. "She said, 'You have to learn first, once language isn't so hard you can easily find a good job.'"

Hamahang says his teacher also made sure he was aware that his educational journey didn't have to stop once he was confident in his English skills. He said the prospect of continuing in to higher education in the future is something he's given serious thought.

"Going to a university is something that has definitely become one of my goals," Hamahang said. "I'm just looking to pick a field that best suits my own personality."

Hamahang says he is thankful for his time at the Lincoln Unified Adult School. He has become far more confident in his English skills and recommends others

who struggle with language barriers do the same.

"Now it's easy to talk with people," Hamahang says. "I suggest for everyone if they don't know the language to join the adult school."



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For more information about English as a second language and other programs at Lincoln Unified Adult School, visit [lincolnadultschool.lusd.net/](http://lincolnadultschool.lusd.net/). To learn about more adult educational opportunities in the area, visit the San Joaquin Adult Education Consortium's website at [sjadulted.org](http://sjadulted.org).