

Carl

A junior at Truman High School, Carl is involved with the varsity basketball and baseball teams and is currently taking two AP classes in addition to Pre-Calculus. Carl strikes me as a student who is capable of achieving in difficult classes because of his ability to ask questions and provide thoughtful ideas and insights. Throughout the first semester, I noticed that he carried a significant amount of background knowledge in math, but sometimes was not able to put it all together or stay engaged long enough to contribute as much as he could to the class. In addition, there were times when I felt that Carl was a little unorganized, routinely asking me for extra copies of the notes for reasons unknown to me. Because he is taking several upper-level courses at Truman HS, I am curious to know if it is difficult for him to keep up with his classes because of the increased workload. Considering that he plays two varsity sports, is Carl able to find time in his day or on the weekend to do homework? In Pre-Calculus class, I've noticed that Carl rarely turns in homework even though we spend chunks of class time working on them.

On the Pre-Assessment during my work sample, Carl got a score of 1 out of 8, answering only problem 3b correctly. This happened to be the question that many students correctly answered by using properties they learned in the previous unit. Though I do not recall using any specific strategies to meet Carl's needs throughout this unit, I made an effort to walk around to each group and check certain students' understanding of the content. On the exit ticket I gave on December 4th after first introducing the properties of logarithms, Carl correctly answer one out of three questions by using the inverse properties of exponential and logarithmic functions. However, it is entirely possible that he just guessed, considering that the solution was one of the numbers used in the problem. Though he did not frequently attend office hours at the time, I was able to help Carl on two or three occasions during periods in which he did not have class and

chose to stop by. These extra sessions supported the ideas that I already had about him: he is a bright student who can understand the material if he puts forth the effort and if I provide the support necessary for him to succeed. On the summative assessment I gave at the end of my December teaching experience, Carl received a score of 21 out of 30. Carl scored slightly lower on this quiz compared to his other quizzes. Though this was a passing score, I noticed that there were some misconceptions in his work that needed to be addressed. He started several problems incorrectly and failed to apply arithmetic and algebraic concepts for other problems.

As I look forward to finishing out this school year, I need to continue to check in with Carl about his homework to see if there is anything I can do to support him. When I have confronted him previously about his homework, he mentioned that he would get them in, something I have not seen consistently. In fact, he will sometimes wait until grades are due to seek help during my office hours and turn in any incomplete homework.

As with all students, Carl wants to be engaged in his learning. I recall him making a statement describing his feelings about math classes: “We don’t learn how to buy a house or anything like that, but thank God I know how to solve a logarithm.” In his sarcasm, I heard a student who wants to understand the practical applications and relevance of what he learns in school. I have noticed that Carl is sometimes detached in class and this is reflected in the results on his exams, the consistency with which he turns in homework, and his general posture. In my future lessons, I must keep in mind that students are engaged when they see how what they learn affects how they live, and I believe that the same is true of Carl.