The materials presented here are visual aids used in a presentation on citizenship instruction for older and physically challenged adults. They consist of a series of "screens" containing information on: demographic information on samples of citizenship students in 1995 and 1997, illustrating changes in the population; motivations of and barriers faced by the new population; effects of aging that have implications for the classroom; visual, hearing, and learning challenges for older learners, and classroom solutions for them; challenges from other sources, including poor study skills and literacy problems; the citizenship teacher's challenge; ways to address physical issues in the classroom environment; ways to address motivation and lifestyle challenges; a performance contract for students; a sample letter to the student's family affirming participation in citizenship learning; a sample unit outline; notes on possible classroom learning aids; sample visual aids for a unit on the three branches of the federal government; classroom procedures for dictation, testing, and use of realia; and a brief list of World Wide Web resources. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)
Citizenship Instruction for Older and Challenged Students

Patricia Petherbridge-Hernandez, Ph.D.
Kathleen P. O'Donnell, Ph.D.

Authors: Passport to Success in the U.S.: Citizenship
J. Weston Walch, Publisher
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Agenda

- Introduction
- Who are the new citizenship students?
- Strategies for the cohort's needs
- Strategies for teaching citizenship topics
- Resources

Who are the new students?

1995/1997 Demographics-Sample

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Total enrolled</th>
<th>Drop-outs</th>
<th>18-30</th>
<th>31-50</th>
<th>50+</th>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>2221</td>
<td>781 (35%)</td>
<td>90 (4%)</td>
<td>617 (28%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2253</td>
<td>392 (17%)</td>
<td>77 (3%)</td>
<td>779 (35%)</td>
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</table>

Total did not change substantially
- Drop-outs decreased by half
- 18-30 decreased slightly
- 31-50 increased
- 50+ increased from 33 to 45% of the total

Who are the new students?

- Impelled to become citizens by loss of benefits
- Often did not pursue citizenship previously due to numerous barriers
- Now, they must face challenges or lose benefits

Between a rock and a hard place...
Who are the new students?

What are effects of aging?

Age affects all facets of the person:
- Appearance
- Musculoskeletal system
- Cardiovascular system
- Respiratory system
- Excretory system
- Endocrine system
- Reproductive system
- Nervous system

These changes have an impact on classroom performance.

Who are the new students?

Challenges for older learners

Sight issues
- Visual acuity
- Clarity
- Focusing capacity
- Dark/light adaption capacity

Hearing issues
- Reduction in speech discrimination
- Performance deficit with background noise or speech that is sped up

Thought/learning/memory issues
- In processing capacity (storage)
- In recall (memory)

What are the implications for the classroom?

Classroom solutions

Sight issues
- On the board, use large letters.
- Keep distance from board to a minimum.
- When using video or projection in a darkened room, allow time for adjustment to light changes.

Hearing issues
- Keep background noise to a minimum.
- Speak slowly and distinctly.

These changes have an impact on classroom performance.

Challenges from other barriers

- Discomfort with learning process
- Poor study skills
- Literacy issues (not just English literacy)
- Negative self-concept
- No time to study
- No family support
- No internal motivation

Strategies for addressing new needs

Teacher’s challenge

Student challenges
- Physical impairments
- Semi-literacy
- Lack of motivation
- Self-concept issues
- Lifestyle issues
- Need for citizenship

Citizenship skills
- English oral & written proficiency
- Knowledge of US History
- Knowledge of US government

Addressing physical issues

- Have students sit in front to see and hear better.
- Pair with student who can assist.
- Use large print.
- Speak up, speak clearly, repeat.
- Encourage taping, requests to slow down.
- Encourage standing during class if needed.
- Take short breaks in long sessions.
Addressing motivation

- Ask students for benefits of citizenship, list them; add more; post the list; review
- Affirmation: "I will be an American citizen." Every class. Post a banner.
- Remind students that while studying is short-term, the benefits are permanent.

Addressing lifestyle issues

- Discuss time management:
  - Provide a recommended amount of study.
  - Ask students to figure out what times they can study: on the bus, while baby-sitting, instead of TV.
  - Discuss basic time management tips.
  - Different ways to study: listen to tapes, review materials, write sentences, etc.
- Provide a contract identifying goal, commitment, benefits.
- Provide a letter to family members asking for support, identifying benefits to the family

Contract

I, __________________, will be an American citizen. I will do this because I want to:

- 
- 
- 

To do this, I will study at least ___________________.
I will study _____________________.

(Signature)

Letter to family

Dear __________________,

Your relative, __________________, will be an American citizen. S/he will do this because:

- 
- 
- 

S/he will study at least ___________________. S/he needs your support and encouragement.

Please help him/her study. Help him/her have time to study and go to class.

When s/he is a citizen, the whole family will benefit.
S/he can do it!

Address learning issues

- Use strategies that build success:
  - Break every concept and task into small steps.
  - Constantly check to verify learning is occurring (many cultural, social, or personal barriers prevent students from admitting they don't understand).
  - Review class with "What did we learn today?" Each student, who responds is applauded.
  - Use praise, body language, tone of voice and other positive reinforcement to create a positive atmosphere.
  - Atmosphere that making mistakes in class is OK.
  - Take more time than for classes with less challenged students.

Address learning issues (cont.)

Structure the class to help challenged learners:

- Affirmation: I will be an American citizen.
- Preview of the day's lesson
- Content learning in themed segments:
  - vocabulary
  - content, using realia
  - dictation practice

Positive reinforcement throughout

- Review of the day's lesson
- Homework assignment or study reminder
Strategies for teaching Citizenship content for this cohort

Sample theme: Pilgrims

Vocabulary: Discuss, have students make flash cards
Content: Story of the Pilgrims; read, summarize orally in own words, discussion
Realia: Calendar, pictures of Pilgrims, first Thanksgiving
Practice: True/False, Short answer, Puzzles, Multiple choice questions selected from the 100; Have students make flash cards of questions
Dictation: vocabulary, phrases, dictations from practice list
Homework: Complete cards, study, next assignment

Learning aids: help & fun
- Home-made flash cards & tapes
- Memory aids
- Charts and Tables to organize information
- Role plays
- Puzzles
- WWW

Flash cards and tapes
- Students buy index cards—2 colors; make as you go
  - 1st color: vocabulary words
    - English on front, their language on back
  - 2nd color: 100 practice questions
    - Question on front, answer on back
- Make as you go
- Allow students to tape dictation
- Another set of cards could be for dictation

Memory aid—13 colonies
- 3 with “New”
  - New York, New Jersey, New Hampshire
- 6 with women’s names
  - Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Delaware
- 3 long names
  - Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania
- 1 island: Rhode Island

Charts and Tables

Role play—3 branches
- Legislative
- Executive
- Judicial

A student or group of students acts as Congress and passes a tax law. They hand a piece of paper with the law on it to the "President." The "President" signs the paper. He asks a student acting as IRS agent to get the taxes from a taxpayer. A taxpayer finds the tax is not constitutional and asks a judge to decide.
Strategies for teaching Citizenship content for this cohort

Puzzle—3 branches

Strategies for teaching Citizenship content for this cohort

Dictation practice

- Begin with single words
- Advance to phrases
- Finally, use actual practice sentences
- Try to use different speakers
- Encourage students to tape someone reading the questions so that they can practice on their own. (If they each get a different speaker, they can trade tapes with each other for more practice.)

Test-taking practice

- Begin simulation of real test as course progresses, easier to more difficult
- Practice answering on actual answer sheet

Realia and tools

- Realia kit
  - Flag
  - Tape of anthem, pledge of allegiance
  - Pictures of monuments, leaders
  - Scantron forms
  - Pictures of money showing presidents
  - Calendar for holidays
  - Documents
  - Telephone book

- Other tools
  - Banner: "I will be an American citizen."
  - Index cards with questions
  - Vocabulary cards
  - Role play items
  - Tapes of different speakers doing dictation

WWW Resources

- www.ins.usdoj.gov
  - Has interactive test, study guides
- www.casas.org/09Citizenship/09CitMaster.html
- www.usia.gov/usa/usa.htm
  - Lots of information and links
- www.mindspring.com/-citizenship/links.html
- www.nnirr.org
- www.whitehouse.gov/WH/Welcome.html
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