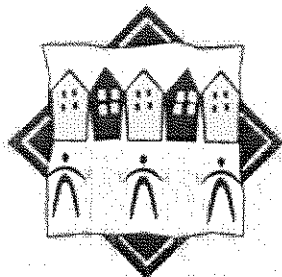


## Citizenship Teacher Writings



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Writings HOME**

**Civic Participation &  
Citizenship  
Collection**

**NELRC**

### The Impact of Citizenship on Daily Life Nicole Lassas, Jackson Mann Community School

#### Overall Objective and Connection to Civic Participation

This was the first civic participation geared activity I used in my citizenship class. I chose this activity because I thought it was a good starting point to draw the link between students' communities and the citizenship process. Often times the citizenship process is viewed as a separate kind of knowledge that is learned for the test. I wanted to breakdown the wall between citizenship and civic participation or community involvement in my classroom by showing that the two are intertwined and very much a part of each other. The way we did the activity got students to think about their community on a daily level and how citizenship related to their day-to-day lives. Overall, the activity revealed a stronger connection between gaining US citizenship and students' lives in their community.

#### Learner Profile

There are 8 students in the class. Most of the students are intermediate speakers of English. They come from a variety of backgrounds. There are 2 students from Russia, 1 from Cambodia, 2 from Guatemala, 1 from El Salvador, 1 from Brazil, and 1 from Iraq. The class is a 12 week class that meets once a week for 3 hours.

#### Description of the Activity:

There are many ways to do community mapping activities. I started by making sure that all students understood what "community" is. Then, for homework, each students drew a map of their community, starting from their home, based on where they go on a daily and weekly basis. The following class students brought in their maps. On the board I drew a column for each student and listed the places that were on their maps. Once their information was on the board we had a discussion based on the following questions about their maps.

*What is the first thing you notice about your map and the places you go?*

*What seems to be important to you?*

*What does each map have in common with each other?*

*What are some of the differences between students' maps?*

*Where do you speak English?*

*Where do you speak your native language?*

*Both languages?*

*What are some places that are not on your map but you would like to have but can't because of language or other (?) barriers?*

*What areas of your life are affected by being or not being a US citizen?*

As we discussed the questions I made notes to supplement the lists. For example, I would write an "I" next to responses that students said were "important" to them. I also drew lines between students' columns to show

similarities.

After we discussed the questions, the maps, and the connections between maps, I asked the following questions:

What are your impressions now about your maps?

Would you draw your map differently now?

How would like your map to look a year from now? After you get citizenship?

By the end of the activity we had a collective intricate map that uncovered the interwoven web of life in the community and how citizenship affects their lives. I closed by asking students what they thought of the activity, if they found it helpful, and what they learned.

#### **Evaluation or Evidence of Learning:**

Students remarked that getting US citizenship ran a lot deeper into their lives than they realized. This activity also gave students a good opportunity to know about each others' lives and recognize that they share many of the same issues.

#### **Teacher Reflections:**

I thought this was an appropriate introduction activity to introduce the civic participation aspect of citizenship. It helped to show the connections between students' everyday lives and the citizenship process. Most students view the process as preparing and passing a test on very general information. While this civics and history knowledge is important, it is rarely expanded upon and related to students' lives. As a way to move beyond the test, I found community mapping a good starting point because it uses students' lives as a basis for understanding their community and how citizenship directly affects each of their lives in their own communities.

The community maps went over very well in an impromptu sort of way. The students all live in the same community give or take a few blocks from each other. I asked them where they speak English and their native language, which places they avoid in their community, which places were most important in their lives, and lastly in what areas of their community will citizenship affect/improve. The results exposed that the areas of their life that are most important (home, school, work, family, bank) were also areas that their gaining citizenship will affect. The only important place they felt citizenship would not affect was their house of worship.

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