

Classroom Management for Differentiated ESOL Citizenship Instruction

Presented by Kathleen Klose and Andrew Koppel

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc.

442 Main Street, Malden MA 02148

www.ilctr.org 781-322-9777

kklose@ilctr.org 978-270-3549

Class Organization

What I do with the students:

- Teach the new lesson
- Assess the students
- Help individuals with specific needs beyond the average, such as severe pronunciation problems

What volunteers do with students:

- Help them practice civics questions and N-400 questions and definitions
- Give dictations with USCIS vocabulary
- Help students review a lesson
- Work one-on-one giving students mock interviews

What students do independently in a group or with a partner:

- Practice the civics questions
- Practice reading and writing USCIS vocabulary
- Practice conversation with topics from the N-400 personal information questions: Parts 1-11
- Practice understanding, answering and explaining the meaning of N-400 Part 12 questions 1-50

I group students by their level of preparation for the interview. Two general groups are:

Group 1: Still learning the civics content (history, government, civic responsibilities)

Group 2: Have completed all civics content. This group includes 4 subgroups:

- a. Have not yet submitted their applications
- b. Have submitted their applications
- c. Have gone in for their fingerprints
- d. Have an interview date

While I am working with Group 1 students on new material, Group 2 students work as a group or in pairs using materials I have prepared and trained them to use. They work independently or with a volunteer. They are very comfortable either way and know what they need to do and how to use the materials.

Materials are designed both to reinforce a lesson and for periodic independent practice. Materials help build recall through visual, auditory and kinetic activity. For example, the activities might involve:

- reading and matching or sorting
- listening and speaking
- listening and writing
- reading and writing.

I generally begin the class with all students and then split them into 2 or 3 groups. For Group 2, I usually ask what they want to focus on and provide them with the materials to do it. Sometimes I decide what I feel they need to work on. At present, I usually have one volunteer available each day, so those needing the most intensive practice work on-one-on with a volunteer while the other Group 2 students work independently as a single group or sometimes as two or three groups, depending on what they wish to practice. If I have a very

B. Materials to Practice Reading & Writing USCIS Vocabulary

These materials are used for peer dictation in which students take turns dictating to each other from sentences composed of USCIS writing vocabulary. Materials include:

- Packets of sentence strips to be dealt out among the students who will take turns dictating one sentence at a time for the others to write
- Colored sheets of sentences for students to take turns dictating to each other
- Reading-writing strips: Student A shows the question (in large font) to other students to read aloud. Then Student A dictates the answer (in small font) for the other students to write. In this activity, the questions target USCIS reading vocabulary and the answers target USCIS writing vocabulary.

C. Materials to Practice Conversation about N-400 Parts 1-11: Personal Information

These materials consist mostly of packets of questions. Students deal out the questions from a packet.

They can work with partners or in small groups asking and answering questions round-robin.

Laminated sheets of questions can also be used with partners or groups. Students can take turns role-playing the USCIS officer and the citizenship applicant. Students can also use the questions for less structured conversation about family, jobs, travel, etc. Gaining speaking confidence is important for the interview.

D. Materials to Practice Definitions of N-400 Terminology and Questions

N-400 Part 12: Additional Information Questions 1 – 50

There are many ways to explain or define this difficult vocabulary. I have made my own definitions which are continually evolving. I think this is the most overlooked and most difficult part of the preparation. Some of my students encounter no “What does it mean?” questions at their interviews while others are asked to explain a dozen or more terms. I am creating lessons to introduce and clarify this terminology and I also recommend Citizenship Passing the Test by Lynne Weintraub, published by New Readers Press. My students spend a lot of time practicing ways to explain the meaning of these very difficult questions which are written less in English than in legalese. I describe 6 types of materials below with activities for each.

I recommend you take a photo of these materials when you are using them so you can match them to these descriptions later. I’ve tried to give detailed descriptions, as without looking at the materials, it can be confusing.

Terminology Activities

DEFINITIONS 1 – Flash cards:

Description

One side has a word or phrase used in the N-400 form.

The other side has a “simple English” translation/explanation of the term.

The cards can be sorted into groups as appropriate to the lesson.

Activity

Say the word: **smuggle** (for example)

Ask: **What does it mean?**

Check the answer on the back.

Organization

- One student plays the teacher and asks the other students:
 - What does it say?
 - What does it mean?
- Deal out the cards among a group of students. Students take turns asking the meanings.
- Partners ask each other.
- An individual student practices with the cards.

DEFINITIONS 2 – Colored terminology cards:

Description

Colored cards with N-400 terms in bold face and simple English in plain type. Color coding helps students remember which cards they've finished.

Activity

Student A says one bold-faced term and then asks: What does it mean?

Student B answers.

Organization

- In a group of students, pair them off with partners. Partners alternate teacher-student roles. When finished, they exchange their card with another pair of students. The group continues until all pairs have practiced with all eight cards.
- In a group of up to 8 students, each student has one card. Student A says a term to Student B on the left and asks for a definition. Student B answers and then says a term from his/her card for Student C to define. They continue round-robin until all the terms have been covered, then pass their cards to the person on the left and repeat the activity.

DEFINITIONS 3 – Match Sets

Description

10 terminology sheets with matching definition cards. Cheat sheets are included. All components are numbered by set for ease of sorting if cards get mixed together.

Activity

Match blue definitions to red N-400 terms.

Organization

Students can work individually or with partners. In a group, they can exchange sets as they finish them. After matching the definitions, they check the cheat sheet for accuracy.

DEFINITIONS 4 – Match cards

Description

6 sets of colored-coded match cards, (grouped by topic) and a cheat sheet.

Activity

In each set, match the definition to the N-400 term.

Organization Students can work on the table or on pocket charts on the wall.

- Chart: Place one set of term cards on the chart and deal out the definition cards. Students place their definitions next to the appropriate term. When all have finished, they check the cheat sheet for accuracy.
- Table: Each student or pair of students works with one set of cards. After matching, they check the cheat sheets. When finished, they passed the set to the next pair of students.

Questions Activities

QUESTIONS SET 1 – What does it mean?

Description

Color-coded packets of N-400 question strips and simple English definition strips. Cheat sheets included.

Activity

Match each question to its simple English definition.

Organization

Around a table, individuals or partners can work on one set, check the cheat sheets, then pass the packet to another person or pair to work with.

QUESTIONS SET 2 – Yes or no.

Description

A set of N-400 Part 12 question strips, including one copy each of questions 1-45, and multiple copies of questions 46-50 (marked with red stickers). Questions 1-45 are usually answered with “No.” Questions 46-50 are usually answered with “Yes.”

Activity

A group leader with good reading and pronunciation skills should hold the strips so the other students cannot see which ones have a red sticker. The red dot strips should be distributed throughout the other strips so that every 5th to 6th question will be a red dot question. The point is for students to listen carefully and not automatically answer “no” to each question.

Organization One-on-one or in a group with a volunteer or strong student leader as leader.

Important Points for materials designed for independent work:

- Materials must include cheat sheets or some way for students to check their answers.
- Use color-coding, numbering or some other way for sorting the materials if they get scrambled.
- Do each activity with your students before you ask them to do it on their own.