A Country of Immigrants, More or Less

Trustees: Bernard Rapoport and Amy Wong Mok
Subject: Civic Education, Government, American History
Grade Level: 6-12
Time: 90 minutes
Topic: Social Studies

View how this fits state standards

View Amy Wong Mok's video or read the transcript

View Bernard Rapoport's video or read the transcript

Materials:

- Computer with Internet access, external speakers, and a LCD projector OR access to a computer lab with Internet access and headphones for each student

- Updated Media Player recommended. Download QuickTime. Problems playing? Check our Media Help page.

- Student Worksheets (MS Word, PDF)

- Download Lesson Plan (MS Word, PDF)

Learning Objectives:

Students will:
1. compare and contrast notions of citizenship and non-citizenship;
2. evaluate the power of metaphors;
3. examine patterns of immigration in the US; and
4. appraise the role of education for citizenship.

PREVIEWING (45 minutes)

1. Start the class by introducing the topic of immigration. Ask students what they know about immigration in the US, the life of recent immigrants, the process of integration, their own countries of origin, etc.

2. On the board, write the three following phrases:

- a melting pot

- a kaleidoscope

- a salad bowl

3. Ask students to select the phrase that best describes contemporary America. Ask them to discuss aspects of modern American life that are explained and/or ignored by the metaphor of their choosing. Make sure that all three metaphors are explored.

NOTE: If students are familiar with concept maps, you may opt to map out each phrase. Allow time for students to make up connections in their conceptual maps. When they finish, ask volunteers to share their ideas.

4. Point out that each metaphor captures views on immigration and attitudes towards immigrants that exist at certain periods of time. Ask students if they know anything about patterns of immigration into the US and how they have changed over the last century.

5. Direct students to the *Ellis Island* website at http://www.ellisisland.org/immexp/wseix_4_3.asp. Divide the class into small groups and assign each group a time period to search (there are six time periods). Ask student to pay particular attention to the immigrant's countries of origin. After students read information about their time period, ask them to present their findings chronologically. Ask student to reflect on the pattern.

NOTE: If the lesson is taught in middle school, ask students to prepare a poster to present their findings.

6. With the broad picture in place, ask the students if they know anything about immigration patterns in their home state. Encourage them to think about recent, as well as 19th century patterns that may have been reflected in the geographical names, particular crafts, and businesses in their state.

7. Next, direct students to the American Life History project online at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html. Ask them to select 3-4 states and to listen to immigrant's stories recorded in those areas. What surprises them about the stories? Ask 3-4 students to share most memorable/vivid/unusual/etc. stories that they have encountered. On this website, have students review the state of Texas, because the videos they will watch feature Texans.

VIEWING & DISCUSSION (25 minutes)

1. Tell students that they are going to watch videos about two immigrants in Texas from different periods: one who arrived to the United States in early 1930s and the other in the late 1980s. Based on what the students have learned so far, ask them to predict film subjects' life stories.

2. As a class, watch the brief Bernard Rapoport and Amy Wong Mok videos. These videos can be accessed online at www.americantrusteesproject.org. If you have difficulties accessing the videos, please visit our Media Help page.

3. Discuss whether student's expectations have been met. Ask students what challenges, if any, did Rapoport and Wong Mok have in common? How could this be explained?

4. Ask students whether immigrants are generally welcomed or resisted in the modern US. What influences attitude towards immigration?

NOTE: In August 2009, the Gallup Poll indicted that 50% of Americans favored a decrease in immigration, 32% favored no change, and 14% favored an increase.

APPLICATION (20 minutes)

1. As a class, discuss the following questions:

- What is the difference between a citizen and an immigrant, an immigrant and an alien, an alien and a citizen?

- What should be done to help new immigrants to the US adjust to their new way of life?

- Should the government provide more assistance to new immigrants? Why or why not?

- Can citizenship be learned? If yes, how? If not, why?

- Is it fair to ask schools to encourage citizens' forms of behavior?

2. Divide the class into small groups and give each student a copy of **WORKSHEET 1**. First, ask students complete the activity individually. Then, ask the students to discuss their choices in small groups. Allow time for groups to come to a consensus.

3. Ask a representative from each group to report on what they did NOT count as citizenship education activities. Wrap-up the discussion and assign homework.

HOMEWORK OR EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Middle school grades can be assigned a paper that presents a history of immigration in their community. High school grades can write an argumentative essay based on class discussion and the readings from **WORKSHEET 2** OR they can write an essay that focuses on the 'citizenship education' discussion from **WORKSHEET 3**.

ASSESSMENT POINTS

Students may be assessed on:

1. completion of **WORKSHEET 1**;
2. writing skills;
3. participation in class discussion; and
4. presentation skills.