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## **Naturalization Workshop: A Capstone Project**

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Author Note

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## Abstract

The capstone project I embarked on focused on the naturalization process and how I could create a plan to better prepare immigrants that are going to begin the process, as well as how I could instill a grandiose sense of confidence in them that will not falter throughout the process. My plan of action consisted of creating a workshop for immigrants that would implement a lesson plan that would prepare and then help improve whatever knowledge of the English language and the tests that come with the naturalization process. A majority of the resources came from the USCIS "Start a Citizenship Program" page of their website (USCIS, 2020) which provides a plethora of helpful information and resources which can help create a comprehensive, concise, and clear plan that would prepare students of the workshop for the tests to come. I prepared 8 people of different immigration statuses with the aforementioned resources for a total of 1 hour a day for 5 days and then gave them a practice test consisting of 100 practice questions for the Naturalization test. After grading, I asked them of their confidence level if they were to be taking the test the next week. The results showed that 4 of 8 of the subjects achieved a passing score on the questions, and 5 of 8 stated they could confidently take the actual test a week later. With a success rate of 50% on the questions and 62.5% on the confidence level, my project fell flat of the scores that were needed to call the project a true success. More preparation and time to study for the students may result in higher success rates in future attempts with the project.

*Keywords:* naturalization, immigration, immigrant

## **Section 1: Introduction to your Capstone Project**

This project holds a true and dear place in my heart. I am a daughter of an immigrant who is a daughter of an immigrant. My mother and her siblings all immigrated here with my grandmother and were able to stay in this country of opportunity due to the birth of their youngest sibling. Thanks to that uncle's birth, they were all able to truly pursue the American Dream and make something of themselves so that they can pass on many opportunities to their children. Of the 10 siblings, there is one doctor, 3 educators of varying levels, one paralegal, one accounting manager who oversees millions of dollars of transactions weekly, 3 military veterans now law enforcement officers in various departments, and the youngest sibling who "granted" them their ticket to citizenship is now the CEO of Golden Boy Promotions, one of the worlds largest boxing promoting companies. To say that I have a personal stake in the success of the naturalization process is an understatement.

My project consisted of the creation of a naturalization workshop that would aid in tackling one major issue: a lack of confidence in the mind of immigrants that plan on tackling the naturalization process. With this goal in mind, I began to research what steps to take in creating a workshop and what parts it would need to be considered a proper workshop. The USCIS (United States Customs and Immigration Services) has a page on their website dedicated to resources that can help create a comprehensive citizenship program/workshop. This is where I pulled my resources for this project. With these resources in hand, I was able to lay down the foundation of my program and create a step by step plan for how my program was going to be developed week by week. The next big goal in the project was to find subjects to prepare and test. I found 8 subjects of varying immigration statuses (friends and family) and I established a baseline of their knowledge, and from there I created plans for each one of them so that they are not stuck

learning knowledge that is already known to them. From there, a study session of one hour a day for 5 consecutive days led up to a practice test of 100 questions for the naturalization test. The real test requires applicants to answer up to 10 of the 100 questions orally, needing 6 correct answers to pass the civics portion of the test (USCIS, 2019), so this mode of preparation will help the applicants greatly. Upon grading of the 100 questions, the subjects were then told their grade and asked if they felt as if they were adequately prepared to hypothetically take the full test within a week. Success of the project was based on 3 factors: how many people attended/participated, the success rate of the 100 question test (a 70% or higher was necessary to pass), and the rate of confidence of the subjects. 8 subjects participated and of those 8, 4 achieved a score of 70 and higher and 5 subjects said they felt confident enough to hypothetically go on to take the real test, despite one failing by one question. Of the 3 factors, only one factor of success was met with an adequate number of subjects. A test success rate of 50% and a confidence rate of 62.5% failed to meet the proper criteria for success, thus ending the project with a failure.

## **Section 2: Elements coming together**

### **Innovative Approach**

With the plan of a cohesive citizenship program/workshop in mind, I set out on my own journey to complete this project. I had to focus on bringing together perspectives of immigrants who were looking to complete the naturalization process. Initially, I had hoped to be able to utilize the perspectives of immigrants who were actually seeking help in preparing for the process. Upon further progress with the project, I realized that it would be difficult to actually find anyone in those shoes who would be willing to help a random person, so I turned to the people around me. I was able to utilize the perspectives and stories of my grandmother, my mother, two of my godmothers, my boyfriend's parents, and my best friend that I have known for quite some time. All of these people are either natural born citizens, earned their citizenship later in life, are permanent residents, or have green cards.

All of these loved ones helped me get to the best plan of action. Creating personal lesson plans based on each person's pre-existing knowledge in regards to the English language as well as historical and US government knowledge. I saw my approach as innovative because it allowed me the best chance at a successful outcome as well as the opportunity to possibly execute this plan outside of a contained class setting if I one day have the funds to do so. I thankfully had the assistance of the United States Customs and Immigration Services website which had solid plans for a program like the one I had in mind. I used the website's resources themselves and as a template for my own plan.

### **Emotional Intelligence**

The work I am doing is very indicative of an awareness of self and an awareness of others. Creating a workshop for immigrants to gain the proper knowledge and confidence

necessary to accomplish the daunting journey that is the naturalization process is something that I truly feel is indicative of awareness of others. As a child of immigrant parents who completed this process themselves, I feel that this is something that I should do and will do! It is my obligation to give this knowledge to others and let them know that there are people who want to help them and make this process much less stressful.

I believe that my approach and recommendations do consider the emotional intelligence of my audience. My audience, as of right now, is not only the staff of the IPS program who are going to be reviewing this work, but also the friends and family who I will end up roping into this assignment since it is one of my final requirements for graduating. My approach of creating a naturalization workshop will not only provide the chance of helping scared immigrants, but it will provide insight to my audience of this process that many people have to face just to potentially be accepted by others in this country. I want to give people insight. The naturalization process is actually quite the scary and stressful task, and that's coming from someone who has gone over the process time and time again for this project. I am a born citizen of this country and even I am scared of the process. In the nature of being able to help people and giving people the insight into this process that they would never have to face, my research is very valuable to others.

### **Creative Thinking**

For my capstone project, my creative framework has been very handy in completing an actual citizenship program. I have done an ungodly amount of research in regards to what exact parts people struggle on the most with the citizenship process (the interview step), which parts tend to come easiest (remembering answers for the written steps), and what exactly I can do to be

able to make these things easier and what I can do to make the easy parts more memorable and come easier when it comes time to get the actual process done. I don't want to create any "games" or anything for this because I don't feel like that would really help at all. This is a serious process and while some fun may make it a little easier, creating games for it can come off the wrong way to people and make it seem like they're being treated like children trying to take a spelling test or something.

I want to create something cohesive and legible so that if someone did have to use this program to study for the naturalization process, I want them to have all the right tools and absolutely unwavering confidence. I'd say the unique part of my project comes in the regard that I don't believe others are tackling this issue. Being able to take advantage of the resources that are available to citizens and even having the feeling of safety that you can't be forced to return to a place that you so desperately clawed your way away from is something that immigrants want so badly.

### **Your Innovative Solution**

My project is all about creating a workshop for immigrants hoping to become citizens. I am creating a plan for a clear and cohesive program that will provide citizenship seeking immigrants all of the information, practice, and confidence needed to tackle the naturalization process but also to CRUSH it and go on to be the best citizens they can possibly be. The process involves establishing a baseline of knowledge by initially giving practice versions of the written citizenship and civics test and doing a language test. From there, their language and writing skills are assessed and they will be able to start the workshop at the proper step (based on their pre-existent knowledge). I attempted to get a copy of the USCIS' Civics and Citizenship toolkit to



better guide my plans, but it did not get here in time and I could not obtain one for use of “organizations” since the website states that organizations can get a free kit (USCIS, 2020).

I would say that my solution is more innovative than others because of how I take any prior knowledge into consideration. I want people participating in the workshop to feel like their time is not being wasted and that they will be getting the proper education. I don't want someone who has all the knowledge but no confidence and no one to practice with to have to go through the whole process and learn almost nothing new and feel like their time is being wasted.

### **Section 3: Results**

My results were not what I expected or had hoped to happen. To measure success in my project, I had 3 things I was measuring: Number of subjects, success rate of the 100 question test, and confidence rate of the subjects. In each factor, I had success, failure, and failure, respectively. I had 8 subjects (3 more than I expected to even get) which is the factor I deemed a success, but the factors of test passing and confidence rate are where I failed. I had a 50% pass rate (4 of 8 people failed the test) and a 62.5% confidence rate (5 of 8 people were confident enough to go on to take the naturalization test). With only 1 of the factors I was measuring succeeding, my project failed.

While I failed in the sense of what I was measuring, the benefits and impact to my stakeholders was fantastic. My stakeholders were able to gain knowledge in the realm of the tests that immigrants must face to become citizens. My family members actually opened up and all told me stories about some of the things that they had to face when they started their own processes of becoming naturalized citizens. My eyes were opened to some of the struggles they had to put up with, but I cannot share them due to them asking me to keep the things I heard under wraps.

For the friends who were tested, I asked what the most beneficial thing they got from this process and the answer I got the most was being able to assist in something that could go on to be a bigger project if it was pursued properly. I tested two friends who were born in Mexico but have lived here as permanent residents for their whole lives (one is 24, the other is 28 with a husband and child).

#### **Section 4: Conclusion**

Compared to the results I did achieve, I really anticipated getting at least a C average (75% success rate) in the testing category and the confidence category. I was hoping that I could get a 3 out of 3 and call my project a success. My actual results, though, as I have previously mentioned, were a failure in terms of what I was measuring. I had more subjects than I thought I would have, but I had a 50% success rate in the testing and 62.5% in the confidence rate. I feel like I could have given them more time to prepare and more material to study.

It is a bit disheartening to not have had the success I had hoped for, but I am still happy with my project and I am not really upset about how it turned out. I am proud of my project and I'm proud of all the work I put into it.

## Section 5: References

**Start a citizenship program. USCIS. (2020, March 4).**

<https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship-resource-center/resources-for-educational-programs/start-a-citizenship-program>

***Register for a civics and Citizenship Toolkit.* USCIS. (n.d.).**

<https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/organizations/civics-and-citizenship-toolkit/register>

**Civics (history and government) questions for the ... - USCIS. (n.d.).**

<https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/questions-and-answers/100q.pdf>

## Section 6: Appendix

### Reading Baseline: Capstone Project Deliverable

#### Reading Baseline

- Start off with the ABC's
- Give a simple language test. Have them repeat simple phrases and sentences. Use alliterations and tongue twisters to get a further base understanding.
- Have them read a few chapters from Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's/Philosopher's Stone. Some things may confuse them like "Diagon Alley" and "Sorting Hat", but it will give them an idea of how words can be combined in the English language in sometimes nonsensical ways. Test their understanding with simple tests on the chapters they read.
- Baselines in language are decided by how much they can understand the parts of or whole chapters they read/can read.

#### Speaking Baseline

- Have them repeat the ABC's
- Give them simple sentences to repeat. Accent's in their speech are more than okay, make sure to remind them of this.
- **KEY POINT:** Test their speech comprehension with confusing word spellings and soundings like rough/cough, bear/bare, here/hear, etc. Understanding this part of speech of the English language is crucial. It allows for deeper understanding of different words.
- Baseline is decided by the ability to speak clear and cohesive sentences.

**Writing Baseline**

- **Students will be tested in writing through simple grammar and spelling tests**
- **Questions will be pulled from the Harry Potter book previously used in the reading baseline testing.**
- **Baseline will be decided by the number of tests passed or failed.**

**Once baselines are set and pre-existing knowledge is evaluated, Civics (history and government) preparation and testing will begin. One hour of studying will be administered daily for a total of 5 days. Subjects will be tested on their Civics knowledge with 100 civics questions for the Naturalization test. Subjects must achieve a 70% or higher to pass the testing.**