

Annenberg/CPB
Professional Development Workshop Guide

Making Civics Real:

A Workshop for Teachers

An eight-part professional development workshop
for high school social studies teachers

**Produced by State of the Art, Inc. in collaboration with
the Center for Civic Education and the National Council for the Social Studies**

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About the Workshop

Overview

Making Civics Real: A Workshop for Teachers is a video workshop for high school social studies teachers. It includes eight one-hour programs, this print guide to the workshop activities, and an accompanying Web site.

The workshop aims to improve civic education across the nation for grades nine through 12 through professional development of social studies teachers. Each of the eight programs presents teachers in diverse school settings modeling a variety of teaching techniques and best practices. These methodologies are applied to a variety of social studies courses from a ninth-grade government/civics/economics course to a 12th-grade law course.

This workshop is appropriate for both novice and experienced high school social studies teachers and recognizes the importance of meeting national standards for civic education. Each lesson references the national standards of the Center for Civic Education and the National Council for the Social Studies.

Civics and Constructivism

Making Civics Real illustrates the use of constructivist teaching methodologies to teach the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that comprise the high school civics curriculum.

Civics courses strive to teach students to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, including participating in society and being sufficiently informed on issues of importance to make good decisions. Among the skills successful citizens need are the ability to:

- think critically about political issues;
- evaluate, take, and defend positions about topics and issues they care about; and
- distinguish among various points of view, evaluate the validity of these views, and choose one.

Citizens must also develop a capacity to influence policies and decisions by working with others; articulating and making their interests known to key decision and policy makers; building coalitions through negotiation, compromise, and consensus; and managing conflict.

Historically, these ideas were primarily taught through reading, lecture, and paper-and-pencil testing. More recently, teachers have found great success using more constructivist methods of teaching and learning. In constructivist lessons, students construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. Constructivist lessons help people reconcile new ideas with their previous ideas and experiences, and provide a means of changing points of view as new ideas and experiences alter understanding. They help students learn to ask questions, explore, and assess their own learning.

Constructivism incorporates a number of teaching strategies, many of which are probably familiar, like simulations, debates, small-group projects, portfolios and presentations, and community and service learning. What these teaching strategies have in common is that students actively participate in the learning process, draw on their own experiences, and practice their civics skills in low-risk environments; in short, constructivist classrooms are ones in which students are encouraged to develop habits of the mind and heart that will result in long-term commitments to the skills and principles taught.

Constructivist teaching strategies typically share some common characteristics:

- Students learn to have a voice in civic life by participating in civic life, building on their prior knowledge and experience of the world, and being in situations in which both the adults around them and their peers value their points of view.

About the Workshop, cont'd.

- Since there are few areas of civic life in which a single person has unlimited power, students often work in groups to explore issues and present their findings to the class. Typically, each has a specific way to contribute to the whole and each completes an individual assignment in addition to his or her contributions to the group. On occasion, particularly well into the school year, teachers may allow students to pick their own groups. More typically, particularly at the beginning of the year, teachers select the groups so that the most verbal or reliable students are spread among the groups. Some teachers seek to balance genders and other characteristics within a group as well. Most groups range in size from three to five students.
- Many constructivist lessons involve simulations of real-world situations. These lessons help students review many previously introduced ideas and present scenarios through which the ideas can be applied to new situations.

Constructivist teaching methodologies are not unilateral, however. Most lessons use a combination of methodologies, often moving from whole-class discussion to small-group work, then to individual or small-group presentations, and back to whole-class discussion. A lesson may run for several days, or even weeks, building understanding of major ideas as it progresses.

The teacher's role often is that of a mediator and coach, pushing students to reflect, to elaborate on notions they already hold, and to reformulate and rethink their current positions. The student then is no longer simply a receiver of knowledge, but an active participant and originator of learning. While constructivist teachers do lecture, as curriculum needs dictate, in general, such teachers tend to talk less in the classroom, and when they do talk, they are often asking questions. The Center for Civic Education suggests that five categories of questions are important in class discussions:

- Knowledge, e.g., "What are the three categories of issues of justice?"
- Comprehension, e.g., "Create a drawing illustrating a person fulfilling a responsibility and the source of that responsibility. What is the central idea of this lesson?"
- Application, e.g., "What examples can you cite from your own experience where these ideas apply? How might you use this process to resolve a conflict in the future?"
- Analysis, e.g., "What are the consequences of this situation? Which consequences are advantages and which are disadvantages?"
- Synthesis, e.g., "What argument can you make that we should increase the authority of the United States Supreme Court?"

Similarly, teachers using constructivist methods often assign textbook and primary source readings to introduce content, and invite into the classroom community members who have expertise in particular areas of interest to students.

The lessons in this workshop also show how constructivist teachers evaluate students' work, frequently multiple times during a lesson, and often in several different ways. Many of these teachers have developed rubrics that let students know what they are expected to do and how their performance will be evaluated. These rubrics are presented to students at the outset of each lesson to provide structure, focus, and clear expectations as students engage in and respond to constructivist teaching methods.

For some teachers, teaching in the manner modeled in the videos will come easily. Many of the featured teachers talk about how liberating the experience was to change the way they taught. They express gratitude for not having the entire lesson rely on them and indicate that student behavior problems significantly decrease when constructivist methods are used. Generally, the teachers have established a few common-sense rules of civic discourse to guide classroom discussion so that it is fruitful and does not degenerate into personal attacks, e.g.:

- When expressing an opinion, always be prepared to justify it.
- Politely and respectfully listen to the opinions of others. You may be called on to tell which one (other than your own) you liked the best.
- Everyone will get a chance to talk, but only one person will talk at a time.

About the Workshop, cont'd.

- Do not argue against people; argue against ideas.
- You may change your opinion at any time. Be prepared to share your reasons for doing so.

As you view these lessons, you will hear the featured teachers reflect on the lessons as they are unfolding. The lessons typically were taped over several days and teachers were interviewed before and after the class on each day. Reflection is an important part of becoming a constructivist teacher. Once teachers step away from center stage and give up the role of imparting all knowledge, many things happen. Often they are surprising and unplanned. Sometimes the new direction will prove beneficial. At other times, it may need a timely intervention to bring the lesson back on course. Most of the teachers you see in the lessons started their career using much more traditional methodologies, typically relying heavily on textbooks, lectures, and tests. Change rarely came overnight. First they tried small changes, e.g., establishing small groups to read and respond to a newspaper article on a current topic of local civic interest. Next, they may have used a technique with very structured rules. As their comfort level deepened, typically they started incorporating these methodologies into their classes on a more regular basis.

Workshop Descriptions

Workshop 1. Freedom of Religion

The lesson shown in this video demonstrates the constructivist methodologies of questioning strategies and their use in mock trials. It features ninth-grade civics students at Southwest High School in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in a simulation of a U.S. Supreme Court hearing concerning a First Amendment case. The case concerns a Texas school district that appealed a lower court decision directing them to discontinue having a student deliver an invocation over the intercom before football games. The case was originally brought against the school district by a group of parents. The Southwest students—who do not know the actual outcome of the case at the start of the lesson—assume the roles of Supreme Court Justices and attorneys. Over a three-day period, students first work in groups to prepare for the hearing as their teacher, Kristen Borges, guides them with strategically asked questions, then participate in the hearing, and finally, debrief their experiences and write a short essay stating their position on the case, including the benefits and potential problems to society of their recommended decision. The methodologies highlighted in this lesson include questioning strategies and mock trials.

Workshop 2. Electoral Politics

This lesson culminates a 12-week unit developed by the national Student Voices Project to engage students in the civic life of their community. It was videotaped just prior to the 2002 mayoral election in Newark, New Jersey. Students divide into small groups to brainstorm and research specific community issues, prioritize the issues studied on the basis of what they have learned, present their findings to the class both orally and through a visual presentation, develop a whole-class consensus on a Student Voices agenda of issues that they think the incoming mayor should address, and study the candidates' positions on the issues they have chosen to track. The methodologies highlighted in this lesson include issue identification and consensus building.

Workshop 3. Public Policy and the Federal Budget

Over three class periods, Leslie Martin's ninth-graders at West Forsyth High School in Clemmons, North Carolina, create, present, revise, and defend a Federal budget, and then reflect on what they have learned. Students participate in a simulation, working in small, randomly assigned cooperative-learning groups. Using such computer applications as PowerPoint and Excel to illustrate their recommendations, they first create a budget for presentation to the class that represents the priorities of the executive branch. They are next introduced to the actual 2001 Federal budget, and in a whole-class, teacher-led discussion, discuss some key concepts involved in creating a Federal budget. These concepts include entitlements, which they learn account for nearly half of the Federal budget, and the difference between zero-based budgeting, which they practiced in the first part of the simulation, and incrementalism. Students return to their cooperative-learning groups to revise their budgets based on new ideas they have heard in the presentations and Federal budget realities that were addressed in the whole-class discussion. Finally, each group presents its revised budget and the remaining students, who have previously each selected a Congressperson whose views are compatible with their own, simulate a Congressional hearing on the budget. This lesson highlights the integration of teacher-directed instruction with small-group work.

About the Workshop, cont'd.

Workshop 4. Constitutional Convention

Matt Johnson teaches an Advanced Placement (AP) Comparative Government class to seniors at Benjamin Banneker Senior High School in Washington, D.C. This program shows the class participating in a simulation in which students create a constitution for the hypothetical country of Permistan. To do so, the students need to review all the materials they have studied over the course of the semester, pull together their ideas, and analyze what works and what doesn't as they attempt to craft an ideal government. They have a wide range of constitutions to look at and procedures to examine. Johnson expects that they will draw from all five countries they have studied, as well as the United States, in putting together a new constitution. Students work in cooperative learning groups to discuss and debate issues relating to the executive and legislative branches of Permistan and then come together as a whole class to participate in a constitutional convention. The lesson—which is designed to help students review prior to taking their final exam—was videotaped over three class periods near the end of the semester. Simulation is the primary methodology highlighted in this lesson.

Workshop 5. Patriotism and Foreign Policy

The students in this lesson are seniors at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, a public magnet school in Washington, D.C. that has a strong commitment to integrating the arts with academic subjects. U.S. Government teacher Alice Chandler, who finds Socratic questioning and Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences particularly useful in an integrated arts environment, has developed a lesson in which students create a Museum of Patriotism and Foreign Policy. Over three days, the lesson alternates between whole-class discussions, in which the use of Socratic questioning is evident, and committee work, in which students determine what will be placed in the museum, using their particular art major as the basis for their choices. The conclusion of the lesson shows the students' presentations, including dance, music, theatrical performances, and visual representations, along with rationales for their selections. This lesson highlights small-group work as a constructivist methodology.

Workshop 6. Civic Engagement

This program shows a group of 11th- and 12th-grade students at Anoka High School in Anoka, Minnesota, a suburb of Minneapolis, engaging in a significant way to improve the quality of their community. All students in Anoka are required to participate in service learning in order to graduate from high school. Students begin with simple teacher-defined activities in the ninth grade and become progressively more involved and self-directed as they progress through their high school years. In this Human Geography class taught by Bill Mittlefehldt, a 30-year veteran of the classroom, students work in teams to define a project, choose and meet with a community partner who can help educate them about the seriousness of the issue and its current status, conduct further research on the identified problem, and present the problem and their proposed solutions first to their peers, and then to a special session of the Anoka City Council. This lesson satisfies state and national standards while helping deal with the needs of today's teens and today's communities. The primary methodology presented in this lesson is service learning.

Workshop 7. Controversial Public Policy Issues

In this 12th-grade law class at Champlin Park High School in Champlin, Minnesota, JoEllen Ambrose engages students in a structured discussion of a highly controversial issue—racial profiling—and connects student learning both to their study of due process in constitutional law and to police procedure in their study of criminal law. She begins by having students individually complete an opinion poll, which they then discuss as a group, realizing that the issue of profiling becomes increasingly complex as examples of it get closer to their personal experience. By physically engaging the students (they move around from "Agree" to "Disagree" to "Undecided" positions as the discussion proceeds), they get both a visceral and visual sense of the controversy. The poll is primarily a motivating activity to engage students' interest. Next, working in pairs, they delve into studying a research packet that Ambrose has prepared, reading local and national sources on the topic of racial profiling. The next activity pairs students in a structured debate. The framework for this debate, which comes from the Center for Cooperative Learning at the University of Minnesota, is highly specific with regard to both time and task and is designed to have each partnership argue both sides of the issue. Each group of four is next charged with the task of developing a consensus position on the issue and presenting it to the class. A debriefing discussion completes the lesson. The methodologies highlighted in this lesson include role playing and structured academic controversy.

About the Workshop, cont'd.

Workshop 8. Rights and Responsibilities of Students

In this lesson, students in Matt Johnson's 12th-grade, two-semester, honors-level Constitutional Law course at Benjamin Banneker Senior High School in Washington, D.C. engage in a culminating activity that helps them review what they have learned over the year and gives them an opportunity to apply the concepts to new circumstances. To begin the lesson, each student takes responsibility for writing and distributing a one-page brief of a Supreme Court case that they have previously studied, and for presenting a summary of the case to the class. All cases involve the constitutional rights and responsibilities of students. Next, students are assigned to groups of three and given a hypothetical case. The hypothetical cases, developed by Johnson, incorporate a variety of fact situations that are similar to previous cases the class has studied. These hypotheticals also relate to student rights cases that were to be decided by the Supreme Court during its 2001–2002 term. Each team represents either the petitioner or the respondent, or is part of the Supreme Court. Students prepare their cases by examining precedents and determining which arguments are most likely to prevail. After a period of preparation, the lawyers present their cases to the Justices, who then retire to deliberate. Justices then present their majority and dissenting opinions, after which the class discusses both the process and the disposition of the case. This lesson highlights the use of case studies for synthesis and analysis.

Workshop Components

This guide provides everything you need to conduct this workshop, either with colleagues or on your own. The workshop consists of activities carried out with your colleagues on-site (Workshop Sessions) and those to do on your own (Before Next Week and Ongoing Activities). See Helpful Hints for Facilitators on p. 7 for more information on preparing for group workshop sessions.

Workshop Sessions

Weekly workshop sessions may be scheduled around live broadcasts, in which case you will want to begin at least 30 minutes before the scheduled broadcast. You may prefer to pre-record the programs on videocassette and schedule the sessions at a time that is more convenient for all participants. Sessions work best when scheduled for a minimum of two hours. Each session consists of:

Before Viewing

In preparation for watching the program, you will engage in approximately 30 minutes of discussion and activity.

Watch the Video

Then you will watch the 60-minute video program. Within each program, there are opportunities to pause the tape for discussion. Discussion questions are included in this guide. If you are watching a real-time broadcast, you may want to consider the questions posed while viewing the program, and discuss them later. Plan to spend approximately 30 minutes discussing the video.

Before Next Week

Each workshop session ends with specific ways in which you can delve further into the methodology demonstrated and/or apply the lessons learned to your classrooms. Also provided are readings to prepare you for the next week's session.

Ongoing Activities

You may want to carry on these activities throughout the course of the workshop:

Keep a Workshop Journal

You are encouraged to keep a workshop journal, including thoughts, questions, and discoveries from the workshop itself and learning experiences that take place in your own classroom.

About the Workshop, cont'd.

Share Ideas on Channel-Talkcivics@learner.org

You can subscribe to an email discussion list and communicate with other workshop participants online. To subscribe to Channel-Talkcivics, visit:

<http://www.learner.org/mailman/listinfo/channel-talkcivics>

Visit the Web Site: www.learner.org/channel/workshops/civics

Go online for materials and resources to deepen your understanding and implementation of the practices shown in the workshop. The Web site expands on topics shown in the programs and provides tools to help you adapt the lessons and strategies shown for your own classroom. The Web site also provides extensive resources for teachers related to constructivist methodology and civics content. The Web site has three main areas:

Workshops 1 through 8

- Workshop Session: an overview of the content of that program and the related resources available on the Web site
- Lesson Plan: information on the teacher's method of teaching the lesson, the national standards the lesson addresses, additional resources, and the teaching materials used for the lesson
- Teacher Perspectives: reflections from the teacher that pertain to the lesson and constructivist teaching
- Student Perspectives: reflections from the students about the lesson and how constructivist teaching strategies help them learn
- Essential Readings: essays that elaborate on a key strategy or strategies used in teaching the lesson
- Other Lessons: articles that suggest additional ways to use the strategies shown

Tools for Teaching

- Lesson Collection: a collection of the lessons provided in Workshops 1 through 8
- Teacher Perspectives: a collection of the reflections from the teachers profiled in Workshops 1 through 8
- Student Perspectives: a collection of the reflections from the students profiled in Workshops 1 through 8
- Essential Readings: a collection of essential essays on teaching civics and using constructivist strategies
- Primary Sources: a collection of the primary sources available on the site
- National Standards: the national standards from the Center for Civic Education and the National Council for the Social Studies

Support Materials

This workshop guide is available online to read or print out.

Helpful Hints for Facilitators

Successful Workshop Sessions

These guidelines will help you conduct successful workshop sessions, particularly the Before Viewing and Watch the Video segments. These group discussions will help participants better understand the video programs and enhance the workshop experience. Before Viewing prepares participants for what to focus on during the video programs while Watch the Video provides the opportunity to analyze and reflect on what they saw in each video segment.

Designate Responsibilities

Each week, someone should be responsible for facilitating the workshop session. This may be a professional facilitator or a volunteer from among the participants, or you may choose to divide and rotate duties among several participants.

Prepare for the Session and Bring the Necessary Materials

The facilitator should review the entire session in this guide prior to arriving for the session. Occasionally, we recommend that participants have access to material that is on the Web site to use in the discussion. The facilitator will be responsible for bringing enough materials for the participants. In *Making Civics Real*, any materials needed for the workshop are highlighted in a Facilitator's Note. If you are viewing the video programs on videocassette, the facilitator may want to preview the programs.

Before the First Session

You may want to photocopy this guide for all participants so they may follow along, refer back to ideas covered in the session, or have their homework assignments handy. Or, you may direct them to the workshop Web site to print the guide themselves (direct them to "Support Materials"). Either way, you will want participants to have the guide prior to the first session, so they will come prepared. Be sure participants know:

- what they should bring to each workshop session (see the Facilitator's Notes for each session) and
- that they should review the lesson plan for Workshop 1 on the workshop Web site before the first session.

Keep an Eye on the Time

We have suggested the amount of time you should spend on each activity. While these times are merely guidelines, you should keep an eye on the clock, particularly if you are watching a live broadcast. You may want to set a timer before you begin Before Viewing to ensure that you won't miss the beginning of the video. If you are watching the programs on videotape, you will have more flexibility if your discussions run longer.

Record Your Discussions

We recommend that someone take notes during each discussion, or even better, that you tape-record the discussions. The notes or audiotapes can serve as make-up materials in case anyone misses a workshop.

Share Your Discussions on the Web

The workshop sessions serve as a starting point to share and think about the workshop ideas. Encourage participants to continue their discussions with participants from other sites on Channel-Talk at the workshop Web site at www.learner.org/channel/workshops/civics.

Materials Needed

Some activities require that materials from the workshop Web site be duplicated for distribution and use at the workshop session. These instances are highlighted by Facilitator's Notes.

