Educating High-Need Students for Citizenship

Center for Civic Education and Georgetown University
With you today

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Workshop Goals

1. Demonstrate instructional pedagogies that are effective in providing civic education to high need students
2. Present research findings on the effectiveness of these instructional strategies in imparting civic knowledge, disposition, and skills to students.
The James Madison Legacy Project
What is the James Madison Legacy Project?

A professional development program (PD) of the Center for Civic Education designed to improve teachers’ civics content knowledge and develop their pedagogic skills in order to enhance students’ achievement in attaining state standards in civics and government.

To date, the JMLP has been administered to 4 cohorts of participants from 48 states and the District of Columbia. Since 2015, over 2,000 teachers and 80,000 students nationwide have participated in the JMLP.
We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution

WTP is a curriculum intervention grounded in the foundations and institutions of American government. It is distinctive for its emphasis on constitutional principles, the Bill of Rights, and Supreme Court cases and their relevance to current issues and debates.

More than 30 million students and 75,000 teachers in all 50 states and the District of Columbia have participated in WTP since 1987.
# We the People Six Content Units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>What Challenges Might Face American Constitutional Democracy in the Twenty-first Century?</td>
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Administration

- 26 Sites (48 states in Total)
  - Single State sites
  - Partnership sites

- Yearly National Meetings
  - State Coordinators
  - Lead Mentors
Professional Development

- **Cohort 1** –
  - Minimum 30 hours of PD
  - Traditional Approach

- **Cohort 2**
  - Minimum 52 hours of PD (36 in summer and 16 hours during the academic year)
  - Choice of Traditional or Hybrid Approach

- **Cohort 3**
  - Minimum 52 hours of PD (36 in summer and 16 hours during the academic year)
  - Random Assignment to Traditional or Blended Approach
JMLP Professional Development
Three Major Elements

- Professional Development
- Scholarly Videos
- Platform
Element #1: Scholar Content
Element #2: Interactions with Mentors and Each Other
Element #3: Learn the Simulation—Then Adapt
Sample Hearing Question

What are the fundamental characteristics of a constitutional government?

- In what ways does constitutional government mean limited government?
- Describe at least three provisions of the Constitution that provide a means of preventing the abuse or misuse of governmental power.
- Explain how these provisions work in our system of government today.

—From high school text
Scholar Videos

6 Nationally known Scholars
6 Videos (1 per unit of the We the People Text)

- Each video is divided by lessons
  - Each lesson divided by session/segment
    - After each session/segment there are:
      - T/F Questions as a check for understanding
      - Discussion questions
# Content of Self Guided Tutorial Course

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—Based on the *We the People HS Curricula*
Check for Understanding

1. Each of the American colonies was governed under a charter, which was a royal grant of authority. (True)

2. The people who held corporate charters were strictly controlled by the British Crown. (False. They were given considerable leeway to govern their colonies, but had to meet their economic responsibilities to the Crown.)

3. Those who held proprietary charters had all of the powers of the Crown in their colonies. (True)
Discussion Questions

3 of 6 questions

1. How did the period of "salutary neglect" set the stage for independence?

2. Which colonies would you suppose might develop stronger movements toward self-government, proprietary colonies or corporate colonies? What evidence can you find on this topic?

3. What rights and obligations of their recipients were contained in the charters?
Check for Understanding

1. In general terms, an “established religion” is one that is officially endorsed by a government. (True)

2. Some nations have had more than one established religion. (True)

3. American colonists came from many nations with established religions. (True)

4. Nations with established religions require all citizens to belong to them. (False: Some have officially established religions, but do not require everyone to adhere to them.)
Discussion Questions

3 of 3 questions

1. Does the tax-exempt status given to religious groups violate the principle of the separation of church and state? Explain your position.

2. Do religious practices in public institutions, such as state and local governments, schools, universities, and public meetings, violate the principle of separation of church and state? Explain your position.

3. Does the provision of chaplains and other religious leaders in the armed forces violate the principle of separation of church and state? Explain your position.
Learn.CivicEd.org

A new civic education platform!
Pedagogies
JMLP PD is implemented in underfunded schools that serve high-needs populations. These include:

- Title I Teachers
- ESL/ELL Teachers
- Special Education Teachers
- Teachers of Incarcerated Students
- Vocational Teachers
- Teachers of Native American Students
Under-Resourced Schools

Access to Adequate School Resources

- Books
- Supplies
- Technology
- Internet
- Digital Media
- Software

Middle School vs. High School
Civic Knowledge

JMLP students gained significantly more civic knowledge than students in the control group who took a traditional civics class.

On a test of civic knowledge:

- JMLP middle school students scores 33% higher
- JMLP high school students scored 12% higher

Students in classes that held a WTP simulated congressional hearing scored 2½ points higher on a civic knowledge test than students whose classes did not hold a hearing.
Civic Knowledge

There is a statistically significant correlation (Pearson’s R) between teachers’ civic content knowledge and students’ knowledge.

- Middle School: .214
- High School: .378
Key Takeaways

The vast majority of teachers lectured to students at least sometimes prior to and following the JMLP. However, fewer teachers lectured frequently after participating in the JMLP PD program, allowing more classroom time for active, student-centered learning.

JMLP teachers incorporated basic reading and research pedagogies into the civics curriculum in addition to more active learning approaches.
Key Takeaways

The JMLP was successful in having teachers adopt the core pedagogies associated with the WTP curriculum. Over 65% of teachers held simulated congressional hearings in their classrooms and 24% participated in a WTP civics competition.

Teachers reported an overall increase of 30% in their use of group projects.

Teachers felt empowered to incorporate active classroom activities that complement JMLP’s core pedagogies and increase students understanding and engagement of democratic institutions.
Key Takeaways

Teachers were more likely to have students use digital tools for accessing news and information from government websites, contacting government officials, and sharing and creating civics content after taking part in the JMLP PD.

There was a significant increase in teachers having students engage in respectful debate and develop their public speaking skills as a result of the JMLP PD program.
JMLP Simulated Congressional Hearing
Mock Election

![Bar chart showing voting participation for different groups before and after JMLP.](chart.png)
Conclusion

JMLP allowed teachers to expand their pedagogical repertoires and to gain confidence in implementing new approaches in their classrooms.

A combination of basic pedagogies, such as lecture, reading, and research, combined with novel, active approaches is successful in imparting civic knowledge to high-need students.

The JMLP has benefitted the civic development of high-need students nationwide.