Citizenship Knowledge for Students Entering Adulthood

The Joe Foss Institute and partners, including its affiliated Civics Proficiency Institute (CPI), have inspired more than 30 states to require that, to graduate from high school, students must study civics and pass some form of the U.S. civics exam given to immigrants seeking citizenship. This first-step strategy restores civics to its place among the core disciplines that are critical for educated Americans. The Institute uses this lever to encourage further professional development of teachers, and provides lesson plans and an interactive online curriculum that promote deeper understanding of civics concepts. In fall 2019, JFI merged into the School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership at Arizona State University.

Joe Foss Institute
Scottsdale, AZ
Annual budget (with CPI): $1.5 million
Chief Academic Officer: Lucian Spataro Jr.
480.348.0316
joeossinstitute.org

Alexander Hamilton Comes to Town

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History has produced a creative curriculum in partnership with the musical Hamilton, with more than 250,000 high school students in 30 tour cities (through the 2020–2021 school year) completing a rigorous Founding Era curriculum. Students perform their own creative works and see the show. The Institute also provides a fully online master’s degree in partnership with Pace University with more than 600 American history teachers currently enrolled, hosts more than 70,000 original documents, has 22,000 schools as network affiliates, and has a unique Teaching Literacy through History curriculum that helps more than 2,000 teachers per year use primary sources to integrate English literacy with historical literacy. The Teacher Seminar Program, having operated for 25 years, brings eminent scholars to 1,000 teachers per year to discuss content and pedagogy. A Teaching Civics through History pilot will use foundational American documents to give students a historical perspective on current events that will inform civic action projects—providing a stronger educational foundation than is common in “civic engagement” programs.

Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History
New York, NY
Annual expenditures: $9 million
President: James G. Basker
646.366.9666
gilderlehrman.org

Gamified Learning

Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor founded iCivics to transform civic education through games. The newest game, Race to Ratify, puts a student in the middle of the ratification debates that began in 1787: you travel to the states and collect argument tokens by talking with other citizens. You then use your arguments to create either a Federalist or Antifederalist pamphlet just in time to influence the ratification debate, going state by state, starting (of course) with Delaware. In 20 other games, you might find yourself at a law firm deciding whether your client’s constitutional rights have been violated, or in all three branches of government as a law gets passed, signed, and challenged in court, or on a jury, or in your naturalization interview. About 95% of teachers say they trust iCivics as a neutral resource that fosters civil conversation. iCivics reaches 100,000 teachers and more than 6 million students every year. iCivics also runs the CivXNow coalition, a large, trans-partisan network promoting increased K-12 civics in state law and policy. Many CivXNow members tend to focus on civic engagement more than core constitutional principles. While not ignoring content, some members of the coalition