

CASE METHOD INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION AND DEMOCRACY

PROGRAM OVERVIEW FOR INCOMING TEACHERS

Thank you for your interest in the Case Method Institute's professional development program. We look forward to the opportunity to work with you to bring the case method and cases from Professor David Moss's acclaimed Harvard College course, "History of American Democracy," to your students. At the Institute, we offer online workshops for teachers to learn the fundamentals of the case method from Professor Moss, experience case discussions on critical moments in U.S. history, and hear from high school teachers who are using the case method in their own classrooms. *Everything is provided free of charge*, including the professional development program, the twenty-two original cases, Professor Moss's teaching plans and materials, and unlimited support from our in-house team. The program is available only to active teachers of grades 9-12 in U.S. history, government, or civics classrooms.

In this Program Overview, you will find information on:

- The case method for high school classrooms (page 2)
- The "History of American Democracy" curriculum (page 3)
- The impact of the program for students and teachers (page 4)
- The partnership between the Institute and teachers (page 5)
- Options for your PD experience and next steps (page 6)

"This is teacher initiated. We went out, got trained and wanted to bring it back and implement it because we saw value. It's grassroots and has a different feel because of it."

—A teacher at a public school in Idaho



THE CASE METHOD FOR HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

The case method itself centers around documents known simply as “cases,” which present students with historically rich narratives about real-world problems faced by decision-makers and then invite the perennial question: “What would you do?” Together as a class—and led by an instructor’s use of carefully designed questions—students engage in rigorous, evidence-based discussion and debate to draw out key insights and concepts from each case.

While written at the college level, the cases have worked exceedingly well in every type of high school. The cases range in length from 9 to 22 pages, each taking the reader through a unique period in U.S. history and leading up to a key decision-point, yet leaving it unresolved. In some classrooms, students are asked to read a case at home and come ready to discuss the following day. In others, teachers might take a week or more to read a case with students together in class or in small groups. Teachers have used the cases with great success with students of every reading level, including those reading far below grade-level and English-language learners. We would be happy to share their strategies with you.



AN EXPERIMENT IN EDUCATION

In 2014, the experiment that launched the Case Method Institute began when two high school teachers requested cases from Professor Moss’s “History of American Democracy” curriculum to use in their high school classrooms. Their former students had reached out while at college raving about this new approach to teaching history and civics. The course had been taught by the case method, which has long been the gold standard at leading business and law schools yet had not historically been available in the high school setting. With permission from the publisher, Professor Moss provided cases from the course to these teachers free of charge. He also shared his own detailed teaching plans, each a step-by-step map for how to guide the case discussions. So began a five-year pilot program within Harvard Business School to see if the case method, with its track-record of success at the college and graduate level, could have the same academic and civic benefits for high school students.

The Case Method Institute is now an independent non-profit and has worked with over 3,000 teachers in all 50 states to reach over 200,000 high school students. The results have been truly remarkable for both teachers and students and are outlined on page 4 for your review.

THE CASES

The curriculum includes 22 cases, originally taught at Harvard, covering periods in U.S. history from the founding to the present day. The cases are deeply researched, historical narratives based on primary and secondary sources. They avoid, as much as possible, injecting analysis into the narrative so that students can make their own interpretations and bring their own perspectives to bear.

Each case takes the reader through a historical period leading up to a decision point, equipping students with both a broad thematic overview and many of the most relevant facts that would have been available to decision-makers at the time. In the discussion, students are asked to think critically, to build evidence-based arguments, and to deliberate and exchange differing viewpoints with their peers. In this way, students learn "history in the present tense," as one observer put it, and the class itself becomes what partner teachers have described as a "laboratory for democracy."

Many teachers introduce selected cases into their existing curricula; others have developed fully case-based courses. Each case is accompanied by teaching objectives and a teaching plan that maps out a series of questions intended to surface the key concepts of the case. Titles include:

- James Madison, the 'Federal Negative,' and the Making of the U.S. Constitution (1787)
- Democracy, Sovereignty, and the Struggle over Cherokee Removal (1836)
- A Nation Divided: The United States and the Challenge of Secession (1861)
- The Jungle and the Debate over Federal Meat Inspection in 1906
- Martin Luther King and the Struggle for Black Voting Rights (1965)
- Manufacturing Constituencies: Race and Redistricting in North Carolina, 1993

"We started the MLK case in my APUSH class and I have to tell you that it was unbelievable! Honestly, one of the best classes in my 12 years as a teacher. The level of student engagement was through the roof and totally college-level and these are 10th graders! I was so impressed with them and so many after class were like, 'This was so engaging! Can we do more of this?'"

—A teacher at a public high school in Colorado



THE IMPACT

- **Academic performance:**

- Teachers report extensive benefits for their students, including improved
 - critical thinking skills
 - evidence-based reasoning
 - willingness to vocalize opinions
 - overall interest in the material
- Students report benefits for themselves, including improved
 - confidence
 - ability to think through historical issues
 - ability to look at issues from multiple points of view

- **Impact on students' civic interest:**

- Data show positive impacts on a range of student outcomes, including their
 - understanding of major political issues
 - comfort in sharing their viewpoints
 - interest in running for office
 - likelihood of correctly identifying basic facts about the U.S. government
 - likelihood of saying it is “absolutely important” to “live in a country that is governed democratically”

- **Impacts on teachers include:**

- The overwhelming majority of participating teachers:
 - are “extremely likely” to recommend the program to their colleagues
 - report significant, positive impacts on their
 - overall job satisfaction
 - comfort with course material
 - excitement for the next school year
 - professional growth

“The most significant part of this course was the critical thinking skills it encouraged me to develop. . . . [E]ven though I learned a lot of concrete material, what I believe to be the most significant thing I learned . . . is how to collaborate with individuals with differing opinions as well as how to conduct difficult conversations that may come with substantial disagreement. . . . I am eternally grateful for the deep level of engagement that came with each discussion.”

—A student at a private school in Louisiana

THE PARTNERSHIP

We are committed to a robust, ongoing partnership with you: we offer support in case method teaching while continually learning from you how best to bring cases to the high school setting.

Teachers who partner with CMI receive, at no charge:

- Comprehensive training in the case method from Professor Moss and teachers currently using the cases in their high school classrooms, along with a letter confirming PD hours
- A full set of twenty-two “History of American Democracy” cases from the original course at Harvard College
- Teaching plans, teaching objectives, reading questions, and a conclusion for each case
- Audio versions of the majority of the twenty-two cases
- Videos of Professor Moss teaching each case to his students
- Ongoing support from our in-house team on any questions you might have, from how to access the cases online to which cases would cover content in your existing curriculum to how to bring the case method to students reading below grade-level
- An invitation to join a teaching group and access to the broader network of over 1,000 high school teachers who have taught by the case method

We ask that partner teachers:

- Aim to teach at least four cases within a year of completing the PD program
- Complete surveys to allow us to learn from you and your students about how cases are working in your classroom. We take care to share with you all feedback (collected anonymously) from your students so that you can take it into account as you fine-tune your approach for the next case. We also aggregate these data, along with start and end-of-term surveys, to conduct rigorous program-wide assessments so that our understanding of the program’s efficacy and impact is wholly evidence-based.



CHOOSE YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Zoom-based workshop

A half-day Zoom-based workshop will let you experience an interactive case taught by Harvard Business School Professor David Moss. Live Q&A sessions with current high school teachers and Professor Moss will let you dive deeper into the pedagogy and classroom experience. This option also includes 3-5 hours of self-paced work in advance of the workshop.

Fully self-paced

An asynchronous, online program designed for you to learn at your own pace. Videos, led by Professor Moss and high school teachers experienced with the case method, take you through the same content as the live workshop. (Total of 8 to 10 hours.)

NEXT STEPS

If you have already completed the Application Form, please complete the final Registration Form you received by e-mail to secure your spot in a Zoom-based or fully self-paced asynchronous workshop. Please note that you are *not registered for a workshop until you complete the second form*. If you have not yet applied, please complete the Application Form at www.cmi.org (click “Contact Us”) or reach us directly at info@cmi.org to discuss next steps. We very much look forward to working with you!

“In a year when teachers are struggling mightily, my students — all four classes reading the cases — are soaring. They are engaged in working through the cases, supporting each other in collaborative groups. There is something magical about teaching with the case studies. My students tell me they feel smart and accomplished when they puzzle through difficult parts. I am truly grateful. . . .”

—A teacher at a public high school in Pennsylvania

