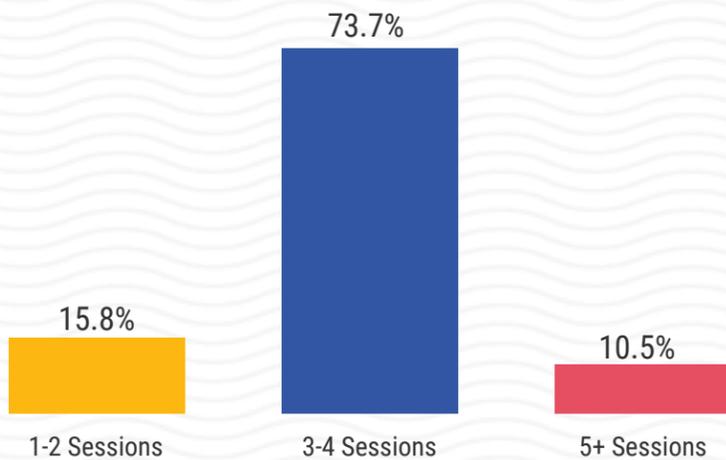


We the Educators Report

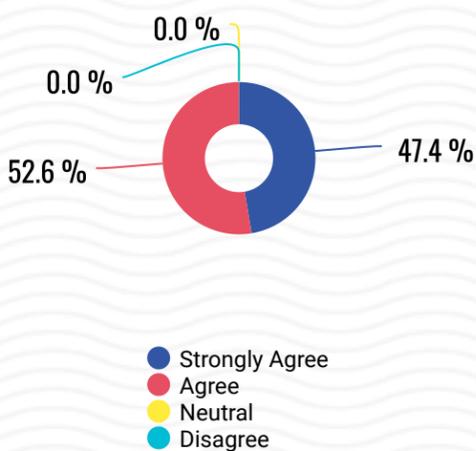
The second annual 2022 virtual civics symposium posed the question, "Can we craft a shared national narrative?" to educators across the nation and created a community of learning for participants to explore nuanced ways to teach the American story and the possibility of a unifying national narrative.



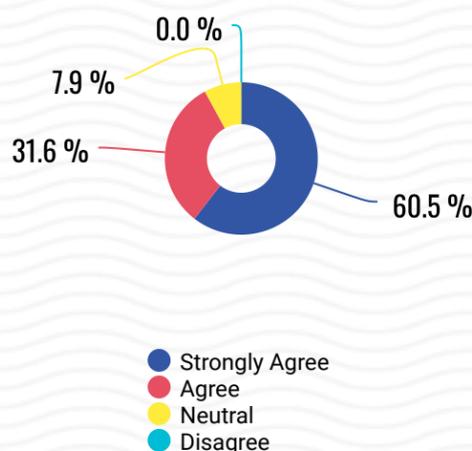
Multiple sessions attended by participants throughout the symposium.



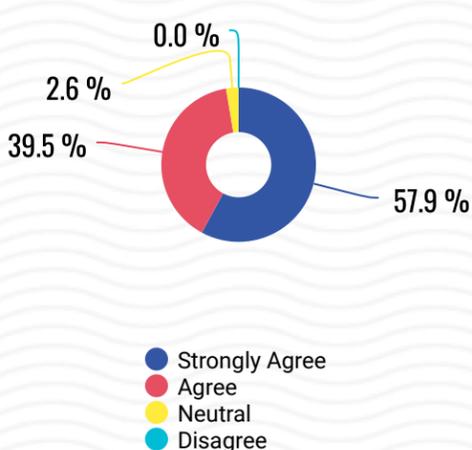
The Symposium was relevant for me professionally:



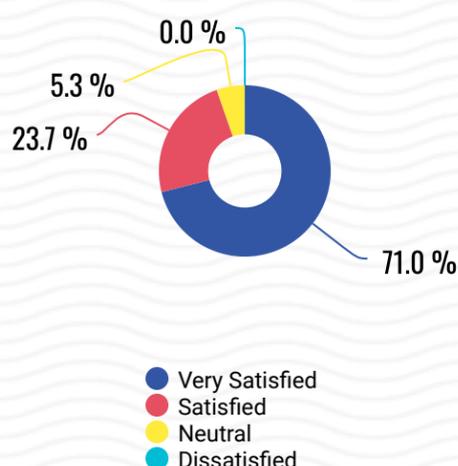
The Symposium was personally rewarding:



I gained new texts, tools or resources to bring back to my classroom:



Satisfaction with Quality of Sessions:



Participant Testimonials

"I really love how the topics are not the "norm" or "old school" topics being taught – that the topics are diverse (race and gender), and are such important topics! I appreciate it even more because it fits with my curriculum – Colonial America to Reconstruction/Great Migration) – and I can easily bring it to my class."

"I plan to encourage more members of my department and my school district to participate in next year's Civic Spirit Symposium. I have found the Civic Spirit Symposium this year and last to be powerful and meaningful professional development."

"The symposium offers access to content that perhaps you've been looking for all alone, you just didn't know where to go or the proper terminology to find what you were looking for."

"So many resources! Meaningful discussions. Specific strategies for teaching/facilitating certain skills."

"[Learned] that there were more teachers like me that want to work together and figure out a way forward as opposed to dividing up into factions."



Can we craft a shared national narrative?

As educators across the nation grapple with how to teach the story of America, the symposium sought to address this question by providing participants with content and tools they will need to approach the possibility of a unifying story across multiple perspectives.



Scholar Panel: Is a Shared National Narrative Possible?

In this inaugural session, scholars Madeline Hsu, Samuel Goldman, and Edna Greene Medford reflected on the possibilities and challenges of a shared national narrative. They examined the relationship between national narrative and national identity, the unique American nature of the desire for a shared narrative, and the role of educators in helping students see commonalities and what binds Americans together. Participants came away with a range of texts and questions to bring forth to students and continue the conversation.



What Binds Us Together: Tools and Resources for Teaching the American Story

Led by Rachel Humphries from the Bill of Rights Institute, participants were introduced to the Educating for American Democracy (EAD) inquiry-based approach to bringing compelling content and pedagogies to teach civic education and history in the classrooms. Exploring the idea of a shared landscape and unity among diverse populations, Rachel provided participants with thematic questions and key concepts to bring to students, including strategies on examining shared ideals and values among diverse backgrounds.



The Text & Context of the Declaration of Independence

From analyzing Thomas Jefferson's Rough Draft of the Declaration of Independence, Associate Professor Adam Seagrave from Arizona State University discussed with participants the founding political principle of "all men created equal" juxtaposed with the enslavement and denial of equal rights to African Americans in America's history.

By bringing a new perspective on teaching the Declaration of Independence and its Rough Draft to students, participants gained new content and insights on this shared story of our founding.



Frederick Douglass: American Critic or Patriot?

Professor Lucas Morel from Washington and Lee University led participants in a discussion and examination of Frederick Douglass' 1852 speech, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" and brought about inquiry into Douglass' critique and hope for America's founding ideals and future potential. Structured discussion groups and probing questions gave participants a new framework to bring this text into the classrooms to guide students in understanding our country's past.



Learning from Sacred Stories: Faith Leaders on the Quest for a Shared Narrative

Faith leaders Rabbi Yehuda Sarna and Pastor Heather Ohaneson guided pivotal discussions on religious texts, excerpts from The Book of Genesis and The Book of Jonah, to shed light on the importance of finding a common beginning and accepting negotiations in our narratives in order to unify during a time of polarization. Participants engaged in thoughtful dialogue on how wisdom from faith traditions can inform the way we teach the American story.



Art as Classroom Catalyst: Fostering Complex Conversations about U.S. History with Creativity

National Gallery of Art museum educators Liz Diament and Julie Carmean introduced participants to two artworks highlighting the Native American experience while facilitating the thinking routine of *See/Wonder/Connect* from Arts as Civic Commons by Project Zero. By having participants take on the role of students in this activity, new perspectives were shared on how to engage thoughtfully with different mediums that shed light on parts of American history.



Phillis Wheatley: The Audacity of Poetry

Dr. April Langley from the University of Missouri introduced participants to the works of Phillis Wheatley, the first African-American with a published book of poetry, and proposed her work to be a part of America's shared narrative on hopeful determinism for liberty and equal rights to all. Having described Wheatley as one that "wrote herself into humanity," Dr. Langley discussed with participants on the enduring sentiments Wheatley held for her country and her feelings of belonging and identity in America.



Understanding News Media Bias: Empowering Students with Essential Skills

Peter Adams from the News Literacy Project instructed participants and provided guiding questions and tools to bring to the classrooms for students to identify and carefully evaluate bias in news and media coverage. With concrete examples and practiced methods, participants came away with useful frameworks to structure lesson plans and conversations to help students form nuanced critiques on bias while evaluating their own perceptions.



Reframing Divisive Topics through Dialogue: Structures for Deeper, Nuanced, and More Personal Conversations

Scott Silk of Essential Partners led this workshop for educators to actively learn how to utilize the Reflective Structured Dialogue approach through a series of thoughtful exercises and self-guided discussion groups. Educators came away with practical tools and resources to facilitate respectful dialogue in the classrooms in order to create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment for students.



Community of Practice: Integrating our Learning

Tiphonie Shoemaker of Civic Spirit facilitated this concluding session in which participants reflected on their learning throughout the symposium and discussed with peers what they hoped to bring back to their classrooms. Teachers were also introduced to Civic Spirit's signature pedagogy framework, CivBox, which incorporates historical context, media literacy, dialogue, and problem-solving.