

Assessment of *Environmental Forum* using the SENCER-SALG

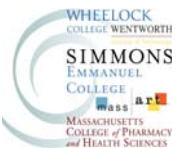
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With the help of the SENCER community, we developed a unique course titled *Environmental Forum* as the cornerstone of a joint environmental science program for the Colleges of the Fenway. Offered for the first time in 2005, the course has used current environmental topics and service learning to teach scientific concepts. To assess the effectiveness of this course, we have utilized the SENCER-SALG for pre-and post-course on-line assessment. Preliminary findings indicate that after completing this course, students are more confident in their abilities to discuss scientific concepts, think critically about scientific findings, and determine what is valid scientific evidence.

Environmental Forum 2007 focused on the Muddy River Restoration Project, with course content and service learning activities centering around this current local environmental issue. In prior offerings of this course (years 2005/2006), students examined multiple issues, ranging from contaminated drinking water to green chemistry.



A partnership was formed in 2006 between the COF community and the MMOC to promote public awareness of the Project. Forum students acquire first hand experiences in research and civic engagement.



Student feedback on personal confidence.

	2005/2006		2007	
	PRE-TEST (N=18)	POST-TEST (N=18)	PRE-TEST (N=16)	POST-TEST (N=15)
Discuss scientific concepts with my friends or family	3.00 (0.87)	3.17 (1.17)	3.50 (0.89)	3.87 (0.74)
Think critically about scientific findings I read about in the media	3.44 (0.88)	3.71 (1.11)	3.19 (1.05)	3.93 (0.80)
Determine what is – and is not – valid scientific evidence	3.11 (0.78)	3.0 (0.89)	3.19 (0.98)	3.79 (0.70)
Make an argument using scientific evidence	3.11 (0.60)	3.17 (1.17)	3.31 (0.79)	3.93 (0.59)
Understand scientific processes behind important scientific issues in the media	3.22 (0.83)	3.29 (1.25)	3.06 (1.06)	3.80 (0.77)

Values reported are the averages and standard deviations for student responses using a five-point scale where 5 = "Extremely confident" and 1 = "Not confident".

"I am now more interested in environmental issues. Before I didn't really care but now I am more interested in learning more." 2006

"I didn't really understand how research was done until having been involved in this project." 2007

"Organizing the Earth Day Clean-up.....the final result was really rewarding." 2007

"I liked the service learning component because it got me involved in changing the way people look at climate change." 2008

"I valued the service learning project because it taught me how to be very independent, and I learned a lot about my campus, as well as Boston." 2008

Student feedback on personal civic engagement responsibilities.

	2005/2006		2007	
	PRE-TEST (N=18)	POST-TEST (N=18)	PRE-TEST (N=16)	POST-TEST (N=15)
Write a letter or email a public official about a civic or political issue	1.33 (0.71)	2.86 (1.68)	1.4 (1.06)	3.20 (0.86)
Write a letter or email a public official about a science-related issue	1.11 (0.71)	3.00 (1.53)	1.5 (1.10)	3.33 (0.90)
Debate or offer public comment on a scientific issue	1.11 (0.33)	2.86 (1.57)	1.88 (1.50)	3.13 (1.06)
Debate or offer public comment on a civic or political issue	1.33 (1.00)	2.86 (1.57)	1.88 (1.50)	3.27 (0.96)
Attend a meeting, rally, or protest about a civic or political issue	1.56 (1.33)	2.86 (1.68)	2.9 (1.47)	3.27 (1.22)

Values reported are the averages and standard deviations for student responses using a five-point scale where 5 = "Extremely more likely" and 1 = "Not more likely".



The annual Muddy River Research Symposium is designed to bring together researchers, educators, and members of the Boston community to share research interests, projects, and ideas focusing on the Muddy River and its restoration.



COF students pose for a picture during the annual Muddy River Clean-up and Focus the Nation Teach-In (theme of *Forum 2008* course).