

Introducing Renewable Energy Through Community-based Engaged Learning

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We live in a period where human expansion has put its own existence at risk. Local sustainable development strategies are key in reversing these global effects, but only if they are easily accessible and supported by the community. However, gathering that support can be difficult. Reaching a communal understanding of underlying scientific mechanisms starts at a young age and is difficult to develop without hands-on experiences. Community based engaged learning (C-bEL) programs provide these experiences for community members while simultaneously supplying teaching opportunities for college students. We developed a stand-alone workshop for local Baldwin county schools that utilizes renewable energy demonstrations that adheres to the C-bEL guidelines. With a variety of hands-on demonstrations and activities alongside a backbone presentation, students from local schools interacted with these new concepts using different renewable energy technologies. The workshop concluded with similar questioning as the initial to gauge content comprehension and retention levels. Students showed an increased understanding and comfort with the concepts such as renewable energy and energy efficiency.