INTRODUCTION

Incorporating strong Evaluation, Metrics, and Verification (EM&V) standards into the planning phases of your program or pilot project can lead to an array of impressive results to showcase in the end. The story of how one environmental education program was able to accomplish this, and truly illustrate effectiveness, shows us that we can all take some vital EM&V steps and showcase the influence of our programs towards multiple environmental goals.

PEAK Student Energy Actions, an environmental science education program of The Energy Coalition, aims to make innovative, standard-based, action-oriented programming accessible to a wide range of teachers throughout the state of California, particularly those who serve “underserved” and/or “disadvantaged” populations. PEAK strives to increase the environmental literacy and pro-environmental behaviors of school-aged children while also increasing the population of young people who are interested in Green Careers.

RESULTS

In the 2014-2015 school year, roughly 31,670 K-8 California students were reached through PEAK. In an effort to learn more about program effectiveness, nearly 16,000 pretests and posttests that educators administered to their students were collected. The data was then analyzed to distill key learning elements and to summarize evidence of progress toward four dimensions of student outcomes – knowledge, conservation behavior, engagement of family and others, and interest in “Green Careers”.

The results showed highly statistically significant increases in every dimension of student knowledge that was assessed, and almost equally impressive results for behavior change and an interest in science, generally. There are important lessons that can be learned from this study for anyone looking to evaluate the knowledge and behavior change goals of their programs.

For more details about this evaluation and these key findings please see the full report, “PEAK Student Energy Actions Evaluation of Student Outcomes in the 2014-2015 School Year.”