Evaluating the Theory and Outcomes of the Teen Advocates for Sustainability Corps (TASC) Summit

by

Sophie Golomb

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Department of Teaching and Learning, NYU Steinhardt

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Abstract
According to Riemer et al. (2014), “The threat that global climate change and environmental degradation poses to future generations makes youth key stakeholders in any attempts to address environmental issues through social change.” Young people have the most to gain from addressing environmental concerns through civic and political action, yet there remain few opportunities that empower youth to be change agents and that allow them to be active participants in the decision-making process. Further, many New York City high school students learn about environmental issues in the classroom through science and environmental studies classes, but as city dwellers, they do not often think of the city as an environment in itself, and have a limited social and political context for how environmental issues affect their lives. The Teen Advocates for Sustainability Corps (TASC) program brings together New York City’s youth with the mission of supporting the sustainability of the city and the environmental wellbeing of its citizens through social and civic engagement. My research will explore two major components of the TASC program: 1. I will assess the theories behind the TASC Summit and its efficacy in educating participants on urban environmental issues and the legislative process; and 2. I will assess how the TASC Summit encourages its participants to develop an understanding of the city as an environment and feel empowered to advocate on its behalf.

Keywords: sustainability - youth - civic engagement - advocacy - urban - environmental education - social justice

Introduction
Traditionally, environmental education has focused on issues of the natural world and has emphasized the relationship between humans and “nature.” This notion is perpetuated by labels like Louv’s “nature deficit disorder,” and environmental education curricula that too often stresses the importance of connection with the natural world. Yet, this paradigm disadvantages city dwelling youth, suggesting that the environment is distinct from urban spaces. Recent research defines a new critical urban environmental pedagogy (CUEP) that situates pressing environmental issues within social and political contexts, and places people as a part of the environment, rather than divorced from “nature” (Bellino and Adams, 2017). The Teen Advocates for Sustainability Corps (TASC) program applies this framework and through education and advocacy, seeks to expose its participants to urban environmental issues, their social implications, and their political solutions. In doing so, TASC inspires its participants to feel a connection to the environment and empowered to advocate on behalf of the city and its inhabitants.

Additionally, the TASC program is designed to address the marginalization of young voices from the political decision-making process. Studies show that young people are generally disinterested in politics or find the political process ineffective because they are rarely given
platforms to engage or participate in the process (Riemer et al., 2014). The TASC Summit draws attention to the inequalities in political decision-making and gives its participants the opportunity and tools to participate.

Using literature from the field, survey data, and personal accounts, this research evaluates the theories behind the Teen Advocates for Sustainability Corps (TASC) and measures its success in using New York City and its systems to educate on urban environmental issues through a social and political lens.

**Literature Review**

Recent studies support an educational framework for engaging youth in civic participation through informal environmental education programs (Riemer et al., 2014). Youth are key stakeholders in advocating for environmental solutions, yet marginalized from political processes. To this point, Brett L.M. Levy and Michaela T. Zint delve into the barriers to engaging more individuals in the environmental political process and why youth are well-positioned to be on the forefront of political movements.

Riemer et al. (2014) cite the reasons why youth should be encouraged to participate more in advocacy. Young people are effective in reaching out to and influencing their peers, they have a strong grasp on how modern technology and media is a powerful tool for raising awareness, and they have fewer constraints and less risk in taking a stance on political charged issues and participating in demonstrative actions (p.555). Young people need to be included in the conversation and equipped with the knowledge and skills to be meaningful participants in the decision-making process.

Levy and Zint (2013) explore how educators can strengthen the political efficacy and interest of their students through engagement activities (p. 553). Levy and Zint’s (2013) research touches on the low rates of political participation in democratic societies, particularly amongst populations of youth, due to a lack of willingness to pay attention to politics (political interest), and general impressions that advocacy is minimally effective (political efficacy) (p.558). Levy and Zint (2013) find that when individuals have the opportunities to learn more about politics and the political process, both their political interest and efficacy increase (p. 562). Levy and Zint (2013) suggest that experiences like volunteering for an environmental organization, participating in community decision-making, helping to revitalize one’s neighborhood, and partaking in local activism for sustainability can influence an individual’s interest in engaging in environmental political participation (p. 567).

Schusler et al. (2009) draw from a study that asked practitioners who worked with youth in environmental action programs to describe how these students were influenced and moved by their experiences (p.114). In particular, the practitioners noted that these opportunities
empowered students to be change agents and to develop a sense of responsibility for their local communities (Schusler et al., 2009, p.117). In the examples given, these young people had the opportunity to take leadership, drive their own experience, and become engaged citizens. Considering the research findings of Levy and Zint, when individuals are given the opportunity to engage in environmental action programs and experiences, they are then more likely to have high political interest and efficacy and participate more frequently in forms of advocacy.

Research suggests that when youth engage in and learn more about their local environments, they better understand their communities and build place-consciousness (Gruenwald, 2003). In an even more recent study, Bellino and Adams (2017) describe what they term, critical urban environmental pedagogy (CUEP), that argues for youth-driven, relevant urban environmental education. This research offers a new perspective on environmental education designed for urban environments. Environmental education tends to focus on the ways in which youth in cities are deprived of natural spaces, but fails to consider our cities as urban “ecosystems” with unique issues shaped by social and political forces. Bellino and Adams (2017) argue that CUEP can transform how we define and describe urban environments (p.272).

Traditional environmental education, and even urban environmental education, focuses strongly on nature and ecological systems. Students are taught to engage with the natural elements within the city, delineating between what is “the environment,” and what is not. This paradigm overemphasizes nature, so that city dwelling students internalize a romanticized version of the “natural” environment. As a result, environmental issues are described as having basic, or one-to-one solution, when in reality, solving ecological issues is more complex. Bellino and Adams use the example of an urban polluted river, which is a pressing issue but often taught as having a basic solution: reduce pollutants from entering waterways. However, environmental educators do not often situate the issue within a political or social context that investigates the reasons why the river is polluted in the first place and who lives near the river and how they are affected (p. 271). Urban environmental solutions are also framed narrowly. For instance, a low-income neighborhood may not have access to green space and may benefit from a new park. While this would no doubt be a boon to the community and provide ecological services, it may also increase property values in the neighborhood, which could lead to gentrification or harm local businesses. Every environmental solution has a social or political implication. Urban environmental education needs to allow youth to explore the ecological, as well as social and political, complexities of the spaces where they live (Bellino and Adams, 2017).

In examining these studies, a few key trends emerge. All of the researchers speak to the necessity of raising the voices of youth as key stakeholders in environmental action (political and otherwise) and being creators of their own environmental experiences. In Riemer et al. (2014), the researchers suggest that youth should take on leadership roles in structuring environmental activities and innovate environmental engagement opportunities for their peers (p.560).
Similarly, in Schusler et al.’s (2009) research, the young people described by the practitioners were co-creators in developing and carrying out environmental action programs and activities (p.120). One practitioner even indicates that she often underestimates the students she works with and is pleasantly surprised by their success and growth in the program (Schusler et al, 2009, p.119). Bellino and Adams (2017) places youth as key decision-makers as a means to creating an educational experience that is truly critical and participatory. This sentiment is particularly significant in considering attitudes towards youth. Youth are not often given the opportunities to lead and be part of the decision-making process precisely because people tend to not see or trust their potential.

These articles also touch on the success of building social experiences into environmental engagement experiences. Riemer et al. (2014) discuss how social support groups are a crucial factor in the quality of youth experiences (p.561). Organizations that incorporate relationship building into their programming and activities find that participants have a more positive experience. Levy and Zint (2013) discuss how personal relationships have an impact on political interest and efficacy (p.563). When an individual identifies with and has a sense of rapport with politically engaged people, they in turn, become more interested and engaged as well. Schusler et al. (2014) also indicates that forging relationships and engaging face-to-face with people in the community is a significant element in building a positive experience for the students involved in environmental action programs (p.120).

All of the researchers agree that youth are a marginalized voice in the decision-making process, both in the political arena but also in discussions around their educational experience; young people often have very little say in what and how they learn. Bellino and Adams’ (2017) argument is entirely predicated on the idea that environmental education as a field fails to address specific social and political implications that impact youth in cities (p.270). City dwelling students do not often have the opportunities to experience natural spaces so they should not be bound to strictly traditional concepts of what constitutes the environment. The changes seen in their own neighborhoods, such as the environmental racism of gentrification and pollution, should instead be central to their environmental education. The field of urban environmental education demands a more nuanced view of the environment, its impact in cities, and how sustainable solutions have social and political implications. Only then will young people understand how crucial these issues are, how they impact their lives, and why advocating for critically considered solutions is so important to their future.

Theory and Description of the Teen Advocates for Sustainability Corps (TASC) Summit

The Teen Advocates of Sustainability Corps (TASC)’s formal mission is to unite New York City’s youth to support the sustainability of the city and the environmental wellbeing of its citizens through social and civic engagement. The TASC program’s three-day Summit is specifically intended to educate its participants on urban environmental issues and sustainability-
related legislative solutions and to encourage its participants to develop an understanding of the city as an environment and feel empowered to advocate on its behalf.

The TASC Summit was developed in May 2016 and piloted in February 2017 (see Appendix B for Summit schedule). The program was conceived to improve environmental and civic literacy and provide opportunities for New York City high school students to engage in local, political advocacy. The program also provides a chance for NYU students to educate high school students in an informal education setting. Before the Summit, five NYU undergraduate and graduate students worked closely with me and the staff of NYU’s Wallerstein Collaborative for Urban Environmental Education (our departmental sponsor), to develop the curriculum and create interactive workshops to explore issues of energy and waste in the urban environment. These five students played an integral role in shaping the program’s content and finding ways to develop an urban environmental curriculum that would be relevant to the student participants.

The first day of the program is designed to create space for the participants to get to know and engage with each other and the program staff. Relationship building is critical to the success of the program, so we ensure the space is safe and welcoming to all the participants. In the pilot, while some of the participants came from the same school and already knew of each other, the concentrated time period and intensity of the program allowed the participants to bond and forge friendships quickly.

After meeting each other, participants toured energy and waste management facilities. Half of the group traveled to the Sims Material Recovery Facility in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, and half toured NYU’s Cogeneration Plant, which is a microgrid powering most of NYU’s buildings around Washington Square Park. These tours are intended to demonstrate to the participants the ways in which the city functions as an “eco-system” and how particular systems have a social, environmental, and political impact on every inhabitant of the city. Touring the Cogeneration plant raised issues around energy equity and resiliency. The participants learned about how certain areas of the city were sustained by microgrids during Superstorm Sandy, while others were devastated. At the material recovery facility, the participants were encouraged to think about how trash and waste impact their communities and how city dwellers disassociate from the waste they create. These tours allow the participants to build place-consciousness and develop a sense of responsibility for the environmental wellbeing of the city and its inhabitants (Gruenewald, 2003). Further, the tours demonstrated that environmental systems in the city encompass more than just ecological services, but technical services as well.

The next morning, when the participants returned to NYU for day two of the program, they had a chance to reflect on their experiences with the full group. Then they split up again, and the Program Facilitators conducted energy and waste workshops with the participants to delve deeper into the issues. These workshops allow the participants to learn more about the urban
environmental issues of waste and energy and how individuals and systems contribute to the degradation of environments and the health and wellbeing of humans. They also learned about how to address environmental issues through individual action, education, and political advocacy. The workshops are designed for participants to both zoom out to look at the bigger picture and draw inward—challenging them to think about their own experiences and how these issues affect their lives.

After the workshops, all the participants came together for a session that simulates a City Council hearing. Participants were given different roles in the scenario: City Council Members, hearing testifiers, demonstrators, and members of the press. The Council hearing demonstrates all the competing interests and hurdles to passing legislation in City Council. This session is designed to expose the realities of political decision-making bodies and the challenges legislators face in creating and adopting meaningful policies. The participants were encouraged to reflect on their roles in these situations and what particular voices are privileged over others. As described by Bellino and Adams, environmental issues are often framed as having direct solutions. However, that is rarely the case and the City Council simulation highlights for the participants the systemic barriers to environmental solutions.

After the simulation, the participants received a brief educational and interactive presentation on the functions of local and state governments. They also learned about issue framing and how to be a persuasive advocate. They then had the opportunity to prepare remarks addressing City Council Members on legislation related to waste, energy, or environmental justice. The Program Facilitators helped them prepare their speeches, and gave them the chance to practice presenting.

On the third day of the TASC Summit, participants met with City Council Members and their staff to discuss and advocate for pro-environmental legislative solutions. In these meetings, the participants read their remarks, asked questions, and spoke about their experiences during the Summit. The Council meetings are core to the program. The participants are given the opportunity to act on and engage in these topics through formal political channels. For most of the participants, this was a completely new experience. After the meetings, everyone returned to NYU for a closing session. The participants received certificates for completing the program, enjoyed lunch, and reflected on their overall experience with the program’s facilitators and staff. Ending the program with a social gathering and ceremony of recognition gives the space and time for the participants to secure the relationships they forged with their peers.

Method
Participants
When the TASC Summit was piloted, 33 students from twelve New York City public schools were recruited for participation. For the most part, these students were selected by environmental science and engineering teachers for their particular interests in the environment, sustainability,
and political advocacy. Therefore, coming into the program, the students had basic familiarity with environmental topics. Some of the participants were first-generation immigrants, the majority were youth of color, and they all lived in geographically and socioeconomically diverse communities in New York City. They also all had some experience with traditional environmental education, but very few of the participants had experiences with policy or civic engagement.

Evaluative Process
I administered two surveys to the participants; one prior to the Summit, and one after (see Appendix A). In the three-part survey before the Summit, I posed qualitative questions that ask the participants to share their past experiences with and their interests in environmental issues; their concerns for major political issues, particularly environmental issues; their thoughts on the best ways to protect the environment; their familiarity and experiences with energy and waste systems in New York City; and the political decision-making process. I hypothesized that when prompted, the participants would speak to their experiences in natural spaces or environments outside of the city. I also thought that the participants would heavily emphasize individual action as an area in which they could contribute to protecting the environment. I assumed the participants would not think they had a role in shaping laws and regulations, but that they would consider changes through policy to be the best way to address environmental concerns. Since most of the participants had been formerly educated on environmental topics, I imagined they would demonstrate knowledge of energy and waste systems, but my assumption was that most would be generally unfamiliar with political processes.

In preparing for the TASC Summit, we acknowledged that participants would be politically concerned with several issues. In particular, given the political climate at the launch of the program (just following the 2016 presidential election), I felt many participants would be overwhelmingly concerned with issues related to immigration rights and women’s rights. I based this assumption on the increase of political mobilizations at the time and the heightened media coverage on these topics. While environmental protection is and has historically been under attack, I was interested in knowing how salient the topic was to current high school students. Additionally, since for the most part, the participants had strong interests in environmental science and engineering, we wanted to find out if they felt these issues were politically relevant.

The survey after the Summit was designed to solicit feedback from participants. The survey asked participants to rate different parts of the Summit, share their favorite and least favorite aspects, and reflect on their attitudes towards political efficacy and their own role in the political decision-making process. I hypothesized that the participants would describe feeling more aware of and educated on urban environmental issues and local political systems. Additionally, I thought the participants would express feeling heard in the City Council meetings and that they would have greater interest in continuing to participate in advocacy.
In addition to the surveys, I interviewed five of the participants for a promotional video and collected anecdotal feedback directly after the Summit.

**Discussion**

*Connection to the Environment*

The participants came into the program with diverse experiences and interests related to the environment. When asked about their “relationship with the environment” prior to the program, the majority of the participants (85%) felt connected to the environment in some way. As expected, most participants felt a connection because of their experiences spent outside or in nature. One participant explained: “I feel connected to the environment because it is a different feeling to be outside in nature vs. cities. Nature evokes the feeling of appreciation while cities [have] just become a part of life. However, they both hold equal value to me.” Many expressed feeling disconnected from the environment because they live in a city. However, a few participants expressed feeling a connection to the environment because as humans, they are part of the environment. However anomalous, one participant wrote on the survey, “I feel connected to the environment because it is where I live and the wellbeing of my environment goes hand-in-hand with my own personal wellbeing.”

These open-ended questions revealed information about how the participants perceive and define “the environment.” Of the participants that described experiences spent outside of the city, upstate, or at summer camps, some expressed a separation between natural landscapes and the city. One participant even described nature in the city as “superimposed.” One of the main intentions of the program is to foster in the participants a sense of responsibility for the environment that they are part of, as well as a connection to the city as an urban space with unique environmental issues that need to be addressed. Demonstrating how the city functions (similar to any “ecosystem”) was a crucial piece of the TASC Summit, in that it imbued in the participants an understanding of the roles cities play in protecting the environment and the ultimate beneficiaries (i.e., the people who face the brunt of environmental negligence). As described by the research of Bellino and Adams, traditional environmental education does not often speak to relevant topics when applied in urban contexts or to city dwelling students. Going into the TASC Summit, the participants described many experiences in nature but did not connect the environment to their day-to-day. Rather, their examples of experiences in nature were specifically outside of their norm.

*Protection of the Environment and Pro-Environmental Behavior*

The second part of the survey before the Summit asked the participants to weigh in on what they think are the best ways to protect the environment. The majority (85%) of the participants felt that the best way to protect the environment was through laws and regulations and through educating communities. However, only 18% of the participants felt they personally could
contribute to protecting the environment through laws and regulations. The participants interviewed expressed knowing very little about political systems before coming to the TASC Summit and were unaware of how the public weigh in on policy through official channels. This knowledge contextualizes the data; the participants did not think they could participate in protecting the environment through laws and regulations because they did not know previously that they had a role in that process.

While they did not feel they could change policy, 80% of the participants felt they could personally protect the environment through educating communities and personal behavioral change. In fact, 45% of the participants already perform some or many pro-environmental behaviors, and 40% would like to perform pro-environmental behaviors but are unsure what to do. When asked about the ways in which they perform pro-environmental behavior, most indicated that recycling was their primary pro-environmental action. Very few participants expressed doing more than that. This suggests that while students are learning about environmental issues in school, they may not know many solutions beyond the most basic and culturally pervasive.

**Political Interests**

When it comes to political issues, 35% of the participants ranked human rights for marginalized communities as their highest concern. Twenty-nine percent ranked the environment as their highest concern, and poverty and homelessness at 20%. Education was a highly ranked second or third tier concern for the participants. Thirty-five percent of the participants ranked foreign affairs as the least pressing issue, and gun violence was a close second to that at 28%.

Anecdotally, the participants drew connections between human rights and concern for the environment. A third of the participants spoke explicitly about an environmental justice bill in their City Council visits and gave examples of environmental injustice in their own communities. One participant said: “Me and my group spoke about...the fact that in inner city areas and areas that are highly concentrated with people of color, there is little to no effort to clean up and it’s really frustrating because I happen to live in one of those areas and I happen to be a person of color. And the fact that we’re not given resources to clean up our area and take ownership of our areas is really upsetting.”

**Feedback:**

After the Summit, 91% of the participants (a 6% increase from before the Summit) felt that the best way to protect the environment was through laws and regulations and through educating the community. From this feedback, it appears the Summit was successful in increasing the participants’ sense of political efficacy.

After the Summit, 65% of the participants indicated that the City Council visit was their favorite part of the program. Ninety percent of the participants indicated that they would partake in
political advocacy again, with a breakdown of 65% continuing their engagement if given another opportunity like the TASC Summit and only 25% indicating that they would engage in political advocacy on their own. This confirms Levy and Zint’s argument that students are more likely to have greater political interest and efficacy, if engaged in the process (p. 553).

Based on interviews and informal conversations, I gathered some key takeaways. Mainly, the participants felt that the program had given them a platform. As one participant described: “I was able to talk to [the City Council Member] and voice my opinion and I felt like I was actually heard, which was really nice, and I gained another connection that I can use in the future.”

Further, some participants felt like they gained a better understanding of local government and how to be an effective advocate when joining other voices. One participant explained: “I definitely have friends, groups, teammates to help me out, and...there is strength in numbers. If I just went up to the Council [Member] and said things by myself, they would just say, ‘Oh ok.’ But if I went with a group of nine other students all together, then it would definitely make a difference.” This strengthens the argument that social experiences are key to building political interest and efficacy (Levy and Zint, 2013, p. 563).

Going forward, participants expressed that they would like to be more involved and to have more of a say in the topics the Summit explores and the places they tour. Additionally, they would like more time to mingle with peers and to discuss what concrete actions they are planning to take after the Summit.

**Conclusion**

From the participant data and the supportive literature, the TASC Summit is clearly a successful intervention in addressing the lack of civic engagement amongst youth, and the failures of traditional environmental education when adapted to an urban context. The program was also successful in facilitating interpersonal relationships and fostering a sense of communal responsibility for the environmental wellbeing of the city and its citizens.

Future iterations of the TASC Summit and additional TASC programs will respond and grow off of this data analysis. While the content of the program is based in theories related to urban environmental education and issues, I intend to incorporate more concepts related to social justice and environmental inequalities in New York City. During the program’s pilot, participants advocated for an environmental justice bill, that has since been signed into law and heralded as one of the most comprehensive bills of its kind (Int. 0359A, 2014). However, separating environmental justice from the Summit’s other focus areas suggests that the topic exists as distinct from the environmental impacts associated with energy and waste, when actually these topics have strong justice implications and any attempts to address energy and waste issues will impact low-income individuals and communities of color. At this time and for
these participants, drawing stronger connections between sustainability solutions and their impacts on the lives of vulnerable populations needs to be raised as a relevant and crucial part of the program.

Additionally, I would like to expand TASC beyond the Summit so participants have more opportunities to stay involved and continue to grow as advocates and leaders in the environmental movement. Going forward, the Teen Advocates for Sustainability Corps (TASC) program will be enhanced through youth leadership and youth-driven initiatives in schools, and through opportunities for young people to co-create their own educational experiences and take an active role in their legacy.
Acknowledgements
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Finally, I would like to thank the amazing 2017 TASC Corps Members, for taking a chance and signing up for the program, participating in my surveys, and for inspiring me every day.

Thank you.
References


APPENDIX A

Teen Advocates for Sustainability (TASC) Summit Pre-Program Student Survey

Name or Initials:__________________

PART I: Interest in and Experiences with Environmental Issues
In this section, you will be asked about your past experiences with and your interest in environmental issues.

1a) What has influenced your interests in and ideas about the environment? (Check all that apply.)
- Past or current experiences in nature
- Current political issues
- Environmental problems
- Interactions with friends and family
- Teachers and in-school experiences
- Other: ______________

1b) Which one of these influences your ideas about the environment the most? Why?

2a) Please indicate your current relationship with the environment (Check only one).
   “Connection to the environment” is defined as the emotional connection an individual has towards the environment.
   “Pro-environmental behavior” is defined as individual participation in behaviors that make a positive impact on the environment.
- I do not feel connected to the environment
- I feel somewhat connected to the environment but do not perform pro-environmental behaviors
- I feel connected to the environment but do not perform pro-environmental behaviors
- I feel connected to the environment and am interested in performing pro-environmental behaviors but I’m unsure of what to do!
- I feel connected to the environment and perform some pro-environmental behaviors
- I feel connected to the environment and perform many pro-environmental behaviors

2b) Consider the answer you chose in question 2a. Why do you feel connected or disconnected to the environment?
2c) Consider the answer you chose in 2a. Why do you perform or not perform pro-environmental behaviors? If you do perform pro-environmental behaviors, what do you do?

PART II: Concern for Political Issues

There are many issues (political, social, personal) that impact our lives and causes us concern. In this section, you will be asked about your concerns for major political issues, and particularly environmental issues, and what you think is the best way to protect the environment.

3) Indicate your concern for the following major political issues:

Please rank in order of importance (1 being most important and 8 being least important).

☐ Poverty and homelessness
☐ Foreign affairs
☐ The environment
☐ Gun violence
☐ Education
☐ Healthcare
☐ Immigration
☐ Human rights for marginalized communities (people of color, religious minorities, LGBTQ people, women, etc.)

4) What are your specific concerns for the environment? (i.e. climate change, air quality/pollution, waste disposal, food, clean water...etc.) What actions (if any) do you take to address your concerns for the environment?

5a) There are many ways individuals can act to protect the environment. Which statement do you agree with the most?

a. The best way to protect the environment is to regulate environmentally destructive behavior through laws. (Example: passing a law in NYC to ban the use of Styrofoam)

b. The best way to protect the environment is through community education and practices. (Example: putting recycling bins around your school and educating students on the importance of recycling)

c. The best way to protect the environment is to change your own behavior. (Example: to stop buying items that cannot be recycled and recycling the items that can)

5b) Which of these actions (a, b or c) do you think you can do (or participate in) to protect the environment?

I believe I can participate in choice __________

PART III: Program Questions
During the TASC program, you will learn about energy and waste systems in NYC as well as political decision-making. This section will ask you about your familiarity and experiences with the topics that will be discussed during this Summit.

6) What do you think are the most pressing environmental concerns for NYC?

7) Have you ever participated in the following political activities. (Check all that apply.)
   - Voted for an elected official
   - Voted in participatory budgeting
   - Met with an elected official
   - Testified at a community board hearing
   - Participated in a march or attended a rally
   - Signed a petition
   - Written a letter to a politician
   - Other:__________

8) What are your expectations for this program? What do you hope to accomplish?

Teen Advocates for Sustainability (TASC) Summit Post-Program Student Survey

Please rate the different sessions of the Summit:

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<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Enjoyed most</th>
<th>Enjoyed</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Did not enjoy</th>
<th>Enjoyed least</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Visits to NYU Co-generation Plant &amp; Sims Recycling</td>
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<td>Energy &amp; Waste Workshops at NYU</td>
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<td>The City Council Simulation</td>
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<td>Advocacy Training</td>
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Meeting with City Council Member

1) What part of the Summit did you enjoy the most and why?

2) What part of the Summit did you enjoy the least and why?

3a) What kind of action do you believe is most effective in protecting the environment?
   a. Regulating environmentally destructive behavior through laws. *(Example: passing a law in NYC to ban the use of Styrofoam)*
   b. Educating your community and instituting sustainable practices. *(Example: putting recycling bins around your school and educating students on the importance of recycling)*
   c. Changing your own behavior. *(Example: to stop buying items that cannot be recycled and recycling the items that can)*

3b) I agree most with choice ______

3c) Consider your answer from 3a. Why do you believe this action is most effective?

4) Do you think waste and energy are issues in NYC? Why? Why not?

5) What have you learned?

After the Summit...
1) What new actions, if any, do you plan to take to protect the environment?

2) Would you participate in political advocacy again? (Check only one)
   - YES! - I’m going to schedule another meeting with my Council Member right now!
   - Yes - If given another opportunity like the TASC Summit.
   - No - It was fun, but as a one-time thing.
   - No - I did not enjoy the experience.
   - Other: ______________

3) Are you interested in participating in the following political activities? (Check all that apply)
   - Voting for an elected official
   - Voting in participatory budgeting
   - Meeting with an elected official
   - Testifying at a community board hearing
☐ Participating in a march or attending a rally
☐ Signing a petition
☐ Writing a letter to a politician
☐ Other:____________
APPENDIX B

2017 Teen Advocates for Sustainability Corps (TASC) Summit Schedule

DAY 1: Tuesday, February 21

Welcome to the TASC Summit!
1:00pm - New York University, Room 302

Site Visits
2:30pm - Departure for Sims Municipal Recycling Plant tour
3:00pm - Departure for NYU CoGeneration Plant tour

Students will be dismissed for the day from their site visits

DAY 2: Wednesday, February 22

Reconvene at NYU
11:30am - New York University, Room 302

Lunch
12:00pm - Room 302

Workshops
Energy
1:00pm - Room 603

Waste
1:00pm - Room 302

BREAK

City Council Simulation
2:15pm - Room 302
Workshop Debrief and Advocacy Presentation  
3:45pm - Room 302

Speech Writing Collaboration  
4:30pm - 3rd Floor

DAY 3: Thursday, February 23

Advocacy Day! Visits with City Council Offices  
9:00am - City Council Offices  
*We will notify you on Wednesday where you will be going and the exact time you need to be there.*

Summit Conclusion  
12:30pm - New York University, Room 302