

Seventh Annual Capitol Forum Indiana 2009

Student and Teacher Evaluation Report

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1. Executive Summary

Data on the *Capital Forum Indiana 2009* was collected from 9 teacher and 73 student participants through a post-forum survey. Overall, students and teachers were happy with their experience with the Capital Forum Indiana (CFI). Some of the more prominent responses are listed. For a more extensive examination of the data, see the full report following the summary.

- 91% of students and 100% of teachers either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the students learned a lot about international issues after participating in the Forum.
- 74% of students and 100% of teachers *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the exercises that their class completed prior to the Forum prepared them for the Forum experience.
- Students and teachers reported the following to be the most beneficial aspects they gained from the Forum:
 - Knowledge about the issues discussed
 - Awareness of US foreign policy
 - Appreciating other viewpoints
- Nearly half of students (45%) reported their views changed due to the Forum while the other 55% reported their views did not change. Of those whose views did change, two-thirds reported it was as a result of their increased knowledge on the topic.
- 52% of students thought that the icebreaker activities were a great way to meet students from other schools and 33% believed the breakout sessions were helpful for meeting others.
- 36% of students stated that better time management would be beneficial.
- For 44% of teachers, it was their first CFI experience and of the teachers who responded all of them would like to participate in the Forum next year.
- Teachers said the relevance of the topics discussed at the Forum and the deliberation process has impacted their classrooms.

2. Student Questionnaire

An evaluation questionnaire was administered to all student participants in the Capitol Forum Indiana (CFI) on March 5-6, 2009. Out of 81 student participants, 73 responded to the survey rendering a response rate of 90%. Participants were asked to answer several items that pertained to various aspects of their experience at CFI. A description and analysis of these items appear in this section. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A of this report.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender

- 58% (42) Female
- 40% (29) Male
- 2% (2) No Response

Grade Level

- 42% (31) Twelfth Grade
- 41% (30) Eleventh Grade
- 14% (10) Tenth Grade

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FORUM

Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements in regard to their CFI experience. Data is based on 73 respondents unless otherwise noted. The most common responses are bolded.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I felt prepared to use my deliberation skills during this Forum.	1% (1)	1% (1)	12% (9)	43% (31)	43% (31)
The exercises that my class completed before coming to the Forum prepared me for this experience.	1% (1)	4% (3)	21% (15)	40% (29)	34% (25)
I felt prepared with my knowledge of the topics and Futures to present at the Forum.	1% (1)	1% (1)	18% (13)	52% (38)	26% (19)
The information presented by <i>other students</i> changed my own thinking of the Futures. (respondents=72)	8% (6)	22% (16)	33% (24)	26% (19)	10% (7)
I was comfortable stating an opinion to back up by factual information. (respondents =72)	0	4% (3)	14% (10)	33% (24)	49% (35)
I asked probing questions of others. (respondents=71)	3% (2)	10% (7)	23% (16)	39% (28)	25% (18)
I responded to others' probing questions. (respondents=71)	1% (1)	3% (2)	18% (13)	54% (38)	24% (17)
I was able to meet students from other schools. (respondents=72)	1% (1)	0	7% (5)	31% (22)	61% (44)
Overall, I learned a lot about international issues by taking part in CFI.	1% (1)	1% (1)	7% (5)	36% (26)	55% (40)

BIGGEST GAINS

The majority of students felt the knowledge they gained from the issues discussed at the Forum was the most important aspect of the event. A complete breakdown of their responses is listed below. Percentages may exceed 100% as students could choose up to three selections.

- 60% (44) Knowledge about the issues discussed
- 45% (33) Awareness of US foreign policy
- 42% (31) The lasting effects of our decisions
- 42% (31) Appreciating other viewpoints
- 37% (27) Deliberation in general
- 37% (27) How to cooperate or compromise
- 36% (26) Speaking to large groups of people
- 25% (18) The value of voicing my opinion
- 5% (4) Other

*Other responses included: Confidence, Seeing other people's opinions, and patience

IMPACT OF THE FORUM

Nearly half of the students said their views changed as a result of CFI. A total of 63 students provided additional insight to their response. Representative samples of students' comments are provided below.

45% (33) Views Changed

- 67% (22) **More knowledge and awareness gained**
 - “Before Capital Forum, I had my own views and knowledge that...was a bit close-minded. Going to CF really increased my knowledge on topics I was making opinions about.”
 - “The information I know about the topics changed, so my views changed.”
 - “I am more aware of global issues now. Before I had never really paid attention.”
- 24% (8) **Others opinions influenced my thinking**
 - “I was opened to different views and thoughts. It was an amazing experience.”
 - “I gained knowledge from other attendees which allowed me to form a more educated viewpoint.”
- 9% (3) **No response**

55% (40) Views did not Change

- 45% (18) **No new opinions**
 - “I am firm in my convictions; I believe that my opinions are based in fact.”
 - “I thoroughly understood my views before I came, so they did not change...”
 - “My views have not changed, in fact, they were strengthened.”

- 33% (13) **Open to others opinions, but did not change personal views**
 - “While it was interesting to hear the viewpoints of others, my values and views remain unchanged.”
 - “My eyes were opened to new viewpoints and perspectives, but my views stayed the same.”

- 23% (9) **No response**

BEST ACTIVITIES TO MEET OTHERS

71 students responded to an item asking what activity at the CFI was best to get to know students from other schools. Slightly more than half of the responding students (52%; 37) said the icebreaker sessions were the best activities to meet new students. The next most identified activity was the breakout discussion sessions. Over one-third (36%; 26) of respondents reported the breakout session was helpful in meeting others, while five (7%) of the students reported the first session to be the most beneficial for socializing. Finally, five (7%) students reported deliberation as the best networking activity. These categories are listed below with frequencies, number of students identifying, and relevant quotations.

52% (33) Ice Breakers

- “The icebreaker activity was fantastic. I believe seeing the carefree, less intense side of people first is helpful in finding a happy medium between serious and comfortable.”
- “The icebreaker was the greatest experience. Working together forces students to talk to each other.”

36% (26) Breakout Sessions

- “The breakout session I was the best to meet new students...”
- “I liked getting into small groups and discussing that particular topic.”

11% (8) Futures

- “Working in the futures groups because it was more talking and personal.”

7% (5) Deliberation

- “The deliberations inside of the rooms.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

While 12% (8) of the responding 67 students reported they were mostly satisfied with the Forum, 88% (59) offered suggestions for improvement. The following is a categorization and sampling of respondents' suggestions for improvement.

36% (24) Timing/Logistics

- “Allow more time for Futures part to prepare for presentation.”
- “Make original group deliberations longer, not enough time for all issues.”
- “Limit people talking time because some people didn't even get a chance to voice an opinion.”
- “Longer days.”

9% (6) More Preparation

- “As a school, have more preparation for the topics.”
- “I would've liked to have been provided with more information before the conference about my topic.”

6% (4) Futures/Categories/Topics

- “I would maybe let the students select their desired future.”
- “Allow the students to mix two of the futures.”
- “New issues.”

4% (3) Smaller groups

- “For the "breakout 1" I would break up into smaller groups before having everyone discuss like the terrorism group did.”

Other notable responses:

- “Have more time for social interaction before we do our breakout groups, might help some feel more comfort speaking in from of their fellow students.”
- “Maybe involve other schools and not multiple groups from the same school.”
- “It was difficult to discuss my opinions during the first breakout session because it was a teacher dominated discussion and almost felt like defending myself than elaborating.”
- “Coming from a school in Indianapolis, we didn't get to stay at the hotel and as I do understand the financial logic for it, I feel as if we lost an extra chance to bond with other students.”
- “I think the senators should have been elected by students.”

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Many students responded that they enjoyed the Forum, learned a lot, had fun, and were ultimately thankful for the opportunity to participate in it. Many said they hope to participate again. Four respondents provided more specific questions and comments which are listed here:

- “Everything was well done, the host school Covenant did a great job, and I felt welcome there. Overall, it was a great experience and I learned a lot about how my peers viewed today's society.”
- “This was a very rewarding experience and I would love to participate next year!”
- “This is a great experience for someone who wants to go into any profession.”
- “I think that we should been allowed more questions for the state representative. I really enjoyed hearing what he had to say.”
- “More speakers with different views. We need more professional, honest opinions from adults.”

3. Teacher Questionnaire

An evaluation questionnaire was also administered to teachers who participated in the Capitol Forum Indiana on March 5-6, 2009. Of the 16 participants, 9 responded to the survey rendering a response rate of 56%. This section describes the trends in teacher responses to the Capitol Forum.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CAPITAL FORUM

Teachers were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements in regard to their CFI experience. The most common responses are bolded.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The materials provided to me to teach deliberation skills were useful.	0	0	0	44% (4)	56% (5)
The exercises my students completed prior to the Forum prepared them for this experience.	0	0	0	44% (4)	56% (5)
The address given by Secretary of State Todd Rokita was meaningful for the program.	0	0	22% (2)	44% (4)	33% (3)
My aptitude in teaching deliberation has increased by taking part in Capitol Forum.	0	0	0	44% (4)	56% (5)
My aptitude in teaching international issues has increased by taking part in Capitol Forum.	0	0	11% (1)	33% (3)	56% (5)
Overall, my students learned a great deal about international issues by taking part in the Capitol Forum.	0	0	0	33% (3)	67% (6)

BIGGEST GAINS

Teachers were asked what the most important things they learned from the Forum. Responses are listed below. Percentages may exceed 100% as respondents could choose up to three selections.

- 78% (7) Knowledge about the issues discussed
- 67% (6) Appreciating other viewpoints
- 67%(6) Awareness of US foreign policy
- 56% (5) Deliberation in general
- 56% (5) Speaking to large groups of people
- 56% (5) Valuing their own voice/opinion
- 44% (4) Practicing cooperation & compromise
- 22% (2) The lasting impacts of decisions
- 0% Completing a research project
- 0% Other

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Teachers were asked how many of their students in all of their classes took part in Capital Forum this year. Only 7 teachers responded with the number of student participants per grade. Students grades ranged from 9-12 and a total of 222 students were reported by these teachers as participating in the Forum. A breakdown of students by grade level is listed below:

- 30% (66) Grade 11
- 29 % (64) Grade 10
- 21% (46) Grade 9
- 21% (46) Grade 12

TEACHER PARTICIPATION

Teachers were asked how many years they have taken part in Capitol Forum. Nine teachers responded to this item. Nearly half of all respondents were first time teachers with CFI. One teacher has partaken in CFI every year since its inception.

- 44% (4) First year
- 22% (2) Two years
- 11% (1) Four years
- 11% (1) Five years
- 11% (1) Seven years
- No respondents reported to have taken part 3 or 6 years.

IMPACT OF THE FORUM

Eight participants indicated impacts that CFI has had on their classroom and program, while one participant indicated the question was not applicable. While a number of topics emerged, the overall sentiment was that the forum gives students and opportunity to consider different topics and voice an opinion on those topics. The following are themes that emerged:

50% (4) Relevance/Interest of topics

- “Topics are areas with continued interest. This helps greatly from year to year.”
- “Capitol Forum has kept global issues constantly relevant...”

50% (4) Deliberation process/sharing opinions

- “The units allow the students to develop roles and share opinions in a non-threatening and constructive manner.”
- “I now have a vehicle to allow my students a chance to voice their thoughts.”

Other notable quotations:

- “We have geared curriculum more towards to project and research based.”
- “By thinking methodically about the process and of the subject, it has increased my awareness of other viewpoints as well as the subjects and topics themselves.”

STATE STANDARDS

Participants were asked how well the CFI curriculum meets the Indiana state standards in their courses. Responses indicate the CFI meets certain courses particularly well but also has influence on curriculum in a varied group of classes. The following are courses mentioned with relevant quotations. Percentages exceed 100% because of respondents teaching multiple courses.

33% (3) US History

- “Capitol Forum meets and surpasses the state standards for my US history classes. I use the Capitol Forum curriculum with standards five through eight.”

11% (1) Geography and History of the World

- “It also meets the standards for Geography and History of the World - standards of conflict/cooperation to colonialism and trade and commerce.”

11% (1) World History

- “For my world history classes, I use the CF as a way to connect the concepts of history to today.”

11% (1) International Relations

- “...would meet standards in International Relations (corporation standards) because of the focus on economic, politics, and conflict.”

11% (1) English (American Studies)

- “These meet part of my standards as I teach English (American studies). I will expand the research component next year.”

11% (1) IB European History

11% (1) **AP Comparative Government and Politics**

11% (1) **IB History of the Americas**

Other notable quotations:

- “Standards are met in a more interesting, "real-life" atmosphere that engages the students and forces them to put their views forward.”
- “Easy to work in since standards are so broad.”

SUPPORT

Teachers were asked if they thought they were given adequate support by the Capitol Forum leadership to prepare their students for the Forum. All nine respondents said they were given adequate support by leadership. Additionally, five respondents offered written explanations. The general theme of responses was that they were more than prepared for the CFI. Also, one respondent reported they will look to order more books for future years.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Seven teachers responded offered suggestions which are listed verbatim below.

- “Encourage video presentations to be posted on the website.”
- “Lengthen time for deliberation. Enhance the website to create a tool for teachers that are not meeting - giving the ability to access images and data to serve as an additional guidance for new teachers.”
- “I wish I could incorporate a field trip for all students in the class.”
- “One student is allowed to speak at the mike at one time and answer questions...”
- “More time for the breakouts and guest speakers.”
- “More time, if possible for questions to Mr. Rokita.”
- “Provide a way for students to see ahead of time what to expect. For example, on a website, provide pictures of posters. Also a list of terms or questions that have come up in past future presentations.”

PARTICIPATION NEXT YEAR

The eight teachers who responded to this item noted they intend to take part with CFI in the 2009/2010 academic year.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS / COMMENTS

Three teachers provided additional questions or comments. They are listed verbatim here:

- “Could you make "official" photos of the event available on DVD/downloadable from the website?”
- “I think the speakers should scout out during the sessions the students who were becoming "mike hogs.” The speakers should reinforce the rule only once. Usually the "mike hogs" do not know about the issue in depth anyway and they like to hear themselves speak while they are wasting our lives.”
- “Much as We the People program is used for honors/AP classes, the Choices program needs to promote its use in the high level classes while maintaining its usefulness in a ‘regular’ classroom.”

4. Appendix A: Student Evaluation Questionnaire

7th Annual Capitol Forum Indiana (CFI), March 5-6, 2009
Student Evaluation Questionnaire

Please complete the following questionnaire. The feedback you provide will be used to improve CFI in future years. The Center for Evaluation and Education Policy prepared this survey and will analyze and report feedback to Capitol Forum in aggregate form. Thank you for your time and feedback.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I felt prepared to use my deliberation skills during this Forum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The exercises that my class completed before coming to the Forum prepared me for this experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I felt prepared with my knowledge of the topics and Futures to present at the Forum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The information presented by <i>other students</i> changed my own thinking of the Futures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I was comfortable stating an opinion to back up by factual information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I asked probing questions of others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I responded to others' probing questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I was able to meet students from other schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Overall, I learned a lot about international issues by taking part in Capitol Forum Indiana.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate your response to the following by checking the appropriate box and/or writing a response:

10. What are the most important things you learned/gained by taking part in the Capitol Forum? (Select up to three)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding deliberation in general
<input type="checkbox"/> Appreciating other viewpoints
<input type="checkbox"/> How to cooperate or compromise
<input type="checkbox"/> Speaking to large groups of people
<input type="checkbox"/> Awareness of US foreign policy
<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge about the issues discussed | <input type="checkbox"/> The value of voicing my opinion
<input type="checkbox"/> The lasting effects of our decisions
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (s), Please explain:

_____ |
|--|--|

11. Did your views change as a result of the Forum? Yes No
Please explain your response:

Please continue questionnaire on other side...

12. Which activities did you find the best to meet students from other schools?

13. How would you improve the Capitol Forum experience for the future?

14. What is your grade level? 9th 10th 11th 12th

15. What is your gender? Female Male

Additional Comments:

Thank you for your valuable input!

5. Appendix B: Teacher Evaluation Questionnaire

7th Annual Capitol Forum Indiana (CFI), March 5-6, 2009
Teacher Evaluation questionnaire

Please complete the following questionnaire. The feedback you provide will be used to improve CFI in future years. The Center for Evaluation and Education Policy prepared this survey and will analyze and report feedback to Capitol Forum in aggregate form. Thank you for your time and feedback.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The materials provided to me to teach deliberation skills were useful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The exercises my students completed prior to the Forum prepared them for this experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The address given by <i>Secretary of State Todd Rokita</i> was meaningful for the program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. My aptitude in teaching deliberation has increased by taking part in Capitol Forum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. My aptitude in teaching international issues has increased by taking part in Capitol Forum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Overall my students learned a great deal about international issues by taking part in the Capitol Forum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate your response to the following by checking the appropriate box:

7. What are the most important things you believe your students learned/gained by taking part in CFI?
(please select up to three)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deliberation in general
<input type="checkbox"/> Completing a research project
<input type="checkbox"/> Appreciating other viewpoints
<input type="checkbox"/> Practicing cooperation & compromise
<input type="checkbox"/> Speaking to large groups of people
<input type="checkbox"/> Awareness of US foreign policy | <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge about the issues discussed
<input type="checkbox"/> Valuing their own voice/opinion
<input type="checkbox"/> The lasting impacts of decisions
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (s), Please explain: _____
_____ |
|--|--|

8. How many of your students in all of your classes took part in the Capitol Forum curriculum this year? Please indicate each grade with which you taught the Forum curriculum and the number of students per grade.

9th # of students:_____ 10th # of students:_____ 11th # of students:_____ 12th # of students:_____

9. How many years have you taken part in Capitol Forum with students?

This is my first year 2 years 3years 4 years 5years 6 years all 7 years

Please continue questionnaire on other side...

Please write/indicate your responses to the following items:

10. How has Capitol Forum impacted your classroom/program throughout the year(s) you have taken part?

11. How well does the Capitol Forum curriculum meet the state standards you are teaching? Please describe this including the title(s) of the class(es) or program(s) you teach/lead and the standards you aim to meet using Capitol Forum Indiana.

12. Were you given adequate support by the Capitol Forum leadership to prepare your students for the Forum?

Yes No Please explain:

13. How would you improve the Capitol Forum for the future to impact student learning?

14. Do you intend for your students to take part in Capitol Forum next year? Yes No

Additional Comments:

Thank you for your valuable input!