
AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY'S *SEMINARS ON SCIENCE* ONLINE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE HONORED WITH CODIE AWARD

ONLINE COURSE ON WATER WINS FOR BEST PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SOLUTION

Seminars on Science, the online professional development program for teachers launched in 2000 by the American Museum of Natural History, was recently honored at the 25th Annual Codie Awards, established by the Software and Information Industry Association to recognize creativity and innovation in the field. The Museum's new online course *Water* for **Seminars on Science** won in the category for **Best Professional Development Solution**.

The award-winning *Water* course focuses on why water is a critical resource, the impact of human consumption on aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, and the social, economic, and environmental implications of water management. Along with a solid grasp of these water-related issues, students come away grounded in the science that underlies environmental studies. They are able to understand the interrelationships between living things and the ecosystems they inhabit; analyze environmental problems caused by changing natural conditions and by human activity; and evaluate ways to prevent and resolve these problems.

"The combination of high production values, unsurpassed resources, and knowledgeable teachers makes *Seminars on Science* unique. In reaching across disciplines and media, the Museum is at the forefront of professional development for science teachers," said Rosamond Kinzler, director of the National Center for Science Literacy, Education and Technology, the group within the Museum's Department of Education responsible for creating **Seminars on Science**.

Seminars on Science (<http://learn.amnh.org>) allows K–12 teachers across the United States to participate in Web-based courses in the life, earth, and physical sciences. The program was launched in 2000 with three courses and has greatly expanded its catalogue. It now offers 12 courses—each six weeks in duration—that include original writing from scientists and resources such as three-dimensional virtual specimens and videos that take educators behind the scenes to field sites and research facilities. Co-authored and co-taught by Museum scientists and educators, *Seminars on Science* brings participants into the collections, laboratories, and exhibitions of the American Museum of Natural History.

The program has grown steadily since its initial course offerings were launched in 2000. During the past four years, enrollment has grown from approximately 550 to 1,200 learners, an annual increase of almost 30 percent. In the 10 years of the program's existence, **Seminars on Science** has drawn teachers from 49 states. Independent evaluation of **Seminars** by Inverness Research Associates indicates that teachers who participate in the courses deepen their scientific knowledge, enhance their understanding of the process of scientific research, and gain valuable classroom resources. Graduate credit is available through partnerships with colleges and universities across the country.

Other courses include: *Climate Change*; *Evolution*; *Earth: Inside and Out*; *Genetics, Genomics, Genethics*; *Sharks and Rays*; *Space, Time and Motion*; *The Link Between Dinosaurs and Birds*; *The Solar System*; *The Study of Spiders*; *Water*; *Ocean System*; and *The Diversity of Fishes*. The newest course, *Climate Change*, will debut in the spring of 2011.

Seminars on Science is a program of the National Center for Science Literacy, Education, and Technology (NCSLET), part of the Museum's Department of Education. Founded in 1997, the National Center is dedicated to tapping the Museum's unparalleled resources—collections, scientific research, and exhibitions—and making them available to the broadest possible audience across the nation and throughout the world.

The Museum supports professional development activities for teachers particularly through the **David S. and Ruth L. Gottesman Center for Science Teaching and Learning**, a part of the Museum's Department of Education. This past fiscal year, over 6,000 education professionals—teachers at all levels, science coordinators, and principals—benefited from the Museum's professional development programs for a total of over 24,000 contact hours. The Museum's offerings for educators deliver on the institution's goal to bring its unique science resources to teachers and students through teachers' direct exposure to Museum scientists and educators in **custom workshops**, **professional development institutes**, **educator evenings**, and **science leadership days for administrators**. There are also curriculum resources such as Educator's Guides for the Museum's halls and exhibitions; and online resources provided via **Resources for Learning** and **Seminars on Science**.

The Museum also spearheaded the launch of **Urban Advantage: Middle School Science Initiative**, a comprehensive, integrated program of professional development and class and family visits that has helped 7th- and 8th-graders and their teachers from all over New York City pursue investigations at eight science-rich New York City institutions and to complete their science exit projects, a requirement for advancement into high school. The program has grown dramatically since it was launched in 2004 with 60 teachers and 35 schools. Today, it supports over 300 teachers in more than 150 middle schools—fully one-third of all New York City public middle schools—and serves more than 37,000 New York City students in all five boroughs.

Leadership support for **Seminars on Science** has been provided by The Atlantic Philanthropies. Additional support has been provided by the Sherman Fairchild Foundation, the Educational Foundation of America, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and NASA.

The Codie Awards were established by the Software and Information Industry Association (SIIA) in 1986 so that the pioneers of the up-and-coming software industry could evaluate and honor each other's work. Since its inauguration, the Codie Awards program has showcased the software and information industry's finest products and services and honored excellence for corporate achievement and philanthropic efforts. The Codie Awards are the only peer-recognition awards program of its kind in the industry, providing a unique opportunity for companies to vie for the praise of their competitors.

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