

Sharing the Challenge

Lessons learned:

Our experiences developing, running, and evaluating this workshop has taught us several lessons that will be useful for future programs.

Recruiting Participants

Recruiting informal educators was straightforward. A single e-mail message sent to a broad group of educators across the region led to sufficient numbers of participants registering.

Recruiting scientists was more challenging. We had to personally call or e-mail scientists to ask them to commit to this six-hour workshop away from their home institutions. Invitations did not have to come from a well-known colleague. Still we had the most success recruiting scientists that had been recommended by people they know. Most scientists expressed interest, but scheduling conflicts prevented many from participating.

Positive Outcomes

At the end of the workshop, all 23 participants reporting said they had met at least one person they intended to contact later. Many participants suggested that we provide contact information, personal webpage addresses, and other information about the participants so people could more easily get to know each other and communicate later.

The participants generated, shared, and discussed many good ideas for programs and projects that would enhance ocean science education in New England. NE-COSEE has committed to supporting some of those ideas.

Suggestions for future programs

Scientists and informal educators said they would appreciate more specific ideas about finding funding to support education programs and exhibits.

Scientists and informal educators expressed interest in getting help meeting people across disciplines beyond the participants in the program.

There were several other suggestions that could lead to other types of workshops. Ideas included workshops organized around particular projects and messages, and workshops in which scientists and informal educators presented success stories about research and education.