

**Synthesis of Interviews: Assessment of Sanctuaries, Reserves, Sea Grants, Climate Program and Corals Program Need for *Designing Education Projects* Course**  
**Prepared by Beth Day-Miller**

*This is a synthesis of the interviews with people representing educators at the NOAA headquarters level. Transcriptions of the interviews are available upon request (responses were coded to maintain the anonymity of the respondents). Respondents were sent the interview questions ahead of time and then interviewed over the phone. The purpose of these interviews was to gauge potential interest in and identify needs related to the *Designing Education Projects* Course.*

**Q: Are you aware of the *Designing Education Projects* Workshops that NOAA's Office of Ed presented/conducted this spring?**

Four of the respondents were aware of the DEP workshops; one was not.

**Q: If yes, how were you made aware of them?**

Three respondents heard about the workshops from OED staff. Two responses included the Education Council as an information source. Additional sources included one of the developers and through a line office.

**Q: Have you seen the manual, *Designing Education Projects*?**

Three of the five respondents have seen the manual.

**Q: If so, how did you come across it?**

All three respondents encountered the manual through an OED contact; either at an Education Council meeting or through a specific conversation with someone in the OED.

**Q: Have you had time or were able to look through the manual?**

All three of the respondents have looked through the manual to some extent; one sent it to all of the educators in the program.

**Q: Do you have any thoughts on the manual that you would like to share?**

Each respondent offered a different perspective on the manual. One stated that it was similar and draws from material created by CSC. Another said it is a very basic, introductory level document that may not be detailed enough or may not have specific enough information for some more experienced educators. The third is glad that it exists.

**Q: Do you think there is a need among the education and outreach staff in your program/office to attend a workshop on program design, implementation, and evaluation?**

All five respondents think that this kind of workshop is needed. Three respondents are concerned that the workshop that has been offered in the past is too basic for their educators; a more advanced or tailored course would be more useful for these educators.

**Q: Besides attending the DEP workshop, what other types of training have they attended? Please describe.**

One participant indicated that the group he represents (Climate) has had essentially no training in this or another relevant area. The other four groups have had much more in depth training including these topic areas: evaluation and assessment (3), CSC training (2), developing a good interpretative center, graduate level courses on evaluation, Grant writing and technology training. In the near future (this fall) three groups will have additional training including how to conduct effective teacher training, and how to apply and use the Bennett framework for program evaluation (2).

**Q: Approximately how many education and outreach staff in your program/office would benefit from this type of workshop?**

The total estimate ranges from 140-160 possible invitees. It is anticipated that some number less than this would actually attend a workshop. The individual groups ranged from 1-4 for the Corals program, 15-20 for Climate (mostly from OAR labs), about 31 for Sea Grant and 70-80 for NERRS.

**Q: What are the best times of the year to offer workshops for these staff members? Are any times particularly difficult for your education and outreach staff to participate in a workshop?**

Best times for most: late fall through early spring, depending when professional meetings occur and involvement with NOSB. The only time that is likely to be good for nearly everyone is February. If budget restrictions are not an issue, more of the fall can be viable.

Worst time for all: Summer because of programs and vacations.

**Q: What workshop format (on-line, mix residential/on-line, all residential) would be most appropriate for your education and outreach staff?**

All respondents indicated that at least part of a workshop should be face-to-face. Enthusiasm for an on-line component ranged from very optimistic to cautious optimism based on the specifics of how the on-line portion would be designed and offered to participants.

**Q: Can you tell me more about why this would work best for your staff?**

Stated advantages to a mix of on-line and face-to-face include reduced costs, less time away from "home", opportunities to gain background information or to follow-up on workshop material on the participant's own time while focusing time together on applying material and working with experts. Face-to-face time is valued as the best way for most people to learn and apply new material.

**Q: Are there any barriers to participation by your education and outreach staff that we should be aware of (e.g. funding for travel, support from managers, and time away from office)?**

Of the five respondents, two stated that all of these were significant barriers to participation. Three respondents indicated the funding and time away were the big barriers to participation; support from managers was not a barrier. In addition, two

respondents indicated that the specific timing of a workshop (fitting this into already busy schedules) could be an important barrier to participation.

**Q: Of the barriers you mentioned, does one of them take precedence over the others? In what way does this barrier take precedence?**

All five respondents indicated that funding availability was a significant barrier to participation in professional development by their educators. Two respondents reiterated that time was also a limiting factor to participation in professional development.

**Q: Is there anything you would like to ask or share with me regarding our plans to implement additional DEP workshops?**

Two of the respondents offered that they are interested in supporting OED's effort to continue to develop these workshops especially if there will be innovation and attention to the needs of their educators. They view their educators as knowing much of this material and being more advanced than past participants may have been. Three of the respondents are interested in workshops that are specifically tailored to the needs of their educators. A fourth respondent asked several questions about how this information would be used, what the goal of the workshop was, who the target audience was, and what other data is being collected. The fifth respondent asked additional questions about who might participate in the workshops and provided some names of additional potential attendees in NESDIS and NOS.

**Synthesis of Emailed Survey:  
Workshop Developers' Evaluation of 2007 Designing Education Projects Workshops  
Prepared by Beth Day-Miller**

*Below is a synthesis of the responses to the questions asked of the people involved with developing the DEP workshops in 2007. The complete anonymous responses of the five developers are available upon request.*

**Q: Overall, how do you think the workshops went?**

Of the five responses received, all were positive. One indicated that there was room for improvement and another commented on the improvement made over the previous administration of the workshop. I think both are accurate.

**Q: What do you think went particularly well?**

Among the responses, some effect of conducting the DEP workshops regionally with participants from across line offices (NMFS and NWS) was stated by every developer (7 total responses). Two people found specific activities to have gone particularly well. Additional responses that were stated by one of the developers were: time working on own projects, time working on own tools, having two trainers plus OED staff who offered experience and expertise, the format (mix of activities and lecture), and the size of the group.

**Q: What do you think could be improved upon?**

Two developers stated that Moodle should have been working when the workshops began. The continued lack of a mechanism to support the learning community created by these workshops is disappointing. The face-to-face time of the workshops should be shortened to two days without losing any content. The value and appropriate use of the case studies needs to be revisited. Also revisit the tools to ensure they are immediately applicable. Many very specific changes and adjustments to the content and organization of the workshops were offered. These are provided in a complete form in the attached Appendix.

**Q: What changes would you make in future workshops?**

In addition to the detailed responses to the previous question provided in the appendix, the developers added or reiterated the following thoughts. There should be more contact and preparation before and as follow-up to the workshops, thereby focusing the time together more on developing a plan and appropriate instruments. The duration should be less. Two developers stated the importance of only inviting participants who wanted to be there and intended to take the workshop seriously. Moodle should be functioning before the workshops begin. The manual should be revised to be consistent with agency views on program evaluation. Funding support should be sought from all participating line offices.

**Q: What changes would you make to the manual?**

In addition to responses to the previous question targeting the manual, the following thoughts were offered by the developers. The current structure of the manual is logical but it can be improved upon. Two developers stated that additional case studies should be developed and added to the manual as examples; another stated that more examples would

strengthen weak areas (program planning and implementation). Two developers stated that because of NOAA's adoption of the Bennett TOP model for program evaluation, theory and application should be incorporated into manual revisions. In addition, workshop materials and presentations need to be updated to reflect the TOP model as appropriate. Always strive to use as much plain language as possible. One developer had no suggestions for revising the manual.

**Q: What changes would you make to the workshop agenda?**

More time for participant interaction in the form of introductions and networking was stated four times. In addition the following were mentioned once: using evening time more productively for interaction between instructors and participants, introduce more material in advance and follow-up with participants on-line, revisit comments from participants' evaluations and interviews.

**Q: What changes would you make in the administration, development and evaluation of the workshops?**

Two of the developers did not offer any changes related to workshop administration, development and evaluation. The remaining three offered the following comments in these areas. Unless otherwise noted, these statements were offered by one participant.

**Administration:**

Having a combination of NOAA and non-NOAA people involved as developers of workshops was critical. This complement of people with different perspectives and expertise made the workshops stronger. Having NOAA HQ level people justified and conveyed the importance of the workshops to participants; NOAA experienced people assisted in translating NOAA level concerns to instructors and participants. Participants should be screened to ensure that all participants are appropriately engaged in the workshops. An e-learning component should be added to the workshops. A change that has already been made: NEETF is no longer involved.

**Development:**

Keeping the planning team mostly intact will benefit efficient development of future workshops. There is a good base to work from and future face-to-face meetings should only occur if necessary. Changes to the manual should be completed first before workshop planning starts. More workshops should be offered; workshop size should remain the same.

**Evaluation:**

Pre and post workshop assessment and evaluation are critical to the success and future of these workshops. Two developers stated that the assessment and evaluation plan is solid and the instruments are good with the following exceptions: the time lag from the end of the workshops to follow-up questionnaires/interviews is too long, and the assessments need to be reevaluated for validity and comprehensiveness of question sets.

*Note: The following questions were only offered to the two LO representatives. I will add these responses into those from the HQ interviews so all of this information is together.*

**Q: Approximately how many education and outreach staff in your program/office would benefit from this type of workshop who have not already participated in a DEP Workshop?**

The responses were 15+ and 100+, so more than 115 potential invitees.

**Q: What are the best times of the year to offer workshops for these staff members?**

The developers agree that November, February, and March are the best times. NMFS also indicated that April, September, October, November, December, and January are possible times of the year. NWS indicated that June, July, and August are good times.

**Q: Are any times particularly difficult for your education and outreach staff to participate in a workshop?**

Everything not mentioned above is bad.

**Q: Are there any barriers to participation by your education and outreach staff that we should be aware of (e.g. funding for travel, support from managers, and time away from office)?**

All of the mentioned barriers were viewed as important by both developers.

**Q: Of the barriers you mentioned, does one of them take precedence over the others? In what way does this barrier take precedence?**

One developer stated that managerial support was the biggest barrier, the other developer identified money as the biggest issue.

*Note: Everyone (5) responded to this question.*

**Q: Is there anything else you would like to share related to the workshops?**

Most of the developers (3) were positive about the workshops and are looking to future implementation of more workshops. One developer was thankful that the workshops are happening, one developer had nothing additional to add and one developer had several questions regarding future administration of the workshops.