



## Evaluation of New Hampshire Education & Environment Team Summer Institute 2003-2006

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Program Profile	
<b>Program Description:</b>	The New Hampshire Education and Environment Team (NHEET) Summer Institute is a multi-day residential professional development program for K-8 educators. The program focuses on natural science content and related teaching skills with the hope that educators will integrate more natural science instruction into their curriculum. The theme and session topics vary from year to year. During the academic year teachers have the option of attending additional professional development workshops organized by the New Hampshire Education and Environment Team.
<b>Program Goals:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To foster change in teacher practice related to integration of natural science in K-8 curriculum.</li> <li>2. To increase awareness, knowledge, appreciation, and stewardship of New Hampshire natural resources in K-8 educators and their students.</li> </ol>
<b>Program Funding:</b>	Funding comes from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service, Public Service of New Hampshire (PSNH), PLT/WET/WILD joint workshop revenues, and registration fees.
<b>Program Links:</b>	<a href="http://www.nhplt.org/NHEET.htm">http://www.nhplt.org/NHEET.htm</a>
Evaluation Profile	
<b>Evaluation Goals &amp; Questions:</b>	<p>The goal of the evaluation was to measure changes in teacher practice as a result of teachers' participation in the NHEET Summer Institute 2003-2006.</p> <p>Change in teachers' practice was defined to include four aspects: greater study of natural science, greater use of interdisciplinary strategies and hands-on investigation, greater use of curriculum materials in designing units, and greater use of school grounds or other local natural areas.</p>
<b>Evaluation Methods:</b>	A survey was used to collect data from participants in the 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006 Summer Institutes. The surveys were administered using Survey Monkey. Paper surveys were sent to participants who did not have a current email address. Participants were sent introductory letters before they received the survey. The NHEET provided a two week period for participants to respond and offered incentives (teaching materials or resources) in return for completion of the survey.

	<p>The survey questions focused on participants’ perceptions of the workshop’s impact on their knowledge and practices related to integrating natural science and specific programs/materials into their teaching. Most questions had closed-ended, Likert type response options.</p> <p>Additional comments and quotes were used to highlight and support the key findings.</p>
<b>Evaluation Instruments:</b>	A complete set of evaluation instruments is available in the report.
<b>How were results used?</b>	<p>The evaluation results have been used in several ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To inform strategic planning decisions by NH Project Learning Tree on how best to invest and leverage resources for teacher professional development.</li> <li>• To justify continued participation in the NHEET partnership by some partners.</li> <li>• To justify continued investment in the institute as effective professional development for teachers.</li> <li>• To adjust how time is spent on different aspects of the institute.</li> <li>• To adjust how time for curriculum planning is structured and defined.</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation Cost:</b>	Funding for the evaluation came from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and NH Project Learning Tree. The cost was \$7,500.
<b>Evaluation Insights:</b>	<p><b>What worked well?</b>  This evaluation was designed to enhance staff capacity at NH Project Learning Tree for conducting in-house utilization-focused program evaluations. While the staff performed the tasks of designing, conducting, analyzing, and reporting the results, they also consulted regularly with an evaluation consultant on the design of the evaluation plan, appropriate instruments, and tabulation of the results. The consultant also provided an external review of the draft findings. This approach deepened the organization’s understanding of how to conduct evaluations, as well as its commitment to evaluating its work with a utilization-focus.</p> <p><b>What were important evaluation “lessons learned”?</b>  Perhaps the strongest lesson learned was to focus on the core evaluation question(s). A clear, unwavering focus on what we wanted to learn drove (and simplified) decisions about questions to ask and thus, data to be analyzed and reported. Another important lesson was to include an open-ended question to prompt interesting, spontaneous comments from survey participants. Some wonderful gems of information were gained.</p> <p><b>What could have been done differently?</b>  If we had more money and time, we would have also conducted focus groups to gain more detailed information from the institute participants.</p>
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