



## **Talking about teaching: the importance of professional interactions about geoscience education**

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Geoscientists have rich professional networks supporting their work as scientific researchers that foster the sharing, discussion and testing of scientific ideas. We have fewer opportunities to participate in networks that support our work as faculty teaching geoscience to undergraduate and graduate students. Yet, this aspect of our professional work has the potential to benefit tremendously from sharing of educational research results, discussions of successes and failures in teaching, and testing of the ideas that underpin our choices of content for courses, methods for instruction, and design of degree programs. In the United States, educational sessions and workshops at professional meetings have become an important mechanisms for extending our professional interactions into the realm of geoscience education. In addition, the National Association of Geoscience Teachers provides a venue for peer reviewed publications (Journal of Geoscience Education) and sponsors professional development programs such as 'On the Cutting Edge' that provide opportunities for extended interaction among geoscience faculty and education researchers. The Science Education Resource Center works with several of these programs to create on-line resources that extend opportunities to participate in a geoscience education network into the virtual realm (serc.carleton.edu). Participation in geoscience education networks impacts the ability of faculty to teach and thus students to learn geoscience. As we focus on developing broader scientific literacy, improving the preparation of pre-college science teachers, and preparing the geoscience workforce, participation in professional networks focused on geoscience education becomes an increasingly important professional opportunity.