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Innovative Features to an Evidence-Based Practice Conference: A Program Evaluation

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BACKGROUND

The Evidence-Based Scholarly Communications Conference (EBSCC) held in Albuquerque, New Mexico USA during March 2010 piloted two innovations:

1. *Real-time peer review* by attendees on research paper presentations
2. A participatory *advocacy workshop* focusing on speaking skills

METHODS

Prospective cohort study design evaluations.

Real-Time Peer Review

Step 1: Prospective research paper presenters submitted 250 word proposals to the selection committee six months prior to EBSCC. Four finalists submitted their 2,000 word research papers a month prior to EBSCC.

Step 2: Conference attendees completed evaluation forms for each presenter immediately after their presentation. 60% of attendees completed feedback forms.

- Presenters received an average of 22 feedback forms from attendees.
- On average each presenter received 15 comments on their methodology and 15 comments on their interpretations from attendees.

Most feedback was positive using adjectives such as "good" and "solid". A minority of feedback forms contained actionable feedback for publication.

Step 3: The presenters were encouraged and coached to publish their manuscripts in *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice* (*EBLIP*).

Advocacy Workshop

In a pre-conference survey a majority of registrants rated "Strategies for promoting open access publication" as their highest key issue.

Participants in the Advocacy Workshop developed pre-existing knowledge and skills in a collaborative constructivist learning environment .



Drs. Nancy Ridenour and Jonathan Eldredge

Participants interacted with advocacy experts to brainstorm ideas, develop talking points, and present "3-minute elevator speeches" for critique.

Conference participants were asked to evaluate the efficacy of this experience at one month and then seven months following the conference.

RESULTS

Real-Time Peer Review

Two of the four presented research papers were published in December 2010 issue of the peer reviewed open-access journal *EBLIP*. Authors of a third manuscript elected to publish their results more quickly in a blog rather than as a commentary in *EBLIP*. The fourth author had contemplated publishing in another journal, but was lost to follow-up.

The first and second manuscripts received 9 and 7 actionable comments from peer reviewers respectively. These two published articles in *EBLIP* had evidence of incorporating 7 and 4 of these suggestions accordingly.

Advocacy Workshop

Conference attendees evaluated the Workshop highly. 55% agreed and 45% somewhat agreed that this workshop will be "helpful with my efforts to promote the use of open-access publication at my institution" one month after EBSCC. Seven months later 44% and 50% of the attendees evaluated the workshop the same way.

CONCLUSION

•The real-time peer review offers an effective method to provide direct, immediate, and actionable feedback to presenters.

•Attendees felt the Advocacy Workshop presented valuable skills and will be useful in promoting open-access.

•These innovations might enhance future conferences and other venues as evidenced by the positive outcome and evaluation measures.



Advocacy Workshop participants.

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