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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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Photos by Sally Bowler-Hill.