Emerging Learning Design 2013 Conference

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In 2011 the Emerging Learning Design (ELD) conference first took place at Monclair State University and in its third year the conference has grown in scope, diversity of presentations and presenters, and reached beyond the MSU campus and the local region to develop a national following.

The concept for the ELD is simple; a reasonably sized event where attendees have an opportunity to experience high quality presentations and have time to network with others at the event. The conference schedule is specifically designed with larger than normal gaps between sessions so that attendees can get to know the presenters as well as their fellow attendees.

In 2011, all of our presenters were invited guests. We had three keynotes (Kapp, Richter, & Robbins) and numerous concurrent sessions. For 2012 we began accepting submitted proposals and ended up with more submissions than the schedule could allow. We also reduced the number of keynotes to one (Danish) and added 3×15 and Ignite! sessions to our schedule. The 3×15’s were designed to be mini-keynote, much like TED talks and the Ignite! sessions were our own take on the popular conference session type where a presenter only have 5 minutes to go through 20 slides that change automatically every 15 seconds.

For 2013 we solidified the mission of the conference, which is to showcase best practices in design and implementation by bringing together those interested in engaging in vibrant and dynamic discourse regarding pedagogy and how technology can better enhance it. We also made revisions to the program. We introduced 90-minute workshop sessions, which are longer and more hands-on than a concurrent session, and brought back the very well received Ignite! session with a bit of a twist. This year, each Ignite! presenter will get their 5 minutes (20 slides every 15 seconds automatically) on stage but at the end of the whole-audience Ignite! we have added something we’re calling Engage! Each Ignite presenter will have a table space in the lobby area (where snacks are also being served) to act as a digital “poster session”. Those who want to know more about the topic of the Ignite! will have a chance to speak directly to the presenter.

Another big change for 2013 was how we reviewed and accepted presentations. In 2012, the ELD used a more traditional conference model whereby prospective presenters submitted proposals that were then reviewed by a committee and either accepted or rejected. This year, under the guidance of Program Chair Kirk McDermid, the ELD took a revolutionary step and adopted a peer-reviewed “journal” model for accepting presentations.
When a proposal is submitted it goes through a blind peer-review process and is either accepted, rejected, or returned for revision. Those that are accepted get added to the conference schedule immediately. Those that have suggested revisions, once resubmitted, go through the peer-review process again. This process allows for feedback to the presenters enabling them to make the best presentation possible as well as helping the conference to fill its schedule sooner and allowing potential attendees to make decisions about the conference sooner.

The other big news for 2013 is the addition of proceedings published here in the Journal of Emerging Learning Design. Those who are tenured, or on a tenure-track, don’t get credit for tenure or promotion for presenting at conferences. In an effort to draw more research focused presentations by faculty we’ve added the opportunity to be included in the peer-reviewed proceedings that will appear in this journal in Spring 2014.

We are also very excited about our theme for this year’s event: Learning as Disruption. “How learning occurs” has become the disruptive force that affects an educator’s decision process in all that occurs in the classroom, including pedagogy, curriculum design, and incorporation of technology of a course. Since Christensen’s book “Disrupting Class” began to influence the national (and global) conversation, learning as a disruptive force has been a hot topic in professional development, on campuses, and at conferences. When learning becomes the focus of education, the students’ experiences become relevant and motivating factors that drive what occurs in the learning experience, in or out of a classroom. As Judi Apte points out in her 2003 article Facilitating Transformative Learning, “learning is about transformation, it’s about change, it’s about seeing yourself in relation to the world differently” (p. 168). The 2013 ELD Conference Theme “Learning As Disruption” is designed to help presenter and attendee alike address this important issue.

The 2013 conference will take place on the campus of Montclair State University. MSU is located in northern New Jersey, 14 miles west of Manhattan and is easily accessible by car, bus, or train.

Reference