1st Annual Evaluating Better Together Conference
University of Denver, Research Methods and Statistics Program Final Report - December 7th, 2017

About the Conference

The Evaluating Better Together Conference is a graduate student-led gathering intended to connect students with evaluation experts in the Denver Metro Area. We seek to build authentic relationships between current and future evaluation practitioners through a series of sessions fostering dialogue, networking, and mentoring.

Practitioners and students of evaluation come together to engage in problem-solving discussion. The conference will provide a shared, safe space to examine challenges and lessons learned from past and ongoing evaluations. Presenters will share original work, gather feedback from a broad audience regarding evaluation practices, and consider how best to translate evaluation theory into everyday practice. Sessions will be structured around presentations, problem-solving roundtables, skill-building sessions, student research roundtables, and reflective panel discussions. The conference also offers a 'state of the workforce' panel discussion regarding the status of evaluation in Colorado, anticipated evaluation workforce needs, and preparation of aspiring evaluators to meet those needs.

Planning Committee

- Debbie Gowensmith (3rd year doctoral student)
- Jessica Morganfield (2nd year doctoral student)
- Megan Kaufmann (3rd year doctoral student)

Steering Committee

- Robyn Thomas Pitts, Assistant Professor of Evaluation and Mixed Methods Research at the University of Denver
- Carsten Baumann, Manager of Early Childhood Evaluation Unit & External Evaluations at the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment
- Antonio Olmos, Executive Director of the Aurora Research Institute & Adjunct Professor at the University of Denver
- Yvonne Kellar-Guenther, Clinical Associate Professor at the Colorado School of Public Health

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Executive Summary

The Evaluating Better Together Conference is a graduate student-led gathering intended to connect students with evaluation experts in the Denver Metro Area. We seek to build authentic relationships between current and future evaluation practitioners through a series of sessions fostering dialogue, networking, and mentoring. The Evaluating Better Together Conference joins a growing number of student led conferences happening across the country. The evaluation used a combination of in person data collection and surveys for both the presenters and the overall satisfaction of the conference. These three different data collection methods were used to measure how effectively the conference met its goals of: a safe space for presentation, networking and mentorship, and satisfaction with conference layout, along with overall satisfaction of the conference. The in-person data collection took place during each of the individual sessions. The presenter survey was used to measure how well the conference achieved creating a safe space and the amount of time given to the presenters. The overall conference survey measured overall satisfaction for the conference content, layout, and networking. The results were very promising as 92% of the participants said they planned on returning next year. Attendees also stated that they were very happy with the content of the conference. Presenters commented that the ease of presenting and conference layout as the biggest reasons they would consider returning to the next year. The conference also successfully reached their goal of creating a networking opportunity as over 90% of attendees reporting that they made at least one connection. Most of the concerns from the attendees were issues due to time constraints and this being the inaugural conference. The attendees and presenters were confused about the wording of the questions and goals of the conference. These are minor fixes that can be worked out as the conference develops and grows each year.

About this Report

This report was prepared by Kyle Brees, a master's student in the Research Methods and Statistics program at the University of Denver. This report was prepared in December of 2018 regarding the inaugural conference. Any questions or concerns regarding the report should be sent to Kyle Brees at kyle.brees@du.edu.

Conference Background

This first annual Evaluating Better Together conference is a graduate student-led gathering intended to connect students with evaluation experts in the Denver Metro Area. The conference seeks to build authentic relationships between current and future evaluation practitioners through a series of sessions fostering dialogue, networking, and mentoring.

Practitioners and students of evaluation will come together to engage in problem-solving discussion. The conference will provide a shared, safe space to examine challenges and lessons learned from past and ongoing evaluations. Presenters will share original work, gather feedback from a broad audience regarding evaluation practices, and consider how best to translate evaluation theory into everyday practice. Sessions will be structured around presentations, problem-solving roundtables, and skill-building sessions. We also hope to offer a 'state of the workforce' panel discussion regarding the status of evaluation in Colorado, anticipated evaluation workforce needs, and preparation of aspiring evaluators to meet those needs.

Evaluating Better Together joins a growing assembly of national graduate student-led evaluation conferences, including: the Edward F. Kelly Evaluation Conference (held in Canada and upstate New

York from 1990-2014), the Emergent Voices in Evaluation Conference (held in Greensboro, North Carolina, from 2017-present), and the DC Consortium Student Conference on Evaluation and Policy (SCEP, held in the District of Columbia from 2017-present).

Organized by graduate students in the Research Methods and Statistics Program at the University of Denver (DU), Evaluating Better Together is sponsored by the Organization for Program Evaluation in Colorado (OPEC) and the Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Collaboratory Hub (REACH) within DU's Morgridge College of Education.

Financial Support

This conference would have not been possible without the very generous support of its sponsors, which include, The Colorado Evaluation Network (COEN), Organization for Program Evaluation in Colorado (OPEC) and the Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Collaboratory Hub (REACH) within DU's Morgridge College of Education.

Keynote Speaker

The Evaluating Better Together planning committee invited Dr. Beverley Parsons as the keynote speaker. Dr. Parsons is the President and Executive Director of InSites, a Colorado based non-profit research, evaluation, and planning organization. At InSites, Dr. Beverley works to promote sustainable, equitable, and ecological change through multi-year and multi-site evaluation designs across the fields of education, health, social services, and environmental fields.

She received her B.S. in Medical Technology from the University of Wisconsin. She went on to get her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Colorado in Educational Research and Evaluation. She has

used her academic background to apply systems-thinking and systems-theory to her work in evaluation design. Dr. Parsons's evaluation work is as extensive as it is impressive, she started working for the Education Commission of the States (ECS) leading their redesign initiative (with the Coalition of Essential Schools) to update the underlying paradigm of teaching and learning undergirding the nation's education system. While at ECS, she also served as Director and Associate Director of the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Dr. Parsons's also served as the president of the American Evaluation Association in 2014, Beverley focused on visionary evaluation for a sustainable, equitable future. In addition to working with organizations such as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, National Science Foundation, and Center for the Study of Social Policy, she has consulted and conducted evaluations in China, Japan, Europe, Brazil, Nepal, and South Africa.

Call for Proposals

The call for proposals had a deadline of August 15th. The call for proposals had a total of six different categories, presentation, problem-solving round tables, teaching sessions, student showcase round tables, lessons learned panel discussions, and a state of the workforce panel discussion. The accepted proposals were all from the presentation, problem-solving roundtable, teaching sessions, and state of the workforce panel discussion. None where submitted for the student showcase round table or lessons learned panel discussion.

The call for proposals used five criteria (See Appendix A) to determine whether to accept the proposals. The selection committee was very inclusive of the call for proposals, if the evaluation was rated as "no" then the leadership team would examine the proposal one more time before determining if the proposal would not be accepted.

Formal Evaluation of Conference Methods

The formal evaluation of the conference took place in three different stages: participants of a singular session collected day of, presenter feedback survey, and an overall conference feedback and satisfaction survey. Both the presenter survey and overall conference feedback surveys were administered after the conference had concluded. These two surveys were administered to determine how well the conference achieved the goals of, a safe space for presentation, networking and mentorship, and satisfaction with conference layout, along with overall satisfaction of the conference.

In Person Data Collection

The first stage of the data collection was done, live, during the conference. This stage of the data collection helped the evaluation with measuring how overall satisfied with the conference attendees were. With the difficulty in having a high enough response rate for internet administered surveys, the evaluation aimed to collect data from the participants immediately after a session had ended. To achieve this the attendees were asked to answer a single question after the session, "Was the information presented relevant to your current work or profession?" The attendees were then asked to place a poker chip in a cup labeled yes or no to record their response. Below (Table 1) shows the votes cast per sessions and the response rate for each.

Table 1

Session	Beginning number of attendees	End number of attendees	Yes	No	Participation %	Satisfaction %
A-1	18	18	10	2	67%	83%
A-2	18	18	11	2	72%	85%
B	7	7	5	0	71%	100%
C	7	6	5	0	83%	100%
D-1	16	15	7	3	67%	70%
D-2	15	18	12	2	78%	86%
E	13	13	4	1	38%	80%
F	2	3	3	0	100%	100%
J	7	8	8	0	100%	100%
H	4	4	4	0	100%	100%
I	6	7	5	2	100%	71%
G	6	7	4	0	57%	100%
L	19	17	15	0	88%	100%
WP 1	27	32	11	1	38%	92%
WP2	24	24	9	0	38%	100%
O	8	7	5	0	71%	100%
K-1	2	2	2	0	100%	100%
K-2	2	2	2	0	100%	100%
N-2	6	6	6	0	100%	100%
N-1	6	6	6	0	100%	100%
Totals		220	134	13	67%	91%

In column six we can see that the total participation was only 67% for the "poker chip question." The lowest sessions were the workforce panels (WP1, WP2) with 38% participation for both. This caused a very dramatic dip in the overall numbers.

The most common concerns dealt with the amount of privacy during the voting process and the clarity of the "poker chip" question. The wording of the "poker chip" question left some of the attendees slightly confused. Attendees were mostly concerned with the possibility of others or the presenter seeing their vote. This could explain the drop in participation of the workforce panel sessions, as they were the most

public and largest of all the sessions. Overall, members were very satisfied with the sessions and the information that were presented.

Presenter Feedback

With one of the goals of the conference being to create a safe space for presenters a survey was given out to the presenters after the conference had been completed. The survey consisted of six questions (see Appendix B) with 2 sliding scales from 0-100, two free response questions, and two other selected answer questions. Figure 1 (shown below) shows the type of session breakdown by the presenter who responded the survey. There were 14 responses out of the 18 presenters that were emailed the invitation to the study, resulting in a response rate of 78% with two surveys that were not counted due to the presenter not finishing the survey. This was a very high response rate for the presenters, even higher than the collection of the data during the conference. This could be due to the presenters being more invested into the conference than the average attendee. The survey questions were sent out to the presenters two days before the conference with another email being sent out a week in advance to alert the presenters of the incoming survey. This additional alert time could have helped with the increased response rate.

Figure 1

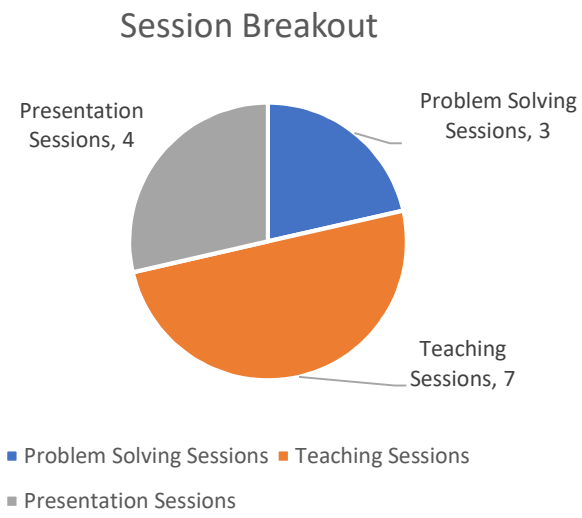


Table 2

PRESENTATION TYPE	AVERAGE SCORE (GIVEN ENOUGH TIME)	AVERAGE SCORE (SAFE PRESENTATION SPACE)
PROBLEM SOLVING SESSIONS	48	78.33
TEACHING SESSIONS	45.71	74.33
PRESENTATION SESSIONS	45.5	83.75
TOTAL	46.14	77.93

In Table 2 (see above) it shows the average scores from the responses broken out by sessions type. In column two the questions were on a continuous scale of 0-100 where less than 50 was given too little time and more than 50 was given too much time. From the responses in the table it is safe to assume that all the presenters would have liked more time for their sessions. The last column was scored on a continuous scale of 0-100 where 0 was did not achieve a safe presentation space and 100 achieving the perfect safe presentation space. The responses were all very high across all the presentation types. To help supplement the above information an open-ended response question was given to ask for the reason why they chose their above selected answers. There were two main themes that appeared from the open response questions:

- **Comfortability**
    - I felt the patrons were very supportive in their critiques. I felt comfortable sharing everything with them."
    - "I felt empowered to share my skills.
- **Room for Discussion**
    - **"**I think the discussions were very open."
    - "Lots of great discussion, both during our presentation and after other presentations."

The size of the conference allowed for more intimate discussions amongst the attendees and presenters that the presenters enjoyed. Out of all the respondents 13 out of the 14 responded yes to whether they would consider presenting the conference again next year. The main reason that the presenters were considering returning was due to the satisfaction with the setup of the conference. Presenters commented on the ease of presenting at this conference and the lack of work needed from their end due to the work of the conference planning committee. While the reviews from the presenters were generally glowing, there were two main concerns or areas to improve on for next year's conference.

- Clarifying the goals of the conference
    - Many of the participants felt that the conference did not understand what the concept of a safe space was or what was done to increase safe space for presenters.
- Ways of engaging the audience
    - Presenters mentioned that the audience felt shy at times, or where not particularly engaged. Most of these concerns appeared to come from the problem-solving sessions.

To help clarify the goals for presenters the planning committee and evaluation should be more intentional in about how they choose to make the goals a greater area of emphasis for the

Attendee Feedback

An overall conference satisfaction survey was given out to all that attended the conference after the final day of the conference. The survey was sent to 53 emails, the total number of respondents that were counted as part was 48 accounting for those members who were part of the planning committee and evaluation. Of those 48 who answered 24 started the survey with 22 finishing the survey resulting in a response rate of 45.8%. This is higher than the expected response rate of an electronically administered

survey and right around expectations prior to the conference. Of those who responded 8 were students and 14 were professionals (see Figure 2). 13 of the respondents attended both days of the conference with the rest attending either only one of the days or the keynote speaker only (see Table 3)

Table 3

Attended Thursday	Attended Friday	Attended Both	Attended Keynote Only
6	2	13	1

The first section of the survey aimed to measure overall conference satisfaction from the attendees. There were four questions (see Table 4) measured on a Likert scale of one to five with one being strongly disagree to five being strongly agree. From the table below, you can see that overall the attendees agreed to strongly agreed with the questions or statement being asked.

Table 4

My time was well served attending the conference	I enjoyed the conference	The conference layout was easy to navigate	How likely are you to recommend this conference to a colleague?
4.36	4.50	4.64	4.36

As part of the overall conference feedback survey the participants were asked what sessions they found to be most useful. The results (see Figure 2) from the question were split very evenly amongst the different types of presentations. The most useful presentation were the teaching sessions. The teaching sessions help evaluators learn a new skill that could be applied to their work. Learning a new skill that could be immediately applied into their

Figure 2

Which session type did you find most useful?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Teaching Session	7	31.8	31.8	31.8
	Presentation Session	6	27.3	27.3	59.1
	Problem Solving Session	4	18.2	18.2	77.3
	Panel Discussion	5	22.7	22.7	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

work was most likely the reason for the responses. The final question as part of the first section the survey asked respondents if they planned on returning to the conference next year. Of the 22 that responded, 20 or 91%, of the attendees said that they were planning on returning to the conference next year. That is a very good sign and aligns with the rest of the conference satisfaction survey answers.

The next section of the survey measured how satisfied with the conference content the attendees were. The respondents were asked four questions (see Table 5) on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 with one being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree.

Table 5

	I learned new things that I can employ in my future work	I found the conference content relevant to my career	Conference organizers provided sufficient time for questions	Conference organizers provided sufficient time for discussions
Student (n=8)	**4.63**	**4.25**	**4.13**	**3.88**
Professional (n=14)	**4.07**	**4.57**	**4.21**	**4.21**
Total (n=22)	**4.27**	**4.45**	**4.18**	**4.09**

The above table is broken out the responses by student, professional, and total. The reason for this section being broken out by student versus profession was due to the possibly of the content presented having a varied impact on a student in the field versus a professional who may be looking for more applied methods to help in their daily life. The results from the conference content fell in line with what was expected from the different viewpoints of students versus professionals. Students wanted more time to talk and discuss. This is probably most likely that the information being presented to the students were new, as shown in the responses in column 2, and therefore wanted more time to talk about how it could be applied in the future. Professionals found a more immediate connection to their everyday lives and work.

While there were some slight differences in the averages of the scores between professions and students, when additional analyses were performed there was no statically significant differences found.

Networking

One of the goals of the conference was to create a place for evaluators to connect with other professionals in their field. There was a special emphasis on this as the conference wanted to attract both new and more experienced in the field to create possible mentorships or professional connections that could be used in the field. After the first session on Thursday the evaluation and planning committee decided that there needed to be a way of facilitating networking amongst attendees. During the Friday session attendees were assigned to tables by a colored sticker that was placed on their name badge. While there was no formal data collected the planning committee and evaluation team did notice that there was more conversation amongst attendees who had previously not known each other.

As part of the overall conference feedback survey there were four Likert scaled (1- Strongly Disagree, 5- Strongly Agree) questions to determine satisfaction of the networking aspect of the conference (see Table 6).

Table 6

I was satisfied with the amount of networking time	I actively tried to make new connections	The activities provided helped facilitate networking	I will use the contacts made during the conference in the future
4.32	**4.05**	**4.23**	**3.91**

The results of the social networking satisfaction were very promising. Due to this being the first inaugural conference, the planning committee and evaluation team could not focus as much on this aspect, but professional were still able to make connections with other professionals. While the attendees

didn't agree as strongly with themselves trying to actively make connections, twenty of the twenty-two respondents reported making at least one face to face connection. Eleven of the twenty-two respondents reported that they exchanged business cards or resumes with another professional. While many of the attendees reached out in person very few tried to reach out to connect online. Only two reported connecting via email, with zero making any connection via social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter). The lack of an effort to make any online connections could play a role in while the attendees did not agree as strongly with the statement that they would use the connections in the future. The attendees agreed more with how the conference presented the networking aspects than how motivated they were to make and use connections made at the conference. This lack of intrinsic motivation could have been caused by a lack of emphasis before the conference had started.

There was a resume and job table placed at the side of the main lecture room, but the table had very little activity during the conference. For the next year's conference there could me of a commitment to informing the attendees of the networking aspect and really make it the showcase of the conference. While there were some areas of improvement the overall networking appears to have been very successful, from the free responses of the qualitative questions in the survey. The most common theme from the qualitative questions was how great of networking opportunities were, stating "Great networking opportunities!', "This is a great opportunity to get face-to-face time with like-minded individuals in the evaluation field and break new ground." These were just a few of the comments highlighting the success of the networking.

Limitations

With this being an evaluation of the inaugural Evaluating Better Together Conference, it created a time crunch during the planning of the evaluation. The inaugural conference was not able to focus as

much on the networking and mentorship as much as was originally planned. Several of the attendees and presenters noticed this as well, by responding in the comments sections that it felt like a traditional conference. There were also some limitations with collecting the data during the day of the conference. While the volunteers were prepared and trained to run the different session they were not given instructions on how to collect the data or what the evaluation was aiming to accomplish. This lack of clear instructions led to a difference in what the attendees heard. One of the main areas of improvement commented from the presenters and attendees were to have clearer goals for the conference. The evaluation team believes with more time to prepare for the conference next year and a template to follow will allow for better preparation of the volunteers and clearer goals or themes for the attendees.

The lack of time also caused the evaluation team to eliminate certain aspects of the evaluation. The areas most affected were the social networking and collection of data during the conference. Originally there was a plan to collect data during the day through different venues besides the poker chip question. There was a survey or quiz made in the online platform Kahoot that would've allowed for immediate feedback from the attendees in conference. This quiz would've collected some of the select choice and Likert scale questions that were used in the overall conference feedback survey. This would have hopefully raised the response rate as collecting the data in person is often more successful than collecting data once the conference had ended. The evaluation also wanted to have a long term follow up survey to determine if any of the participants were still using connections made during the conference. While these data points would have enriched the evaluation, they were not deemed vital to this evaluation but will be recommended next year.

Recommendations

During the evaluation there were some common themes of improvement that happened in various stages of the evaluation:

- More time for preparation of evaluation activities
- Greater clarity of goals and themes for the conference

The first improvement will happen as the conference grows and the planning committee and evaluation team are better able to create a template to follow and not have to start from scratch every year. This will allow for better preparation of volunteers on how to collect information and better implement in day data collection. With the goal of the Evaluating Better Together Conference being more nontraditional conference, in the future there should be more of an emphasis on the goals that make the conference nontraditional. While the attendees did enjoy the networking many of those were amongst professionals and there was not as many long-term mentorship connections. Clearer definition of what a safe space for presenters as well will help create more useful information in the evaluation as well.

The overall conference feedback survey also had a space for attendees to give their own recommendations as well. The main feedback was around the level of content and time. Many of the professionals felt that the content was more geared towards new evaluators or towards students. In the future it is recommended that the sessions have a focus for career development or for new evaluators looking to learn more generalizable skills. The attendees also wished for more discussion time after the sessions. They all felt that the sessions were too short, but that the overall number of sessions could be reduced. It was also noted that the conference could be one day as opposed for two. It is difficult for professionals working to miss two days of work to be able to attend both days of a smaller more local conference. The planning committee and members of the steering committee met together to discuss recommendations or improvements for next year. This report does not formally talk about those

recommendations due to the evaluation not being a part of those sessions. The full list of recommendations from the planning committee can be found in the appendix at the end of the report.

Discussion and General Feedback

The conference was very successful from the feedback given by the attendees in the free response questions. To go along with the success of the networking, attendees were also very pleased with the diversity of the fields in the conference and how the conference highlighted evaluation happening locally in Denver. Just a few of the comments, "It provided a valuable space to engage with evaluation practices and practitioners, which may not be regularly possible.", "Well-organized, manageable, local conference that provides practical information and networking - (especially useful for early career evaluators)", and "I liked the mix of attendees and presentations from all corners of professional and academic work." To go along with the numerous positive comments 21 out of the 22 attendees answered yes when asked if they enjoyed the conference. This combined with the overall high averages from the Likert questions can shows that the conference was a success and should be continued in future years.

Appendices

Appendix A: Evaluating Better Together Proposal Review

* Required

What number proposal is this? *

These are the session types for the conference:

- ***Presentations:*** You will present a tool, strategy, or approach that can help others in their evaluation work
- ***Problem-solving round tables***: You will begin with a short presentation of a specific evaluation problem you have encountered, and seek feedback from the table to solve that problem
- ***Teaching sessions***: You will lead a skill-building workshop related to the following needs identified by the Denver non-profit community –
  - Survey development for evaluation;
  - Impact evaluation;
  - Tracking longitudinal data;
  - Weaving equity into evaluation;
  - Data visualization; or
  - Another need you deem relevant
- ***Student showcase roundtables***: You (if you are a student) will showcase your evaluation work or evaluation-related research
- ***Lessons learned panel discussions***: You will coordinate a panel discussion on challenge and lessons learned in evaluation
- ***State of the workforce panel discussion***: We are specifically seeking an individual to coordinate a panel discussion on the context of evaluation in Colorado, specifically related to evaluation workforce needs and preparing students to meet those needs

Does the proposal fit the session type it is proposing to fit? *

Yes/ No

If you selected no, would it fit under these other session types?

Presentations

Problem solving round tables

Teaching sessions

Student showcase roundtables

Lessons learned panel discussions

State of the workforce panel discussion

The session does not fit the existing session types

N/A

The following questions ask you to assess the proposal on six criteria. Criterion 1: Will the session connect students with evaluation experts in the Denver Metro Area? *

Likely yes/Likely no

Criterion 2: Will the session build authentic relationships between evaluation practitioners? *

Likely yes/Likely no

Criterion 3: Will the session facilitate a shared, safe space to examine challenges and lessons learned from past and ongoing evaluations? *

Likely yes/Likely no

Criterion 4: Are presenters sharing original work (ex: building off of others' work and presenting it would be considered original, but summarizing a research article would not be)? *

Yes/No

Criterion 5: Did the presenters ground their work in the theory and foundations of evaluation? *

Yes/No

Criterion 6: Will the session inform local evaluation practice? *

Yes/No

Overall, should this proposal be accepted? *

Yes/No

Appendix B: Presenter Feedback Survey

Q1) Type of Presentation (choose up to 4)

Teaching Sessions

Problem Solving Sessions

Presentation Sessions

Panel Discussions

Q2) Where you given enough time to present at the conference? (0-100, 0 not enough time, 100 too much time)

Q3) One of the goals of the conference was to create a safe space for people to share their experiences. As a presenter, to what extent do you think we reached our goal? (0-100, 0 not at all, 100 to a great extent)

Q4) What is the main reason for your choice above? (Q3)

Q5) Based on your experience would you consider presenting at the Evaluating Better Together Conference again?

Yes/NO

Q6) What is the MAIN reason you would or would not present at the Evaluating Better Together conference again?

Appendix C: Attendee Conference Feedback Survey

Q1) Student or Professional (choose one)

Q2) What day or days did you attend the conference?

Thursday, Friday, Keynote Only, Both

Q3) I knew a lot about evaluation before the conference

Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree

Q4) My time was well served attending the conference

Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree

Q5) I enjoyed the conference

Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree

Q6) The conference layout was easy to navigate

Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree

Q7) I found the conference content relevant to my career

Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree

Q8) My expectations for the conference were met

Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree

Q9) Conference organizers provided sufficient time for questions

Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree

Q10) Conference organizers provided sufficient time for discussions

Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree

Q11) Did you or how many new connections during the conference did you make?

0, 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10+

Q12) What kind of connections did you make? (select all that apply)

Social Media, Face to Face, Email, Resume or Business Card, Other(free response)

Q15) Networking Satisfaction (matrix of 4 questions)

Q16) I was satisfied with the amount of networking time

Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree

Q17) I actively tried to make new connections

Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree

Q18) The activities provided helped facilitate networking

Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree

Q19) I will use the contact made during the conference in the future

Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree

Q20) Which session type did you find most useful?

Teaching, Presentation, Problem Solving Discussion, Panel

Q21) Did you have a favorite speaker?

Yes(free response)/No

Q22) I plan on returning next year to the conference

Yes/No

Q23) Overall I was satisfied with the conference

Yes/No

Q24) How likely are you to recommend this conference to a colleague?

Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree

Q25) What is the MAIN reason for your response in the previous question? (free response)

Q26) What are two priority topics that you would like to see addressed in next years conference? (free response)

Q27) Any additional comments? (free response)

Appendix D: Planning and Steering Committee Recommendations

Notes for Next Year

Catering

- Order 1 dessert per person (especially since dessert is included in the lunch)
    - Exception is gluten-free cookies, which should be 2/person (small)
    - Make dessert different than lunch (so lunch cookies, dessert brownies, etc.)
- Move the food tables out of the walkway; put in KRH 105 (as is the norm in the building, since it has a built-in catering galley)
- If catering tries to clear coffee before the coffee break or deliver lunch 2 hours early, show them the schedule and tell them to stop; or call Sodexo to get a manager
- Sign is available to indicate food belongs to event (Josh Davies helped with this; belongs to 1st floor office of MCE staff)
- Make signs for food selections (this was done for desserts but not for lunches)

Building/Facilities Setup/Technology

- Building
    - Eric Mareck requires a building walkthrough; schedule this for 10 days prior to the event
    - Only keynote, lunch, and welcoming/closing sessions in KRH 106 – this room is too big for sessions
    - Keep one extra room reserved in 25live for backup
    - Avoid elevator (maybe a 2018 thing but it broke about 7 times in the 3 weeks around the conference)
    - Pull the curtain but leave an opening in the middle – this worked better for sound issues since people could see the curtain was open, which minimized their proclivity for discussion in the lobby area
- Facilities
    - Setup did not happen – what was the problem in 2018? How can this be overcome in 2019? (Ken Parrish)
    - Two tables are needed for food (this can be mitigated by using the KRH 105 galley)
    - Setup of 106 for panel events
    - People sat at the back chairs (not at tables) on both days, despite our attempts on day 2 to keep this from happening; either remove those chairs or turn them around
- Technology
    - Reservation were not made for laptops, microphones, dongles, clickers, etc.

The "Night Before" Setup

- Signs were not posted the night before; students felt stressed and under the wire for day 1 setup (comments from steering committee about affect)
- Print signs to put on reserved rooms to minimize "squatters"

- Block off the 4-seater cubby area in the lobby by putting a sign on the table asking students to find somewhere else to study for the day – sign that says reserved for EBT, etc.

Registration

- Make it clear that
    - Parking will not be available for same-day registration
    - Presenters must register
- No Square for same-day registration; re-open Eventbrite (as separate event)
    - Needs to show as a formal charge for attendees who work in governmental offices
    - Square was not setup in advance despite intentions
    - Square check was not submitted in a timely fashion and concerns raised internally
- Need a swipe amount for non/students who want to add a day on the day of the event (so someone who originally paid to come 1 day but now wants to come 2 days)
- The wrong list of names got printed – need a better system here
- Add an inbox for taking up the volunteer datasheets

Sponsorships

- Pull canned emails from Robyn's email this year about the process for intaking external sponsors' checks
- Need more sponsorships so that we can pay for RMS students to attend the conference (our students did not attend this event except as presenters/volunteers; not even those who paid)

Presenters

- Must register
- Must upload files in advance
- Be sure to clarify their times and ask them to confirm they know their session will be from X time to X time, meaning it is X minutes total (overheard 3-5 presenters expressing confusion over this)

Volunteers

- Finalize the volunteers in advance; give directives about arriving on time and picking up packets (Lilian stated in front of whole conference "I was late, I was looking around for my folder, we did not have a good structure for volunteering")
- Have a volunteer responsible for watching the food stations (morning, lunch, afternoon)
    - This person should monitor the hot water and refill using the galley as needed
- At the end of sessions preceding lunch, have volunteers tell attendees to please pickup their lunches right away
    - MCE people started asking for lunches about 30 minutes into the 1 hour lunch session
    - We did not know if everyone who was getting a lunch had already gotten one or not
    - And lots of random people took food without asking
- Volunteer responsible for returning linens

- Volunteers checking for nametags
- Volunteer to can print things for presenters, including printing job descriptions and/or CVs
- Cordiality training/expectations – more than 1 volunteer snapped at a conference attendee (and those people sought Robyn out to discuss this behavior)

Schedule

- Planning committee to facilitate icebreakers and community-building activities throughout the event
- More time per session was desired – time to facilitate discussion and dialogue
- Consider a 1-day schedule – include breakfast, lunch, and dinner out – this can help with community building

Thank You Notes

- Those who gave opening remarks (Mark Engberg, Nick Cutforth, Tom Barrett)
- MCE support (Lori Westerman, Cristin Colvin; Josh Davies and tech team; Eric Mareck; Ken Parrish)
- Sponsors

Planning Committee

- 1 conference chair; 3 subcommittee chairs; minimum of 3 students per subcommittee
- 10 student planning committee minimum

Tables

This table shows all of the data that was collected from the sessions over the two day period by the volunteer.

Session Information Sheet

Table 1

Session	Beginning number of attendees	End number of attendees	Yes	No	Participation %	Satisfaction %
A-1	18	18	10	2	67%	83%
A-2	18	18	11	2	72%	85%
B	7	7	5	0	71%	100%
C	7	6	5	0	83%	100%
D-1	16	15	7	3	67%	70%
D-2	15	18	12	2	78%	86%
E	13	13	4	1	38%	80%
F	2	3	3	0	100%	100%
J	7	8	8	0	100%	100%
H	4	4	4	0	100%	100%
I	6	7	5	2	100%	71%
G	6	7	4	0	57%	100%
L	19	17	15	0	88%	100%
WP 1	27	32	11	1	38%	92%
WP2	24	24	9	0	38%	100%
O	8	7	5	0	71%	100%
K-1	2	2	2	0	100%	100%
K-2	2	2	2	0	100%	100%
N-2	6	6	6	0	100%	100%
N-1	6	6	6	0	100%	100%
Totals		220	134	13	67%	91%

Table 3

The table below provides a breakout of what days the respondents attended.

Attendance

Table 3

Attended Thursday	Attended Friday	Attended Both	Attended Keynote Only
6	**2**	**13**	**1**

Table 4

The following table provides the Likert scores from the overall conference feedback survey dealing with how the attendees felt in general about the conference. The Likert scale was scored on one to five with one strongly disagree with the statement and five strongly agree with the statement.

Conference Feedback

Table 4

My time was well served attending the conference	I enjoyed the conference	The conference layout was easy to navigate	How likely are you to recommend this conference to a colleague?
4.36	**4.50**	**4.64**	**4.36**

Table 5

Below is a table shows the four Likert questions related to the content of the conference. The table is broken out the responses by student, professional, and total. The reason for this section being broken out by student versus profession was due to the possibly of the content presented having a varied impact on a student in the field versus a professional who may be looking for more applied methods to help in their daily life.

Conference Content Feedback

Table 5

	I learned new things that I can employ in my future work	I found the conference content relevant to my career	Conference organizers provided sufficient time for questions	Conference organizers provided sufficient time for discussions
Student (n=8)	**4.63**	**4.25**	**4.13**	**3.88**
Professional (n=14)	**4.07**	**4.57**	**4.21**	**4.21**
Total (n=22)	**4.27**	**4.45**	**4.18**	**4.09**

Table 6

The table below holds the scores from the Likert questions related to the social networking part of the overall conference feedback survey there were four Likert scaled (1- Strongly Disagree, 5- Strongly Agree) questions to determine satisfaction of the networking aspect of the conference (see Table 6).

Networking Feedback

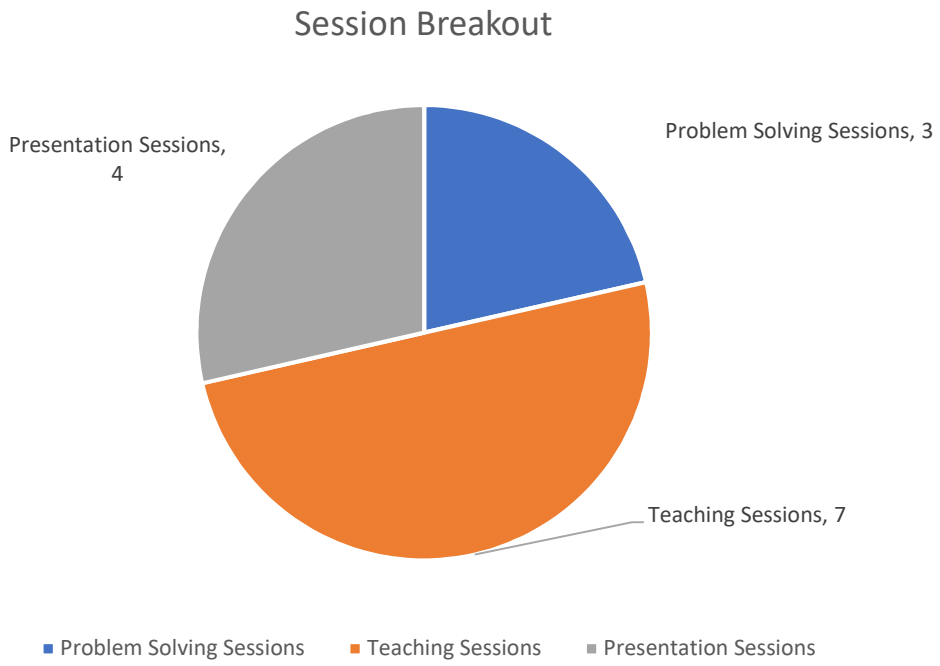
Table 6

I was satisfied with the amount of networking time	I actively tried to make new connections	The activities provided helped facilitate networking	I will use the contacts made during the conference in the future
4.32	**4.05**	**4.23**	**3.91**

Figures

Sessions Breakout

Figure 1



Most Useful Sessions

Figure 3

Which session type did you find most useful?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Teaching Session	7	31.8	31.8	31.8
	Presentation Session	6	27.3	27.3	59.1
	Problem Solving Session	4	18.2	18.2	77.3
	Panel Discussion	5	22.7	22.7	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

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