

**Title:**

Tracking Success: Outcomes of a Multichapter Collaborative Conference

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**Session Title:**

Advancing Nursing Research, Education, and Practice Through a Regional Chapter Collaborative

**Slot:**

G 17: Monday, 30 October 2017: 1:15 PM-2:30 PM

**Scheduled Time:**

1:55 PM

**Keywords:**

conference evaluation, member benefits and outcomes

**References:**

Committee on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Initiative on the Future of Nursing, Institute of Medicine. (2011). *The future of nursing: Leading change, advancing health*. Washington DC: Institute of Medicine.

Cook, D.A. (2010). Twelve tips for evaluating educational programs. *Medical Teacher*, 32(4), 296-301. [doi.org/10.3109/01421590903480121](https://doi.org/10.3109/01421590903480121)

Morrell, J.A. (2010) [http://www.jamorell.com/documents/How\\_to\\_Evaluate\\_a\\_Conference-1.pdf](http://www.jamorell.com/documents/How_to_Evaluate_a_Conference-1.pdf)

**Abstract Summary:**

This concluding session of our symposium focuses on our program evaluation including formative and summative components. Value of a thorough evaluation and lessons learned will be shared with participants to enable them to replicate the collaborative conference process in their area.

**Learning Activity:**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
The learner will be able to summarize key outcomes of a conference collaboration.	a. Formative and summative evaluation methods b. Outcomes of conference, participants, exhibitors and chapters

The learner will be able to apply lessons learned to a collaborative conference planning, implementation and evaluation process.	a. Presenter preparation b. Distribution of responsibilities c. Value of expanded formative evaluation
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**Abstract Text:**

**Background:** In order to plan and execute an annual conference that provides quality learning opportunities for students and practicing nurses in a variety of specialties, it is important to thoroughly evaluate each offering. Evaluations can be used to plan subsequent events and to correct problems that occurred. According to Cook (2010), “the two most important questions in any evaluation are, ‘Whose opinion matters?’ and ‘What would really be meaningful to them?’” The purpose of this presentation is to detail the evaluation process used by the Odyssey Planning Committee, to share two decades of results, and to articulate lessons learned through planning, presenting, and evaluating this conference.

**Methods** The Odyssey Planning Committee uses a multi-faced evaluation approach that includes both formative and summative approaches. The planning committee, through attendee and exhibitor input throughout the event, gathers formative data. Summative evaluation is comprised of participant and exhibitor follow up surveys, and an immediate committee debrief and follow up survey.

**Results** Over the course of 22 years, attendance has ranged from 180 to almost 500 nurses for the two-day conference. Students represent 40-60% of the total attendance and more than 1000 nurses and nursing students have presented at our conference. For many students this has been their first opportunity to learn about abstract writing, poster development, and preparing and presenting a compelling, time-limited podium presentation. These students later go on to present at national and international conferences and have shared how this initial experience has prepared them. Having a dedicated exhibit hall with each conference has provided opportunities for schools of nursing to recruit talented professional nurses who are interested in pursuing higher degrees. This contributes to the nursing workforce and responds to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) mandate for nurses to be educated at highest possible level. Additionally, publishers and vendors of educational products and medical supplies have been able to promote materials useful for education and nursing practice. STTI chapter benefits include the opportunity to network and collaborate with chapter leaders throughout southern California and for planning committee members and volunteers to develop individual leadership skills. Net proceeds have ranged from \$250 to \$1600 per chapter annually. The proceeds are often used to provide scholarships and grants to members. In addition, members in attendance benefit from being able to attend a professional opportunity with broad representation from a number of schools of nursing and STTI chapters on an annual basis.

Our planning committee has learned many lessons over our 22 years of collaborative work and has additional ideas and suggestions for other chapters who seek to host

successful collaborative conferences. We have learned that students need assistance when developing their first abstract and first presentation or poster. We require that faculty review and sign off on student abstracts before submitted. With acceptance letters, we distribute information on how to prepare an effective poster or presentation, and encourage students to consult with faculty for assistance. Furthermore, we have found that we need to require that each chapter have a minimum of two representatives, and chapter responsibilities must be shared so that either chapter member can follow up with assigned duties as needed. Given the value of the day two huddle at the end of the conference, the planning committee should consider adding a day one huddle to correct any issues identified on day one. We should also consider adding a speaker evaluation so speakers have an opportunity to provide feedback and share their valuable perspectives.

**Conclusions** Thoroughly evaluating conference outcomes can help the planning committee to better understand the needs of target audiences and determine how to meet these needs in future offerings. It is no accident that the Southern California Consortium has been able to provide an annual collaborative conference over so many years. It takes hard work and dedicated committee members and volunteers, but the results are priceless.