

Title: **Learning from Academic Conferences**

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Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Identify the key concepts that can be transferred from the classroom to the conference context
- Critique traditional conference formats, identifying their strengths and weaknesses
- List a comprehensive range of social media tools that can be used to promote and enhance the conference experience

Session Outline

This workshop is designed to encourage participants to take SEDA's lead in incorporating participant centred approaches in academic conferences. Many of us provide support to staff to meet increasing challenges in HE through the organisation of institutional, regional or national conferences. We know this form of professional development plays an important role in preparing staff to embrace new ways to respond to the ever-changing landscape. However, it is timely to reflect on how CPD is experienced within academic conferences, what engagement looks like and how taking part can provide lasting effects which also impacts on others' professional development beyond the conference.

In this session we will identify practical evidence based approaches for conference delivery and organisation that uses the expertise that we share regarding 'what works' in the classroom. Participants will leave able to 'walk the walk' as well as 'talk the talk' by incorporating evidence based pedagogy into conference design. Drawing on the recently published book – Learning from Academic Conferences, Popovic (ed.), we will encourage participants to reflect on what constitutes good learning in a classroom and compare that with the typical approaches used in an academic conference. Through example and discussion we will identify concrete practical methods to encourage deep and long lasting learning from the conference experience. This will be of interest to those who attend and present at conferences, as well as to conference organizers

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

- 00 to 05: Introductions
- 05 to 10: What constitutes 'good' learning? Discussion in small groups, then in plenary – drawing out the fundamentals of student centred active learning principles.

- 10 to 15: What constitutes a good conference experience?
- 15 to 25: Presentation based on recent publication and supporting evidence, arguing that what people want from a conference is similar to what students want from their classes; engagement, relevance, practical examples and experience.
- 25 to 35: Discussion exploring what this might look like in practice.
- 35 to 45: Questions and close

References

Popovic, C. (Ed.), 2018. *Learning from Academic Conferences (Critical Issues in the Future of Learning and Teaching)*. Brill | Sense.