

Comparing Traditional and Dialogical Conferences*

	Traditional Conference “Single Event”	Dialogical Conference “Building Research Networks”	Quotes from TCR 2009 on Benefits of Dialogical Approach
Pre-conference preparation	-complete your research, develop a power point presentation, and practice	-share research and engage in informal discussions to identify issues of common concerns and directions for exploration	“Having people prepare something ahead of time was helpful. Made sure everyone was engaged.”
Communication norms and approach	-largely monologue; information from an expert speaker is delivered to a passive audience through formal public presentations in a controlled and managed format, animated questions poised at the end of the talk in the last minutes	-largely dialogue; ideas are explored and shaped within active but respectful group discussions and informal meetings amid dynamic and shifting relationships; skilled facilitators can encourage participation but all participants take responsibility for eliciting and providing unexplored views	“I think the small, intimate brainstorming sessions were completely unique; and I'd like to see that repeated... In my session, we created a research idea that never would have emerged from a traditional conference format.”
Broad experience	-sit in sessions that look interesting; good session may inspire new ideas but little time exists to develop or explore these ideas; research collaboration occurs outside of sessions often with people with whom you have relationships	-sit for many hours among new researchers who share a passion for similar research, find out about their research, share problems and explore different solutions, identify synergies with some of the research projects, see potential opportunities for collaborations	“Wonderful people, great conversation, sense of temporary community better than at most conferences.” “Working in a group of about 12 specialists in your own field of research--not focusing on presenting your own research, but making a step further together.”
General goals	-present your research as a cumulative part of ‘normal science’ stressing the continuities with past research and opportunities for future research; create and operate under a joint vision	-explore a number of competing research ideas, unearth different research visions, see how different people follow their own learning needs while helping others to follow their needs; explore distributive knowledge	“I found that it was a really challenging format --by being quite unstructured, it really helped me to clarify the fundamental principles on which my point of view is based with the other people on my track.”
Conference output	-meet a couple of interesting researchers, discover new research topics and approaches, work with co-authors on research outside the conference events	-become part of a social network of research relationships; gain new perspectives on issues important to your research; perhaps lay the ground work for future collaborations	“The format of the 2009 conference was particularly beneficial in leading to actionable outcomes and developing new working relationships and projects.”

* From: Ozanne, Julie L. (2011), “Introduction to the Special Issue on Transformative Consumer Research: Creating Dialogical Spaces for Policy and Action Research,” *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, Spring, 30 (1), 1-4.