More than 120 Attend Third Annual Teaching for Learning Conference

Center for Innovative Design & Instruction

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A total of 17 institutions were represented.
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Hosted by Utah State University’s (USU) Center for Innovative Design & Instruction (CIDI), the two-day Teaching for Learning Conference had 126 attendees from 17 institutions. Participants came from Nevada State College, Northern Arizona University, the University of Utah, Idaho State University, and more. Dr. Gail Rice, director of faculty development at Loma Linda University, offered the keynote presentation based on her book “Hitting Pause,” which tied closely to the overall conference theme “Refresh and Reinforce Learning.”

“Not only did she present the idea of pausing, or taking a time out from lecture to engage students in learning activities, but she had the audience engage in some of these pauses,” said Travis Thurston, Empowering Teaching Excellence (ETE) coordinator for CIDI. “During her keynote, Dr. Rice explained her idea and then modeled how it can be done.”

There were 48 breakout sessions offered during the conference, as well as a pre-conference workshop facilitated by Dr. Mitchell Colver covering the concept of autonomy-supportive approaches to teaching. Dr. Colver touched on the instructors’ responsibility to provide a rich classroom ecology to provide opportunities for discovery, learning, and reflection.

One of the standout sessions was a faculty panel addressing the idea of practicing pauses in teaching. Prior to the conference, six USU faculty members participated in an ETE Learning Circle where they read Dr. Rice’s book and then implemented the ideas in their own classes. The panel discussed their successes, failures, and offered innovative ideas to improve.

The conference ended Friday, March 22 with plenary speaker Dr. Mark Damen, professor at USU. Dr. Damen masterfully concluded the conference by sharing his own experience on how to reach students, and placed focus on the importance of developing meaningful connections with students.

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