

Foreword

From June 16 to June 19, 2013, the Sixth Conference of MIT's Learning International Networks Consortium (LINC) convened on the MIT campus. Nearly 300 dedicated educators from 49 countries gathered to discuss technology-enabled education, centered around the theme: "Realizing the Dream: Education Becoming Available to All. Will the World Take Advantage?"

In his opening remarks, conference host Professor Richard Larson gratefully acknowledged the support of Platinum Sponsor Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), MIT's Office of Digital Learning (ODL), Fujitsu, The Babar Ali Foundation, and Glenn Strehle. Attendees were welcomed by MIT's Chancellor Eric Grimson who set the tone for the conference by stating: "Education at all levels, but especially higher education, is in the midst of a tsunami, a tsunami of change fueled by many things – fueled by internet technologies, fueled by computer technologies, but also fueled by people."

The conference featured 20 distinguished plenary speakers discussing this transformative tidal wave in digital education. Topics included Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), Open Educational Resources (OER), the future of Virtual Universities, and blended learning through the use of videos such as those produced by MIT's BLOSSOMS Initiative. Speakers also explored assessment tools and technologies, the role of public policy, and the impact e-learning will have on K-12 as well as higher education. Personal accounts from three students who shared their perspectives on technology-enabled learning at MIT provided an ideal closing to the plenary sessions.

The 10 parallel sessions highlighted 67 presentations selected from approximately 100 submitted papers. Presenters traveled from all over the globe to participate in the parallel sessions. India, Ivory Coast, Pakistan, Russia, Thailand, Turkey and Colombia are a modest sampling of the countries that were represented. As diverse as they were dynamic, paper themes addressed issues such as impediments to internet connectivity around the world, the critical role of the teacher in successful technology-enabled education, and the creative use of social media, among many other topics.

Unique features of LINC 2013 included a Twitter feed during the panel sessions and a daily "Storify", which summarized reflections, photos and tweets throughout the conference. Attendees of the Conference Dinner held on June 17 will also long remember the appearance of a spectacular double rainbow that provided a stunning backdrop to the lively dinner conversation. It is difficult to conceive of a more appropriate visual representation of LINC 2013. A rainbow is a spectrum of colors produced by the dispersion of light; the LINC 2013 Conference was also a spectrum. A spectrum of the visions and hopes about how technology-enabled education can disperse knowledge, and bring us closer to realizing the dream of education becoming available to all.

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A very special thank you to Janice Hall who has created MIT LINC's wonderful web presence not only for the 2013 LINC conference, but for all five previous conferences as well.