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Cooperative Extension professionals are using webinar technologies to accommodate time constraints, travel distances, and limited budgets as well as to reach a broader audience. Although checklists and planning worksheets are readily available, there is a lack of resources to intentionally utilize reflective teaching practice and measure high-quality standards that go beyond general webinar set-up, participant experience, and content learning. This article describes the Webinar Evaluation Rubric for Extension Teaching that facilitates reflective practice and sets webinar teaching standards. The rubric provides a standard for professional development taught through webinars that strengthens the participant experience and enables high-quality learning across Cooperative Extension program areas.

Keywords: webinar, teaching, rubric, evaluation, learning, professional development standards, reflective practice

Introduction

Cooperative Extension professionals are using webinar technologies to accommodate time constraints, travel distances, and limited budgets as well as to reach a broader audience. Webinars facilitate engaging conversations with video in real-time and in an online format that can be accessed anywhere there is an internet connection. While this online tool is often used for meetings, Extension professionals are using this tool beyond internal communication to deliver programs to Extension audiences (Lobley et al., 2019; Robinson & Poling, 2017).

Checklists and planning worksheets are readily available to guide the selection of web-based tools, to learn how to set up and run a webinar, and to collect participant evaluations (Robinson & Poling, 2017). However, there is a lack of resources for web-based teachers to intentionally plan, evaluate, reflect, and improve their teaching practices beyond general webinar tool set-up, participant experience, and content learning. Having a standard for professional development in webinars is imperative to strengthen the participant experience and provide more effective programs that encourage continued participation in online learning (Garst et al., 2014).

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A professional standard for webinar teaching includes reflective practice, which allows teachers to step back, evaluate the learning environment, and identify how to improve their teaching skills every time they teach (Zahid & Khanam, 2019). As webinars are increasingly used to deliver programs, it is important for Extension professionals to have a rubric that sets professional development standards in order to deliver high-quality webinars.

This article outlines the *Webinar Evaluation Rubric for Extension Teaching* that facilitates reflective practice for Extension professionals and sets webinar teaching standards. The rubric is adapted from a tool used by traditional classroom teachers moving to web-based teaching environments in Science and Math (Culbertson et al., 2015). The indicators have been adapted to provide a rubric that sets a standard for Extension teaching. Multiple program areas have used it at the University of Minnesota Extension, including youth development, community vitality, and family development. The rubric has been downloaded more than 3,600 times from the University of Minnesota Library (Matthes & Robideau, 2017).

Webinar Evaluation Rubric for Extension Teaching

The *Webinar Evaluation Rubric for Extension Teaching* is an evaluation tool for assessing the effectiveness and quality of extension staff teaching in a web-based environment (Matthes & Robideau, 2017). Rubric development is based on a literature review of webinar teaching practices, piloted by science and math teachers in traditional, for-credit classrooms (Culbertson et al., 2015) and adapted for Extension educators in non-credit settings. This evaluation tool is used by Extension professionals who want to demonstrate excellence in webinar teaching. The rubric may be used to facilitate an evaluative process in three ways: (a) during the planning process, (b) as a peer-review, and (c) as a reflective practice tool. It is not an evaluation tool for webinar participants.

1. **Planning process.** While this tool is not a planning checklist, it is most effective for the Extension professional when the rubric is referenced during the planning process to ensure each component is included.
2. **Peer-review.** A colleague can use the *Worksheet: Webinar Evaluation Rubric for Extension Teaching* (provided on the last page of the rubric document) during the webinar to record observations and provide constructive feedback.
3. **Reflective practice.** The Extension professional can use the feedback to make improvements to their webinar teaching practices. If there was not a peer review, the rubric could be used as a self-scoring tool for evaluating the learning environment and identifying how to improve.

Components

There are seven components of webinar teaching evaluated in the rubric. It is critical for teachers to consider each of these to deliver a high-quality webinar.

1. **Technology**. This includes an overview of the webinar tools for participants, freeing the teaching environment from distractions, and providing clear instructions on how to access supplemental materials. Live closed captions are available, and materials are accessible to all audiences.
2. **Content**. The presenters are introduced by providing credentials relative to the content, and the webinar information shared matches the clearly defined objectives.
3. **Organization**. The webinar follows a defined outline, the content is chunked into small segments, and the presentation stays on task.
4. **Delivery**. A variety of presentation methods are used throughout the webinar, the presenter provides time for participants to reflect and absorb content, and transitions throughout the webinar are smooth.
5. **Visual aids**. Text is used to emphasize information and can be easily read. Presenters scaffold information, and a variety of relevant visuals are used to enhance understanding and maintain audience focus.
6. **Participant interaction**. The presenters use active learning approaches, clearly communicate participation expectations for interaction, and provide opportunities to ask questions throughout the webinar.
7. **Evaluation**. The participant experience is evaluated to assess the quality of the webinar and content application.

Indicators

Each component has a set of indicators that define the level at which that component is reached. Indicators are scored on a 3-point scale:

- Minimal Score: little to no use of the indicator (1 point),
- Developing Score: some use of the indicator (2 points), and
- Strong Score: full demonstration of the indicator (3 points).

Once each indicator has been scored, the scores within each component may be averaged to obtain seven scores that provide a comprehensive assessment of webinar quality. Webinar teachers then total all points to get an overall score to evaluate overall quality. A low total score indicates a need for continued skill development, and high scores indicate quality teaching practices that reflect Extension standards. Table 1 defines the teaching skill level.

Table 1. Rubric Score Range Description

Total score determines range of quality webinar teaching practice	22 - 32 Minimal	33 - 55 Developing	56 - 66 Strong

Table 2 provides a simplified rubric and includes a list of each component along with the descriptive indicator(s) used for scoring the *Webinar Evaluation Rubric for Extension Teaching* (Matthes & Robideau, 2017).

Table 2. Webinar Evaluation Rubric for Extension Teaching

Indicators	Minimal (1 point)	Developing (2 points)	Strong (3 points)	Points
Component: Technology (point range 3-9)				
Tools	Minimal information about the webinar technology tools is provided. Participants have to ask about them during the webinar.	Some information about the webinar technology tools is provided. Participants still may be asking how to use them.	An overview of the tools used during the webinar is provided, allowing participants to actively engage. Participants understand how to use the features.	
Distractions	There are a number of substantial distractions throughout the webinar that impede the flow of the webinar.	There are some distractions during the webinar, but the flow of the presentation is not constantly interrupted.	There are a few minor or no distractions during the webinar.	
Supplemental Materials	Instructions for accessing the webinar recording and slides are unclear and/or incomplete. Supplemental materials are incidentally mentioned, but they are not actually made available. Materials are made available, but participants are not notified.	Instructions for accessing the webinar recording and slides are available and accurate. Participants are made aware of the supplemental materials, but instructions for accessing them are unclear.	Clear and explicit instructions are provided for how to access the webinar recording and/or slides at the end of the presentation. Additionally, written instructions are provided in follow-up communication with participants.	
Component: Content (point range 3-9)				
Presenter Information	The presenters are introduced during the webinar, but their credentials and backgrounds are not provided.	The presenters are introduced, and their credentials are provided during or prior to the webinar, but the relevance of the presenters' expertise to the webinar content is not clear.	The presenters are introduced, and introductions include how their backgrounds and credentials qualify them to speak knowledgeably about the webinar topic.	
Goals	The topic and objectives/goals of the webinar are briefly stated prior to or at the beginning of the webinar, but it is not clear how the webinar's topic is related to the objectives/goals.	The topic and objectives/goals of the webinar are clearly stated prior to or during the webinar. The webinar's topic appears to be related to the objectives/goals, but the connection may be implicit.	The webinar's topic and objectives/goals are clearly stated and referenced throughout the webinar, and explicit connections are made between the webinar's topic and its objectives/goals.	
On Task	The webinar content does not match the stated goals.	The webinar content aligns with some of the stated goals or objectives.	The webinar content clearly aligns with all the stated goals or objectives.	

Indicators	Minimal (1 point)	Developing (2 points)	Strong (3 points)	Points
Component: Organization (point range 4-12)				
Direction	An outline or agenda is displayed briefly without comment.	The presenters read the outline or agenda at the beginning of the webinar.	An outline or agenda is presented and discussed at the beginning of the webinar and revisited during transitions and at its conclusion.	
Online Accuracy	The webinar outline or agenda minimally reflects the webinar's structure and content.	The webinar outline or agenda partially reflects the webinar's structure.	The webinar outline or agenda accurately reflects the webinar's structure and provides clear expectations of the content to be covered.	
Information Chunking	Some portions of the webinar are presented in segments, but the segments are lengthy.	Some portions of the webinar are presented in small segments. Other information is presented in lengthy segments.	All webinar information is organized into and presented in small segments.	
Structure	Webinar information is presented in a logical sequence, but it is difficult to follow. No transitions are used to make connections between sections.	Webinar information is presented in a logical, easy-to-follow sequence. Some effort is made to use transitions to provide connections between sections, but the transitions are minimal.	Webinar information is presented in a logical, easy-to-follow sequence. Presenters make explicit connections between all sections using transitional statements, graphic organizers, relational phrases, or other techniques.	
Component: Delivery (point range 3-9)				
Variety	The webinar primarily uses one presentation mode, with some token usage of other modes.	The webinar alternates between two presentation modes but shifts between presentation modes occur infrequently.	The webinar incorporates a variety of presentation modes and changes presentation modes at least every 10 minutes.	
Reflection	The webinar includes a few opportunities for participants to absorb new ideas, but most ideas are presented one after the other with little time in between.	The webinar includes pauses after each major section of content, but new ideas within sections are introduced one after the other with little time in between.	The webinar provides opportunities to absorb each new idea before moving on to the next that are made explicit and/or directly guided by the presenter.	
Transitions	Transitions result in substantial delays and challenges.	A few transitions result in some minor delays.	All transitions take place without delays.	

Indicators	Minimal (1 point)	Developing (2 points)	Strong (3 points)	Points
Component: Visual Aids (point range 5-15)				
Purpose	All slides are full of text and read word-for-word during the webinar with little elaboration added.	Most slides are text-heavy but not read word-for-word during the webinar, come elaboration added.	Slide text is reserved for key words and concepts. Details and explanations are delivered verbally or through the use of supplemental materials.	
Readability	The majority of visuals, including text and images, are difficult to read.	Most slides are clear, but there are some visuals, including text and images, that are difficult to read.	All visuals, including text and images, are easy to read. A limited number of fonts in high-contrast colors are used throughout to achieve readability and visual consistency.	
Scaffolding Information	Very few slides reveal content in small segments. There are many missed opportunities for scaffolding learning by presenting ideas one at a time.	Many of the slides reveal components of text or graphics in small segments, but some contain missed opportunities for scaffolding learning by presenting ideas one at a time.	One main idea is presented or revealed at a time within each slide. Components of text or graphics are revealed in small segments or one at a time.	
Visual Relevance	Few visuals are clearly or obviously related to the webinar topic or information contained in the slide.	Most of the visuals, but not all, are relevant to the topic or information presented on the slide.	All visuals are highly relevant to the webinar topic or information presented on the slide.	
Visual Variety	Visual elements other than text are rarely incorporated in the webinar.	Visual elements of several different types are used occasionally.	Visual elements representing a variety of different types are used throughout.	
Participant Interaction (point range 3-9)				
Active Learning Approaches	The webinar includes active learning approaches or interactive activities in a superficial way.	The webinar includes some meaningful opportunities for active learning or interactive activities but does not promote audience reflection or application of a new task, skill, or content.	A variety of active learning approaches and interactive activities are included throughout the webinar, and the presenters promote audience reflection or application of a new task, skill, or content.	

Indicators	Minimal (1 point)	Developing (2 points)	Strong (3 points)	Points
Expectation of Participants	Presenters make a general announcement regarding expectations for participation at the beginning of the webinar but do not reinforce this expectation at any other time during the webinar.	Presenters make a general announcement regarding expectations for participation at the beginning of the webinar and reinforce this expectation during a few opportunities within the webinar.	Presenters clearly communicate the overall expectations for passive and/or audience participation and reinforce expectations at each opportunity throughout the webinar.	
Questions	There is an opportunity for participants to pose questions near or at the end of the webinar. However, there is no time to address any of the questions.	There is an opportunity for participants to pose questions near or at the end of the webinar, and there is a sufficient amount of time to address one or more of the questions.	There are several opportunities throughout the webinar for participants to pose questions, and most opportunities have sufficient time to address questions.	
Component: Evaluation (point range 1-3)				
	Does not assess the components.	Evaluation assesses a few of the evaluation components.	Evaluation assesses all of the components.	
			Total Points	

Discussion

As Cooperative Extension professionals increase their use of webinars for teaching, this rubric will ensure professional development standards while fostering reflective practice for continual improvement. While checklists often help with one aspect, such as technology, this rubric provides a comprehensive evaluation of a webinar teaching environment.

Extension professionals who have used the rubric report through solicited evaluations that they have increased skills, shared the rubric with other colleagues, and have higher quality webinar presentations. Specific themes emerging from evaluations include

- **Utilized as a development tool.** Colleagues find the rubric to be beneficial to the planning and implementation of Extension programs. It provides feedback on webinar design and delivery to strengthen the virtual learning environment. When collaborating with others, they have introduced the tool to development teams while designing additional webinars.
- **Builds confidence in web-based teaching.** Utilizing the tool builds instructor confidence and guides them to implement high-quality teaching practices as they give attention to tools, structure, and delivery.

- **Increases participation and improves evaluation scores.** Compared to prior web-based teaching without the rubric, teachers note an increase in participant learning from evaluations and experience higher levels of participant engagement.
- **Guide for reflective teaching practice.** The tool provides a guide for reflective teaching practice in web-based settings and encourages an intentional self-assessment to increase facilitation skills. Extension colleagues have made changes to existing webinars to ensure important components are included.

The authors suggest that the *Webinar Evaluation Rubric for Extension Teaching* be utilized by all Extension Professionals who teach audiences through webinars. The rubric and scoring instructions have been introduced to be implemented across Cooperative Extension programs throughout the United States. The result of this will increase the professional quality of webinar learning experiences for our audiences.

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