



Resource Guide for Establishing an Online Extension Educational Series



University of Idaho
Extension

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Introduction

Online teaching is a potentially powerful educational format. It can provide youth and adult participants with unique and flexible learning experiences that enable instructors and learners to connect across regions, states, and countries. Provided that audio, visuals, and text are incorporated in engaging ways, it offers a promising educational opportunity for all learners, particularly the nontraditional.

Taking your Extension program online can increase audience reach, especially if you record the program for later viewing. Other benefits may include the following:

- **Cost and time savings.** Virtual programming reduces the need to provide printed materials and other supplies and saves on travel costs for instructors and learners.
- **Increased accessibility.** Members of rural communities can participate more easily, since these communities can receive online-access resources similar to those found in more urban regions. Indeed, partners, such as local educators, librarians, or other community members, can support an online program by providing a central location (“satellite” strategy) for attendees, simultaneously connecting and engaging individuals across several locations.

Considerations

For your online educational program, consider the following factors:

- When selecting a platform to host a series, check with your institution’s Information Technology team to review which programs and licenses are available for use.
- Is the educational series inclusive and accessible to all learning styles and those with learning disabilities? Require participants to make any requests for interpretive services (including closed captions) in advance so that you can meet these needs and/or work with the Center for Disability Access and Resources effectively.
- Provide additional resources for learners, including more in-depth information about topics covered in the program. This more enhanced option expands the content to fit learners’ needs.

Planning

As with all Extension programming, for content to be relevant to your intended audience it is essential to understand who you are trying to reach. This can be done by surveying stakeholders or reviewing relevant data. Depending on the programming you wish to cover, you may find that different times of the year are more appropriate for your audience.

Recruit potential team members before you begin and include them in designing the series. Schedule the first team meeting several months before the program start date. Before the meeting, create an agenda, listing discussion items. Include the program’s dates and times, length of class time, length of series, how often classes will be offered, class topics, class format, learning objectives, and evaluation methods.

If the team is large, form subcommittees to handle the details. Whole-group participation in every step of the process tends to lengthen the decision-making process. During the initial meeting, establish a timeline and promptly distribute minutes and calendar invites. This will help individual team members plan as they move forward on the series.

BEST PRACTICES

Establish intended learning objectives **before** designing your series. Determining what you want learners to be able to **do** by the end of a program helps to guide its instructional design, including selecting the most effective evaluation method.

Sample Planning Meeting Agenda

October 1 @ 1:00 PM–2:30 PM

Suggestions for Name of Series/Class

- Group suggests names
- Select the Series name

Series Structure

- Length of each session
- Total number of sessions
- Frequency of sessions
- Meeting or webinar format
- Hands-On/Follow Along/Lecture-Demo

Each Presenter Needs to Provide

- Teaching date
- Lesson title
- Lesson description
- Date to be chat helper (for a different presenter)
- Due Date: Friday, October 24

Marketing

- Flyer: Created by October 31

All team members disperse on

- Facebook
- Professional associations
- Extension.org
- University calendars
- Other social media pages

Series Objectives

- What are the learning objectives? (What should be **evaluated** and **measured**?)

Examples:

- Learners will be able to identify and access Extension resources relevant to program content.
- Learners will understand key foundational concepts for _____ lesson topic.
- Learners will be able to demonstrate increased _____ skill relevant to _____ content.

Survey/Evaluation

Choose the method that best measures the stated learning objectives:

- Polls during class
- Survey immediately at close
- End of series
- Three-Month follow-up

Evaluation

A well-designed Extension program conveys a class's needs and values. As you design yours, determine its intended audience and discover its ultimate objectives.

When creating an evaluation tool or a variety of tools, ask the following questions:

1. What information from the audience do you want to measure? This may help determine the most appropriate assessment method(s).
2. How will you assess participation and engagement?
 - a. Some platforms track attendees' participation.
 - b. To gather participants' responses in real-time, consider embedded polls and launch these live while teaching.
 - c. Enhance feedback and interaction by posing live questions to the audience for open-ended responses. Participants can respond in the chat feature.
3. Do you want to use a variety of assessment formats?
 - a. Only select method(s) that meet your needs.
 - b. Establish a plan to use the data gathered.
4. How often will assessments occur?
 - a. Do not overload participants with evaluations.
 - b. Too many assessments make learners disinterested in participating or may not provide adequate feedback.

EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

As you design the right assessment for your series, develop a plan that addresses the following questions:

- How will you analyze and use assessment data to document the impact of the series?
- How will you maintain the security and privacy of assessment data? Follow Institutional Review Board assessment data requirements and store information in compliance with data protection regulations.
- Does your evaluation allow input for audiences with varying abilities or disabilities? Regularly test the series with users with different learning styles and disabilities to gather feedback for improvement. Adapt your educational series based on the feedback.

See "Polls" and "Survey" for a list of evaluation tools that may fit your series' needs.

POLLS

Google Meet:

<https://support.google.com/meet/answer/10165071?hl=en&co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop>

Microsoft Teams:

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/create-a-poll-in-microsoft-teams-free-3162720d-dfee-4ce2-ae65-4dbbbb6a7827>

SurveyMonkey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/welcome/online-polls/>

Zoom:

https://support.zoom.com/hc/en/article?id=zm_kb&sysparm_article=KB0066150

SURVEY

Jotform:

<https://www.jotform.com/myforms/>

Microsoft Teams:

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/create-a-form-with-microsoft-forms-4ffb64cc-7d5d-402f-b82e-b1d49418fd9d>

Qualtrics:

<https://www.qualtrics.com/lp/survey-platform/>

Zoom:

https://support.zoom.com/hc/en/article?id=zm_kb&sysparm_article=KB0066485

Registration

When teaching online, gathering the demographic information of participants can be challenging. Using preregistration platforms simplifies its collection, in that they sometimes offer preset questions; some even allow users to customize them. Select the appropriate format, meeting, or webinar when creating your registration template.

Include a calendar-scheduling option in the registration if possible. The registration process can be used to send automatic reminders to all registrants (send at least two reminders: twenty-four hours before the class begins and the other one hour before it begins). These may help to improve attendance.

After selecting your platform, thoroughly review its services so that you understand all the available options for designing your registration. The following enumerates a few platforms that may fit your program's needs:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
The course as a whole was:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course content was:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The instructor's contribution to the course was:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The instructor's effectiveness in teaching the subject matter was:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Course Organization was:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clarity of instructor's voice was:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explanations by instructor were:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instructor's use of examples and illustrations was:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of questions or problems raised by the instructor was:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student's confidence in instructor's knowledge was:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

An example of a survey template, using JotForm.

Registration

Registration Questions Custom Questions

Registration

☒ Required

Approval

☒ Automatically Approve
Registrants will automatically receive information on how to join the webinar.

☐ Manually Approve
The organizer must approve registrants before they receive information on how to join the webinar.

Notification

☐ Send an email to host when someone registers

Other options

☐ Restrict number of registrants

☒ Allow panelists and attendees to join from multiple devices

☒ Show join info on registration confirmation page ⓘ

☒ Show social share buttons on registration page

☐ Enable Disclaimer ⓘ

An example of a registration entry page, using Zoom.

Safe Gifts from the Kitchen

Date & Time: Oct 4, 2024, 12:00 PM in Mountain Time (US and Canada)

Description: Learn fun and easy ways to prepare safe gifts from your kitchen, and to avoid those that are not safe.

Webinar Registration

First Name* [] Last Name* []

Email Address* []

Zip/Postal Code* []

Would you like to receive a US Extension newsletter?*

☐ Yes, from Boundary and Chapter Counties

☐ Yes, from Boundary County only

☐ Yes, from Chapter County only

☐ No, no newsletter please

Information you provide when registering will be shared with the account owner and used to send you emails and other communications. You can manage your preferences at any time.

Register

An example of an online registration, using Zoom.

Google Meet:

<https://workspace.google.com/products/meet/>

Microsoft Teams:

<https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoftteams/set-up-meeting-registration>

Zoom:

https://support.zoom.com/hc/en/article?id=zm_kb&sysparm_article=KB0065026

Marketing

Audience and programming content needs are important considerations when designing series marketing. Establish a timeline of promotion for the series:

- Consider the objective(s) and the most appropriate time to offer your program. Note that if you intend to offer a class before a holiday (for instance, “Safely Entertaining for the Holidays”), set the start date at least a few weeks in advance of the holiday.
- Begin marketing your program a minimum of six weeks before.

Include specific details about the program on the flyer.

Graphic: Choose an attractive image relevant to the subject matter

Title: Quick and catchy

Length of Description: Be concise

Font: Choose an easy-to-read font

Date/Time: Make it easy to find on the flyer and include the time zone

Registration: Include how to register for the program (link, phone number, etc.) and its cost, if applicable

FREE CLASS VIA ZOOM

Just Freeze It!

Learn how to properly freeze & store your food for the best quality result.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10
CLASS STARTS AT 12 PM (11 AM PST)

Register at: bit.ly/freezeit24

Other course offerings available at uidaho.edu/food-safety

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Implementation

Before each class, confirm role expectations with the presenter at least one week prior.

On the day of the program, direct the presenter and any other facilitators to log in to the virtual platform a minimum of twenty minutes before the start time to complete a technology check. Test all the equipment to make sure the presentation is accessible and appears accurately on the screen, that the cameras and microphones are working properly, etc.

When the class begins, address how engagement with participants and program questions will be handled. For example, if the program is in a webinar format, point out the embedded tools to attendees and how to appropriately use them during the class (like chat features, Q&A, and polls).

Be mindful of everyone's time and start and end the class at the advertised time. This means allowing time for questions and the presenter avoiding devoting the entire session to teaching content. At the end of the class, include the presenter's contact information so participants can reach out later if they have more questions or want additional information.

Recommendations for Instructors/Keys to Success

A few tips to help everyone have a successful collaborative teaching experience include the following:

- Set a clear objective for each lesson. The series should have an overarching theme, but each class must have a topic and purpose. For example, "After attending this class, I want participants to be able to _____."
- Create a structured lesson plan so that each lesson follows the same format.
- Establish a central virtual storage location for teaching and marketing materials accessible to instructors, students, or both.
- Provide a list of materials needed for any demonstrations before the program so participants can be prepared.
- Invest in a quality microphone and camera. The standard microphone in your laptop may not pick up your voice well enough to be heard easily by participants. Also, having more than one camera may be necessary for live demonstrations.

Ways to Expand Your Live Virtual Program

Some of the ways to utilize content from your virtual series include the following:

- Record your virtual presentation so you can share it with individuals unable to attend the live presentation or those who wish to review the content later. After recording it, conduct basic editing to enhance the presentation's quality.
- Increase the size of your audience by adding links to the recording on your social media channels. This allows new people to access the series.
- Use parts of the recorded class as a visual demonstration when teaching an in-person program with limited resources.
- Incorporate recordings into classes taught by colleagues, volunteers, or community partners who may be less knowledgeable on the topic.

Additional Resources

Before selecting online tools, please ensure that the applications or sites do not contain viruses or malware and are thus safe and appropriate for program implementation. A few examples of credible tools include the following (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

Bitly is a free online application that customizes and shortens links. These are especially useful for social networking sites, SMS, and email.

Canva is a free-to-use online graphic design tool. Users can create social media posts, presentations, posters, videos, logos, and more. It can also be used for video editing.

Google Docs can be used to create and collaborate on online documents. Team members can edit with secure sharing in real-time and from any device.

Google Meet allows users to connect with anyone anywhere with high-quality video and live captions.

Jotform is an online form that can easily be customized, downloaded, embedded, and printed.

Microsoft Office is a suite of applications designed to help with productivity and completing common tasks on a computer.

Microsoft Teams is a chat-based workspace in Office 365 that integrates people, content, and tools your team needs to be engaged and effective.

Pexels provides royalty-free and copyright-free stock photos and videos.

Qualtrics allows users to create online surveys and generate reports.

SurveyMonkey is a free online tool that creates surveys or polls.

Zoom is an online platform that employs modern video calls with live messaging and content sharing for desktop and mobile use. Users can record meetings, make annotations, engage attendees with polls, and more.