TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION -
REACHING ACROSS TEXAS IN NEW WAYS TO SERVE TRAINING NEEDS

Theresa Pesl Murphrey & Susanna Coppersnoll

Introduction

Texas Cooperative Extension offers a wide-range of education to residents across Texas. The mission of extension is to provide quality, relevant outreach and continuing education programs and services to the people of Texas. Keeping extension staff and faculty abreast of new programming and providing up-to-date in-service opportunities is challenging given geographic distance and time limitations. The adoption of the software program, Centra™, has provided a means to meet that challenge. Extension has found that through the use of Centra™ (a LIVE Online Conferencing System) agents and staff can receive just-in-time training at their desk -- avoiding travel expenses and lost time.

Purpose & Major Points to be Shared

This poster presentation will describe the activities involved in developing, piloting, and delivering informal education programs to extension faculty and staff across the state of Texas using Centra™ - a LIVE Online conferencing system. Extension Education, the unit responsible for providing leadership for staff and faculty training, has established “Friday Online” via Centra™ Symposium through which a two hour web seminar is held each Friday. Seminars include topics such as “Balancing Personal and Professional Life” and “Monthly Reporting Q&A Session.” Specifically, the poster will depict the process followed to gain acceptance to the new delivery system and techniques that have been put in place to facilitate continued use.

Conclusions and Educational Importance

Technology is offering new ways to provide needed training to clientele both within extension and outside extension to the residents of Texas. The use of Online Conferencing Systems offer new and innovative ways to meet this need while reducing travel time and cost. However, implementing this technology and gaining acceptance of techniques such as meeting online does not occur without purposeful effort. The educational importance of this poster focuses on two distinct areas: awareness of a new way to provide education, and the process by which the system was put in place to serve clientele. Awareness and understanding of new ways to use technology can provide those working in the international arena a new tool to serve clientele across the globe.