

Master Gardener Satisfaction and Intent to Remain After Training via Remote Delivery

Abstract

One year after using remote delivery via video web conferencing (VWC) in training, we surveyed Delaware master gardeners to assess the remote delivery trainees' satisfaction and intent to remain as compared to those characteristics in volunteers who had had face-to-face training. Although the remote delivery trainees were satisfied overall, they were significantly less satisfied than those who had participated in face-to-face trainings. A more positive perception of the VWC experience was associated with master gardeners' increased satisfaction, suggesting the importance of VWC quality. However, volunteers trained via VWC did not report more or less of an intention to remain with the organization.

Keywords: [volunteer satisfaction](#), [retention](#), [master gardener](#), [remote delivery](#), [video web conferencing](#)

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Introduction and Literature Review

Through the master gardener program, which started in Washington State in 1972, experienced gardeners are trained to share their expertise with others in their respective states (Bobbitt, 1997). Now present in 49 states, master gardeners are a critical resource in Extension's effort to improve consumer horticulture education (Bradley et al., 2016; Dorn, Newberry, Bauske, & Pennisi, 2018; Schrock, Meyer, Ascher, & Snyder, 2000). Once trained, master gardeners constitute a cost-effective means for reaching a wide variety of community members. However, the initial master gardener training can be expensive to provide. To defray or cover costs, some state Extension organizations require volunteers to pay for training courses, with published costs ranging from approximately \$195 to \$450 as of fall 2017 (Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, n.d.; Oregon State University, n.d.). A strategy for reducing master gardener training costs is

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