

## **Institutionalization of the City College of Angeles – Center for Academic Events:**

### **Highlights of Challenges, Strategies, and Impact to New Normal in Education**

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### **Abstract**

The study is focused on designing and describing the webinars sponsored by the City College of Angeles – Center for Academic Events. It assesses the overall impression on the performance and command of the invited resource speaker/s and the organization and delivery of the webinars. Based on the results of the study, the challenges and impact of the webinars on the new normal education are formulated. This study is a combination of qualitative and quantitative types of research. The participants of the webinars are from the entire Philippines. They ranged from a minimum of 150 to a maximum of 500 participants per webinar. They are employed in both public and private higher education institutions and schools catering for basic education (Junior and Senior High Schools). Descriptive statistics, observation, interview, and documentary analyses were used to interpret the data gathered. Results show that topics presented in the webinars were found to be relevant. The extent to which the content of the webinars matched the announced objectives; the time allocated for discussion, interaction between resource speakers and participants, depth of treatment of the topic, pace of delivery of the webinars, and length of the webinars were adequate. The concepts presented were very useful, the extent to which they acquired new knowledge on pedagogy, resource based learning, instructional design are sufficient, extent to which they acquired skills that were new to them is adequate, and extent to which they found new sources of information and skills are useful in the delivery of instruction. Overall, the webinars guide the current abilities of the participants to use the knowledge and skills that they acquired and learned. The content is at the fingertips of participants, and that unlimited playback is possible since it is recorded.

**Keywords:** Challenges, Continuing Professional Development, Transformation, Webinar

## **1. Introduction**

Higher education institutions around the world are currently facing the biggest challenge in the industry this 2020 – the COVID-19 pandemic. With the disruptions not only in classes but in daily lives, several experts acknowledged how the sudden, forced adoption of technology-delivered instruction will affect the well-being of professors and students alike (Lederman, 2020). As in the case of the City College of Angeles (CCA), this pandemic is not just a challenge, but rather an opportunity to strengthen its core values and update its mission and vision to obtain its institutional goals.

The City College of Angeles envisions itself as an Institution of Hope and as a premier local college in the Philippines. Thus, the college has undergone various accreditations and quality assurance evaluations from different governing bodies since its establishment in 2012. To date, CCA has the following accomplishments and recognitions: (1) recognized higher education institution by the Commission on Higher Education, (2) official Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Provider granted by the Professional Regulations Commission; (3) International Centre of Excellence in Events Management granted by the Asia-Pacific Institute of Events Management based in Leeds, United Kingdom; (4) Award of Distinction by the Royal Institute based in Singapore. and , ALCU-COA Accredited given by the Association of Local Colleges and Universities .

As its mission, the City College of Angeles is responsively committed in providing quality education for the holistic development of future professionals who can collaboratively work locally and globally. To attain this, the college has been introducing innovative programs for its main stakeholders: the faculty , the students, and the community. Since the re-organization of the college in 2017, several new units and programs were structured and streamlined to improve the delivery of services both in curricular and co-curricular activities. Among the new units introduced were the

Center for Culture and the Arts, Institute for the Arts, Institute of Culture and Heritage Education, and just recently, the Center for Academic Events.

Prior to the establishment of these new units, CCA has already been organizing curricular and co-curricular activities that supplement student and faculty development. As a main core of its mission, the college believes that events and activities outside of the classroom are an integral part of the total development of its stakeholders. Among these activities are seminars, workshops, fora, conferences, colloquia, exhibits, and festivals organized for the faculty and staff, the students, and the community. By hosting and participating in academic events, scholars maximize the uptake and circulation of research findings as well as promote knowledge-sharing and agenda-setting with potential impact on the academic community and society at large (Hansen & Pedersen, 2018).

The birth of the Center for Academic Events was precipitated by the sudden shift of the traditional learning modality to that of online or virtual mode. As the college needed to prepare for this new normal context, the administration saw the immediate necessity to institutionalize a unit that will execute the academic activities initially planned to be on a face-to-face modality. The Center for Academic Events envisions itself as the premier provider of services in promoting academic events focused on learning and engagement among its stakeholders, the faculty and staff, the students, and the community. Banking on the experiences of its staff in organizing accredited CPD programs and having been trained in events management, the Center also aspires to provide quality events and relevant production management at the institutional, regional and national levels. The need for professional well-educated staff within the event management industry has been driven by the need to develop the industry in a more strategic direction (Arcodia and Reid, 2003).

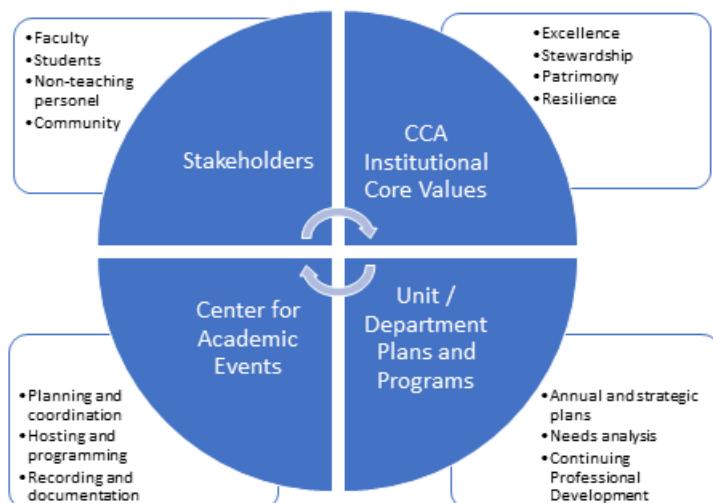
After its official launch on June 24, the Center for Academic Events serves as the

centralized operation through which all college academic events and activities will be scheduled, planned, coordinated, and executed. The center also serves as a repository of documented events and activities of different units within the college. This unit also manages institutional resources to support all campus academic events which aid the quality of programming, production management, and exhibitions that foster learning and development among its stakeholders. Industry-based research has shown that events management requires particular skills, knowledge, and competencies, thus the urgency and high impact of many events means that mistakes caused by the lack of appropriate management competencies can be costly, if not disastrous (Perry, Foley, and Rumpf, 1996).

Event management has emerged as a distinct field of study and career path, with increasing professionalism, yet its scope and

boundaries are somewhat unclear and it is not connected to a disciplinary core (Getz, 2002). Nevertheless, the center was able to ascertain its position in the organization through the following objectives: (1) organize faculty/staff development academic events; (2) facilitate tools and resources available to both faculty and students for their academic events (3) engage and invite resource speakers and experts to share their expertise through academic events; (4) encourage and support stakeholders to identify and participate in educationally meaningful co-curricular activities; and (5) collect and store documentations of academic events and activities conducted by all units that are in line with the center's mission and vision.

**Figure 1. Strategic Framework of the Center for Academic Events**



One of the central roles of the center is to be the avenue of professional events that will cater for all the stakeholders of the college. As seen in Figure 1, all academic and co-curricular events in the college are guided by its core values: Excellence, Stewardship, Patrimony, and Resilience. In order to attain all of these, each unit and department formulates its own annual and strategic plans.

These plans are executed collaboratively with other units to ensure the use of available resources. Aside from these plans, needs analysis and continuing professional development programs are regularly conducted to foster current knowledge and skills among the faculty, employees, students, and community of the college. With the formation of the Center for Academic

Events, (1) planning and coordination; (2) hosting and programming; and (3) recording and documentation of academic and co-curricular events will be streamlined. Thus, providing the college an avenue to ensure its commitment to its stakeholders better and relevant services as guided by its core values.

From June to August 2020 the center (as its first activity) organized a series of webinars on behalf of the college. The purpose of this study was to answer the following questions:

1. How may the different webinars be designed?
2. How may the different webinars be described?
3. How may the overall impression on the performance and command of the invited resource speaker/s be assessed?
4. How may the overall impression on the organization and delivery of the webinars be assessed?
5. What are the challenges and impact of the webinars in the new normal education?

## **2. Methodology**

This study is a combination of qualitative and quantitative types of research. In terms of qualitative, the study designed and described the webinars needed by the participants in facing the new normal in education. It utilized a flexible, holistic, and reflexive method of data collection and analysis. On the other hand, a quantitative research method was employed in the assessment on the performance and command of the invited resource speaker and the overall impression on the organization and delivery of the webinar in general. Based on the results of the study, the challenges and impact of the webinars on the new normal education to the stakeholders were summarized to have a clear view of the conduct of the webinars in the new normal.

The participants of the webinars are from the entire Philippines. They ranged from a minimum of 150 to a maximum of 500 participants per webinar. They are employed in both public and private higher education institutions and schools catering for basic

Every Higher Education Institution (HEIs) is committed to promote quality lifelong learning opportunities for all, in all venues and at all levels of education. In facing the new normal in education, City College of Angeles, like other HEIs, is geared to provide clear policies, guidelines, measures, planned processes and actions in order to address the needs of the teaching and non-teaching personnel in their work place and the more and more diverse students in their learning situations. The creation of the Center for Academic Events provides settings for the lectures, fora, conferences, workshop, and trainings to meets the clients' needs and demands. Most of the webinars organized addressed quality and excellence in curriculum and instruction, library, research and community service, and teaching and non-teaching personnel development programs. These help establish the structures that students need to receive the excellence of education they deserve and bring strength in a time of uncertainty.

education (Junior and Senior High Schools). Descriptive statistics, observation, interview, and documentary analyses were used to interpret the data gathered. This study was conducted from March – August 2020.

## **3. Results and Analysis**

The webinars were designed to provide a presentation, lecture, workshop, or seminar that is transmitted over the Web using the Zoom app as the platform. It is a live online educational interactive presentation where the participants can submit questions and comments or ask questions directly to the resource speaker. The webinars follow the format of the face to face programs. The programs consist of the following parts: doxology, singing of the national anthem, welcome remarks, statement of purpose, introduction of the resource speaker, the talk, question and answer, reading and presentation of the speaker's certificate, closing remarks, and evaluation of the webinar. Only participants who accomplished the evaluation form were

given the e-certificates and these are received through their email addresses. In some cases, the webinars were delivered by a combination of live and recorded presentations depending on the availability and location of the resource speakers. In most cases, the recorded webinars are shared and

distributed via a portal or database. It means that the content is at the fingertips of participants, and that unlimited playback is possible. All the webinars have interactive elements such as the ability to give, receive, and discuss information.

Table 1. List of Webinar – Events Conducted by the CCA – Center for Events Management from June – August 2020

	Title	Objectives	Speaker	Date
1	Professionalization of the Philippines Events Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define the professionalization and events management</li> <li>• Identify the factors in attaining the professionalization of the events industry in the Philippines</li> <li>• Identify the challenges and opportunities in professional events industry</li> </ul>	President, Asia-Pacific Institute of Events Management	June 24, 2020
2	Psychological First Aid Relative to COVID-19 Experiences: A Response to the Challenges of the New Normal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define what is Psychological First Aid</li> <li>• Explain why PFA is relevant to the New Normal context</li> <li>• Identify activities that will help students adjust to the New Normal</li> <li>• Identify the roles of the teachers and school staff in performing PFA</li> </ul>	Program Chair – Psychology, College of Social Science and Philosophy Don Honorio Ventura State University	June 24, 2020
3	Implementation of Physical Education Courses across Discipline  In the New Normal: Significance, Mechanism, Challenges and Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the significance of Physical Education in times of COVID crisis</li> <li>• Identify the mechanisms on how PE can be delivered via different modalities of learning</li> <li>• Describe the challenges that Higher Education PE teachers can experience during pandemic</li> <li>• Identify opportunities that will aid PE teachers in providing teaching-learning alternatives in the delivery of lessons amidst modalities</li> </ul>	Vice President for University Relations, Philippine Normal University  Dean, College of Education, Angeles University Foundation	June 26, 2020

4	<p>Open Access Technology for the Implementation of Flexible / Blended in the New Normal: Tools, Pedagogy, and Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify open access tools that will aid teachers in the delivery of their lessons</li> <li>• Describe pedagogical alternatives that will help in facilitating the teaching-learning process within the context of the New Normal</li> <li>• Provide assessment modalities to check the outcomes of the learning process in different modalities of teaching</li> </ul>	<p>Dean, College of Industrial Technology, Bulacan State University Google Educator Group Leader</p>	June 29, 2020
5	<p>Delivery of the General Education English Courses in the New Normal: Significance, Mechanism, Challenges and Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the significance of Purposive Communication in times of COVID crisis</li> <li>• Identify the mechanisms on how PurComm can be delivered via different modalities of learning</li> <li>• Describe the challenges that PurComm teachers can experience during pandemic</li> <li>• Identify opportunities that will aid PurComm teachers in providing teaching-learning alternatives in the delivery of lessons amidst modalities</li> </ul>	<p>Academic Planning Officer, Angeles University Foundation</p>	June 30, 2020
6	<p>Teachers Competency Model in Higher Education Institution's Blended Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the expected qualities of teachers needed in the implementation of hybrid learning</li> <li>• Identify strategies that will facilitate the acquisition of competencies for the faculty and staff of higher education institutions</li> <li>• Describe the challenges and opportunities of Blended Learning environments in developing teachers' competencies</li> </ul>	<p>President, Association of Local Colleges and Universities</p>	July 02, 2020
	<p>The Teaching of the General Education Subjects via Flexible / Blended Learning: Approaches, Pedagogy, Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify approaches that will aid teachers in the delivery of General Education Subjects via Flexible / Blended Learning</li> <li>• Describe pedagogical alternatives that will help in facilitating General Education Subjects via Flexible / Blended Learning; and</li> </ul>	<p>Former Vice President for Finance and Administration, Philippine Normal University</p>	July 03, 2020

7		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide assessment modalities to check the outcomes of the learning process of the General Education Subjects via Flexible / Blended Learning</li> </ul>		
8	Changing Role of the Library as a Scaffold and Support in the Acquisition of Knowledge in the New Normal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the role of the Library Staff in the context of New Normal</li> <li>Identify alternative methods to deliver Library services in times of the pandemic</li> <li>Describe the challenges and opportunities in the acquisition of knowledge in the New Normal</li> </ul>	Chief Librarian, University of the Assumption	July 06, 2020
9	Fostering the Digital Life of Students through Seamless Learning Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the challenges and opportunities of student services staff within the context of New Normal</li> <li>Describe the needed modalities to facilitate Digital Life of Students through Seamless Learning Environment</li> <li>Identify best practices of higher education institutions in implementing a Seamless Learning Environment to support student learning in times of pandemic</li> </ul>	Vice President for Student Services and Community Development, University of Makati	July 09, 2020
10	Taking a Big Leap towards Quality Assurance in Higher Education:  The ALCU – COA Accreditation Framework and Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define Quality Assurance</li> <li>Identify the steps and areas in accreditation and quality assurance</li> <li>Describe the roles of higher education faculty and staff in accreditation process and quality assurance</li> <li>Identify the challenges and opportunities of quality assurance in times of pandemic</li> </ul>	Executive Director and President of ALCU – COA	July 16, 2020
	Leave No One Behind in this Pandemic: A Panel Discussion about Children, Women,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define disability</li> <li>Describe how disability is connected with the community</li> </ul>	Disability Affairs Officer and Head of Angeles City Persons'	July 31, 2020

11	and Senior Citizen with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify why a community should act as one on disability</li> </ul>	with Disabilities Affairs Office  Speech Pathologist and Founder, kasAMBAG	
12	Finding the Niche of Arts and Culture in Times of Pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify activities of promoting arts and culture in times of pandemic</li> <li>Identify the roles of the cultural workers and teachers promoting arts and culture despite of the pandemic</li> <li>Identify opportunities from different government institution to support the promotion of arts and culture within the New Normal context</li> </ul>	Officer-in-Charge on Plan/Policy Formulation and Programming Division, National Commission for Culture, and the Arts	August 10, 2020

Most of the 12 webinars were conducted from June 24, 2020 to August 10, 2020. The identification of title and objectives and choice of speaker and date were considered to address the needs of the participants in their workplace and family. The identified speakers are the authorities in

their field of specialization and hold high positions in the institutions where they are connected. The webinars were designed and conducted to offer a quality learning experience to participants across the globe and to make them ready in facing the new normal in education (Table 1).

Table 2. Assessment on the Overall Impression on the Performance and Command of the Invited Resource Speaker/s

Speaker knowledge of the issue/topic	Effectiveness of speaker in communicating his/her message	Effectiveness of the presentation of the objectives at the start of the webinar	Extent to which you achieved your personal objective/s in this webinar	Quality of speaker's pedagogical support	Quality of speaker's answers to the participants' questions	Quality of facilitation of the discussions with the full group of participants	W	M
No.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1	4.67	4.89	4.76	4.8	4.59	4.81	4.91	4.78
2	4.79	4.87	4.85	4.92	4.91	4.87	4.8	4.86

									4.8
3	4.8	4.76	4.87	4.86	4.87	4.76	4.85		2
4	4.85	4.91	4.85	4.86	4.89	4.89	4.87		4.8 7
5	4.87	4.81	4.87	4.79	4.87	4.92	4.91		4.8 6
6	4.91	4.92	4.96	4.76	4.85	4.86	4.87		4.8 8
7	4.87	4.85	4.92	4.91	4.87	4.79	4.87		4.8 7
8	4.76	4.87	4.86	4.87	4.91	4.85	4.76		4.8 4
9	4.89	4.78	4.87	4.86	4.87	4.87	4.89		4.8 6
10	4.92	4.91	4.91	4.79	4.76	4.91	4.92		4.8 7
11	4.86	4.78	4.87	4.59	4.91	4.87	4.86		4.8 2
12	4.79	4.81	4.89	4.79	4.81	4.76	4.79		4.8 1
								Composite Mean	4.8 5

Legend: 4.50-5.00 – excellent 3.50-4.49 – Very Good 2.50-3.49 – Good 1.50-2.49 – Fair 1.00 -1.49 – Needs Improvement

Table 2 presents the assessment on the overall impression on the performance and command of the invited resource speaker/s. As shown from the table, the 12 webinars obtained weighted means of 4.78, 4.86, 4.82, 4.87, 4.86, 4.88, 4.87, 4.84, 4.86, 4.87, 4.82, and 4.81, respectively. All were given a descriptive rating of excellent. The composite mean is 4.85 with a descriptive rating of excellent too. This indicates that the speaker knowledge of the issue/topic, effectiveness of speaker in communicating his/her message, effectiveness of presentation of the objectives at the start of the webinar, extent to which the participants achieved personal objectives in this webinar, quality of speaker's pedagogical support,

quality of speaker's answers to the participants' questions, and quality of speaker's facilitation of the discussions with the full group of participants are adequately accepted by the participants. The analysis of data shows that feedback in the evaluation form provided criteria in the selection of the resource speaker in each webinar. Knowing the expertise of the speakers, they are knowledgeable in the chosen topic, they maintain the participants' motivation making them attentive, they answer the questions of the participants with full satisfaction, and they achieve the learning intents of the stated objectives.

Table 3. Assessment on the Overall Impression on the Organization and Delivery of the Webinars

	Technical and Organization	Registration process	Email notification and follow up	Platform (Zoom)	Video and audio clarity	Hosts and moderators	WM
1	4.87	4.85	4.92	4.87	4.86	4.87	4.87
2	4.76	4.87	4.86	4.91	4.79	4.76	4.83
3	4.89	4.78	4.87	4.87	4.59	4.91	4.82
4	4.92	4.91	4.91	4.89	4.79	4.81	4.87
5	4.85	4.92	4.91	4.87	4.85	4.92	4.89
6	4.87	4.86	4.87	4.76	4.87	4.86	4.85
7	4.78	4.87	4.91	4.92	4.85	4.86	4.87
8	4.91	4.87	4.87	4.85	4.87	4.79	4.86
9	4.87	4.91	4.76	4.87	4.96	4.76	4.86
10	4.91	4.92	4.76	4.91	4.92	4.91	4.89
11	4.87	4.85	4.92	4.94	4.78	4.87	4.87
12	4.76	4.87	4.85	4.81	4.87	4.88	4.84
Composite Mean							4.86

Legend: 4.50-5.00 – excellent    3.50-4.49 – Very Good    2.50-3.49 – Good    1.50-2.49 – Fair    1.00 -1.49 – Needs Improvement

The assessment on the overall impression on the organization and delivery of the webinars is presented in Table 3. As can be gleaned from the table, all the 12 webinar – events obtained an excellent overall impression, that is, 4.87, 4.83, 4.82, 4.87, 4.89, 4.85, 4.87, 4.86, 4.86, 4.89, 4.87, and 4.84, respectively. The composite mean is 4.86 with a descriptive rating of excellent. This indicates that participants agree that the technicality and organization, registration process, email notification and follow-up, platform, audio-video clarity, and host and moderators are highly acceptable. It means that all the webinars are well-organized and provided high quality of administrative assistance.

#### 4. Challenges and Impact of the Webinars on the New Normal Education

Although the center was able to systematize its workflows and processes, planning and organizing online events such as webinars offer an array of program management challenges. Since its inception, one major challenge in organizing such an

event is online etiquette. Following etiquette is a must not only for face-to-face social events, but also refers to the world of online communication (Porowska, 2020). A large number of those who attended the center's online events are outsiders, thus it's difficult to control their online etiquette. As part of its system, once a participant is registered, an email containing some reminders are sent automatically to avoid such a challenge. According to Fabian (2018), attending an online presentation or meeting and not being able to get anything out of it is attributed to the presenter or fellow attendees who are unprepared or unfamiliar with how to behave in a formal, online environment.

Another challenge identified by the center in conducting online events is internet bandwidth. Participants, including the organizers, are working from their home. Stable internet connection can affect the delivery and conduct of a successful webinar. All events organized by the center are broadcasted in a live setting via an online platform. Despite of the said limitation, the organizers always find ways to get through or address technical issues should they arise .

They make sure they know how to work the webinar controls (Tiffany, 2017). As part of its online etiquette rules, all audiences are advised to turn off their audio and video while the program is on-going to save on the bandwidth.

Digital learning environments are increasingly popular in higher education and professional training (Gegenfurtner and Ebner, 2019). Thus, the center hosted and organized training sessions to prepare teachers, non-teaching staff, and other stakeholders in adapting to the needs of higher education in the new normal context. The center was able to partner and co-organized with several institutions such as the Association of Local Colleges and Universities to widen its audience reach. According to Gegenfurtner and Ebner (2019), teaching and learning via webinars, and web conferencing more broadly, represents one widely used approach. With the current situation in this pandemic, hosting and organizing online academic events will become a necessity for higher education institutions.

The impact of conducting online events such as webinars have been studied way back before the pandemic. Nagy and Bernschütz (2016), emphasize that using online video presentations is increasingly gaining ground in higher education. With the commitment of the college in quality higher education, the center was able to host and organize several online academic events that catered not only to its faculty, staff, and students, but with that of the whole community at the regional and national level. The academic events boosted the online presence of the college. More so, the availability of the online videos can be utilized to supplement students' classes that will eventually result in improvement in grades and it contributes to reducing dropout rates (Nagy and Bernschütz, 2016).

## 5. Conclusions

Results show that the creation of the Center for Academic Events of the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs posed challenges for the City College of Angeles. With the transformation of the education in the new normal, it is clearly acknowledged that the vision of the college is

as an institution of hope. With whatever happened, the college is ready to face the new normal in education. This is shown in the webinars that were sponsored by the center. In all the webinars, the organizers observed the following issues: maintaining the attentiveness of the participants, technical issues, limitation on non-verbal communication, limited time, cost efficiency, and convenience webinar (choice time frame and accessibility).

The webinars organized were all found to be relevant. The extent to which the content of the webinar - events matches the announced objectives. The time allocated for discussion, interaction between resource speakers and participants, depth of treatment of the topic, pace of delivery of the webinar – events, and length of the webinars were all adequate. Through the webinars, there are improvement in the participants' confidence in performing their work. In an interview conducted with some of the participants, they mentioned that the webinars are extremely helpful in the delivery of instruction. The concepts presented were very useful, the extent to which they acquired new knowledge on pedagogy, resource based learning, instructional design are sufficient, extent to which they acquired skills that were new to them is adequate, and extent to which they found new sources of information and skills were useful in the delivery of instruction. Overall, the webinars guide the current abilities of the participants in using the knowledge and skills they acquired and learned.

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