

# #2020: The Making of a Virtually Excellent Experience!

Dr. Debra Barry  
University of Florida



## Introduction

- The need to create learning opportunities that fit into a virtual platform came to the forefront as the face-to-face learning environment was reduced to a minimum in 2020.
- Synchronous e-learning platforms were found to be potentially effective tools in preparing preservice teachers (Woodcock et al., 2015).
- Online learning brought keen advantages that helped to meet the needs of preservice teachers to gain valuable early field experiences. Online learning was cost-effective because of the lack of travel needed and allowed learners to engage in the experience, regardless of their physical location (Fedynich, 2014; Kim, 2020; Yilmaz 2019).

## Steps

1. Identify agriscience programs that align with the goals of the virtual experience
2. Contact teacher(s) and ask if they were willing to participate in a virtual program visit.
3. Set-up the Zoom™ link and send to presenters, students and faculty.
4. Design agenda with programs that focuses on the strengths of each program.
5. Build in ample time for reflection and Q & A.

## Results/Future Plans/Advice to Others

- Program visits were done virtually for the first time in Fall 2020
- Each program was able to showcase their facilities and program philosophies in 90 minutes.
- 30 UF/AEC students attended, with 60% (n=18) providing feedback in a Qualtrics™ survey.
- 100% of respondents who indicated the visits were informative and worth their time.
- Repeat attendee preferred in-person, but felt the comfort level and pace was better virtually
- Virtual program tours may be necessary moving forward
- Make sure that teacher presenters are proficient in the platform technology (i.e. Zoom™)

“I preferred the in-person tour much more. This tour [virtual] was easier to follow and listen and much easier to ask questions. I also felt like we weren't on as much of a time crunch and that the teachers were more comfortable.”

## References

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