

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

Sewing workshop participants learned new skills and gained confidence

AT A GLANCE

University of Idaho Extension educators and staff from Bingham, Bonneville, Franklin and Jefferson counties taught community members new sewing skills and projects.

The Situation

Sewing is a lifetime skill and continues to be a popular display at county and state fairs. Youth have many worthwhile activities to occupy their time and energy and 4-H sewing groups are a popular choice. Sewing can teach STEAM concepts of science, technology, engineering, art and math with the *science* of force and motion needed to sew through various fabrics; *technology* by using a sewing machine; *engineering* to modify patterns to meet needs; *art* to design, choose colors, create clothing, discuss history of textiles and literacy using new sewing terms; and *math* in measuring, estimating and budgeting money to purchase materials. Sewing teaches youth skills to be used throughout their life and is a way to be frugal by mending clothing. Sewing instructors need training to learn new skills, explore new fabrics and designs, try out new sewing tools, gain new project ideas and share their stories of challenges and successes. Careers in sewing are a viable option for youth and adults with the University of Idaho providing a valuable apparel, textiles and design major. Providing a larger outreach to sewing instructors and volunteers would benefit 4-H offices who struggle to recruit, train and retain sewing leaders and support the joy of sewing.



Sewing projects: thread catcher, travel tick-tac-toe, backpack, fabric beach ball, storage pod. Photos by Extension educators.

Our Response

In response to requests for additional sewing instruction from community members and 4-H leaders, eastern district family and consumer sciences (FCS) and 4-H educators offered the second annual sewing workshop. The workshop was held at the UI Extension office in Bonneville County complex and was catered towards persons 16 years and older with the goal of teaching basic and advanced sewing projects to be used with youth. To continue the successful 2023 Sewing Workshop format, sewing projects were provided in packets. To involve other instructors, Deanna Poulsen, a new UI Extension FCS educator in Jefferson County taught the bandana backpack. Additional UI Extension faculty and staff included the following:

Laura Sant from Franklin County who taught the storage pod; Cherie Carter from Franklin County who taught the fabric beach ball; Paige Wray from Bonneville County who taught the tic-tac-toe travel game; and Julie Buck from Bingham County who taught how to make a thread catcher. Supplies were paid for by an innovative grant from UI Extension. Sponsors were found for raffle prizes and lunch was paid for by participants.

Program Outcomes

Participants were comprised of 11 adult females from two area counties: Bonneville and Bingham. The workshop objectives were linked to the corresponding outcomes.

- **Objective:** Provide a regional sewing workshop to teach basic and advanced sewing skills. This workshop is built on the 2023 innovative grant funded project: 4-H Sewing Volunteer Workshop. **Outcome:** Five UI Extension educators and staff with a focus on FCS and/or 4-H taught a variety of basic and moderate sewing projects.
- **Objective:** Participating faculty and staff will improve their sewing skill instruction. **Outcome:** All instructors expressed improvement in teaching sewing skills.
- **Objective:** Participants will learn and improve upon their sewing skills. **Outcome:** See table.
- **Objective:** Participants will network with people who also teach sewing to encourage collaboration and idea sharing. **Outcome:** Participants sat with people they knew from their own counties and networked with others.
- **Objective:** Expand the number and geographical location of participants. **Outcome:** One university student from out of state attended. The rest of the

- participants were from Bonneville and Bingham counties.
- **Objective:** Encourage sewing instruction in more locations, UI Extension offices, schools and at home. **Outcome:** Four participants were 4-H volunteer sewing teachers, one participant taught sewing online and the remaining were home seamstresses.

A Qualtrics survey was used to collect information on changes in knowledge, skills learned and critical thinking regarding project material choices. Ten of the 11 (91%) participants responded to the survey. All participants (100%) indicated they would recommend this event for future attendance, and nine out of 10 reported planning to teach one or more of the projects. Critical thinking was reported in 90% of participants regarding tic-tac-toe fabric, fastener choices and fray prevention. Participants making the backpack reported 90% confidence in ability to make a pattern change.

Table 1. Sewing and project skills learned

Skills learned	Response N(%)
Confidence using grommets	9(90)
New skill for fabric beach ball: pivoting, matching	10(100)
Using walnut shells for thread catcher	9(90)
Storage pod: ladder stitch, using Pellon, attaching a loop	7(70)

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

This project was funded by the 2024 University of Idaho Extension Innovative Project Award funds. Sponsors of raffle prizes included local businesses.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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