

REACH YOUR POTENTIAL

Mel Kesteven examines two techniques tailored to help Explorer Scouts build their self-confidence and gain a real sense of achievement in Scouting



- for it, or lose any Programme time.
- Explorer Scouts are not 'put on the spot'.

The disadvantages of this approach are:

- You may miss some of the Explorer Scouts.
- You need to remember to follow up on what you've talked about, or give up your own time to make notes on what you've said you will do.
- Keeping it so informal may mean that you forget to do it at all.

THE CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Once every year, you can use the Certificate of Achievement to formalise the mentoring process and celebrate all the things that the Explorer Scout has done that year.

How do you use it?

It could be that you fill in the Certificate of Achievement in pencil at each mentoring session through the year, and then after the final session of the year it can be presented.

In some cases, if you go for the informal mentoring scenario, you might want to give the Explorer Scouts a paper copy of the certificate to fill in themselves, and then you talk to them about what they have written and fill in the Certificate ready for presentation.

I've never seen a Certificate of Achievement – what does it look like?

The Certificate of Achievement has space on the front for the name, the signature of the District Explorer Scout Commissioner or Explorer Scout Leader, the date, and also space for a description of what the Explorer Scout has completed.

Far more important though is the back of the certificate, which lists the things that the Explorer Scout has achieved and what they would like to achieve over the following year.

Over the page you will find an example of the back of a Certificate of Achievement completed for a fictional Explorer Scout, so you can see the type of thing that could be included.

Are there any other situations for which I could award a Certificate of Achievement?

Absolutely! A Certificate of Achievement can be used whenever you

You may have come across the terms 'mentoring' and 'Certificate of Achievement' before – but do you understand what powerful tools they can be within Scouting, and how you could actually put them into practice within your Explorer Scout Group?

Let's start with mentoring. To some people this term is a real problem, as they are used to mentoring in the industrial/commercial sense. In Scouting, we are talking about supporting the personal development of young people as individuals.

WHAT DOES A MENTOR DO?

The role of the mentor is very simple:

- Be somebody that the Explorer Scout can talk to about anything.
- Support the Explorer Scout in getting the most out of what Explorer Scouting offers them.

That's not too tricky, is it? Many of us 'mentor' all the time without realising it. The idea of formalising it is just to make sure that nobody 'slips through the net' and ends up with no support.

It could be difficult with Explorer Scouts belonging potentially to more than one Unit, so each Explorer Scout should have a named mentor (they had to call it something!).

But I've got 24 Explorer Scouts and only two Leaders, how can I 'mentor' effectively?

There are lots of different ways in which you can do your mentoring. Remember though that you don't have to just do it 'in-house' (see below for different ways of mentoring and also for ideas on who else could 'mentor').

WHO CAN BE A MENTOR?

A mentor needs to have three attributes:

- They need to be available to talk to the Explorer Scout.
- They need to know something about Explorer Scouting in the District.
- They need to have had a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check and follow the Young People First guidance on the yellow card at all times.

Your mentor could be an active member of the Scout Fellowship or Scout Network who works closely with your Unit. If the Explorer Scout is a Young Leader it could be another Leader in the Section they are working with. It could also be an adult helper or Skills Instructor.

You might want to explain the concept and the desirable attributes to your Explorer Scouts and get them to suggest somebody they would like to be their mentor.

HOW CAN IT WORK?

It is important to set aside some time for mentoring, otherwise the chances are that in a busy, active Unit, the evenings will slip by and you may not have the chance to talk to all the Explorer Scouts.

There are several models for how this can work, depending on your Explorer Scouts, how many Leaders you have, how many Explorer Scouts there are in the Unit and what your Programme is like.

Scenario 1

You set up a meeting for two of your Explorer Scouts each week. You let them know in advance when it's their turn so that they can prepare if they wish (i.e. remember to bring along their Navigator File and Duke of Edinburgh Award book etc).

While one of the other Leaders is running the Programme activity, you take the two aside and talk about what they are doing in Explorer Scouting, what they have achieved, what they would like to do and how you can support them in their endeavours.

The advantages of this approach are:

- You can give the Explorer Scouts individual attention and you know you're getting to all of them.

The disadvantages of this approach are:

- The reason they come to Explorer Scouts is because they like the Programme.
- Being taken away from one of the activities is annoying and they will be easily distracted, wanting to know what everyone else is doing.

Scenario 2

You set aside a whole evening in the Programme. There is another activity planned for the night, but it's something that involves little Leader input or Explorer Scout running around (I've had Explorer Scouts holding a conversation with one another, one speaking in French and the other in Welsh!).

You gather all your 'mentorees' around a table, with Duke of Edinburgh Award books, *Unit Programmes*, *Unit Essentials*, copies of *Scouting Magazine*, *Navigator Files* and *Young Leader's Essentials* available.

Then you talk to them either individually or as a Group about what they are doing and what they want to do. I found that they were all easily engaged in looking through the books to see what they could be doing, what Activity Badges they were working towards and so on, and they were very keen to let me know what they wanted to do.

The advantages of this approach are:

- You've got their attention and they can talk to each other and share their ideas of what they would like to do.
- They've got something else to do (the Programme exercise and looking at the resources) while you're talking to one of the others.
- You're only setting aside one evening to talk to all of them.

The disadvantages of this approach are:

- You're trying to talk to quite a few Explorer Scouts at once (I had eight).
- If any Explorer Scouts aren't there that week you need to remember to catch up with them at a later date.

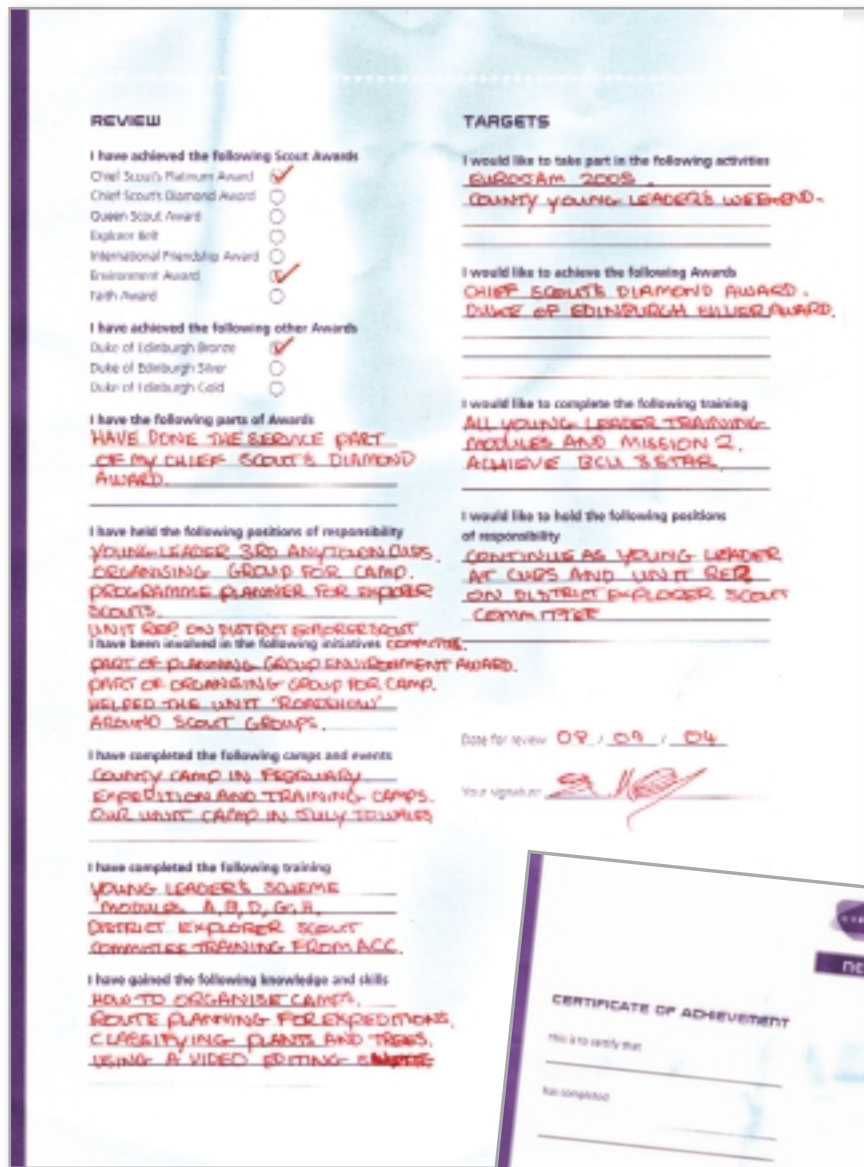
Scenario 3

You stick to informal mentoring, and talk to the Explorer Scouts 'in passing' as the evening progresses. A good opportunity for this is around the campfire at camp (camp is a good time for mentoring in any of these scenarios because you've got more time and everybody is more relaxed).

From this you should find out what they are doing and what they want to achieve. Remember to write it down so you can follow it up.

The advantages of this approach are:

- You don't have to set aside any time



An example of how the Certificate of Achievement can be used as a record of progress and to set new goals and targets

don't want mum to see the video of the latest camp! You could invite the District Explorer Scout Commissioner to make the presentations.

What should the Explorer Scout do with it?

Most young people now have a Record Of Achievement (a folder/portfolio recording their achievements) given to them as they approach the end of compulsory education.

If they don't, they nearly all have a collection of Certificates somewhere into which they can proudly place their Award. If they have neither of these, it's worth recommending that they start one, ready for a time when they may be entering the big wide world of work, aiming for a place at Sixth Form College or heading off to University interviews.

A collection of their achievements will make a very good impression, give the interviewer something to talk about and help to make them more memorable.

My Explorer Scouts aren't interested in bits of paper. What's the point?

Your Explorer Scouts may not seem interested in bits of paper, and may seem embarrassed at the presentation, but if they have had a good year at Explorer Scouts, and have taken the opportunities presented to them, then they will all have achieved something they can be proud of.

For instance, they may have overcome their fear of heights on the climbing wall, achieved even one part of an Award in the midst of exam pressure, or taken the lead in organising a Programme activity or camp.

Whatever it is, if they have been part of identifying what they have done through filling in the back of the certificate, they will be proud of it. Of course, there will always be one that leaves it on the floor at the back of the hall – we can't solve everything! ■

Further information

For further details on these issues contact the Scout Information Centre at Gilwell Park on 0845 300 1818

feel it is appropriate and helpful.

It may be that an Explorer Scout has taken part in a specific and challenging project, or has overcome a particular challenge; a Certificate of Achievement would be an appropriate way of celebrating that effort and achievement.

When and how should it be presented?

That's up to you and your District. The Royal Forest of Dean District AGM this year included a presentation by the Explorer Scouts on what they had been up to, and a presentation of Certificates of Achievement (along with various other Awards and Badges) to the Explorer Scouts by the District Commissioner.

The Certificates could be presented at your Annual Explorer Scout Meeting. Alternatively, you may wish to do your presentations within your Unit (particularly if you have a lot of Explorer

Scouts in the District).

It's nice to share this kind of celebration, so consider having a parents evening where the Explorer Scouts invite their parents. The Explorer Scouts can give a presentation on some of the activities they have been doing and are planning to do.

This kind of thing will go down well with the parents, who often wish they knew what their teenage offspring were up to and would be very proud, but less well with the Explorer Scouts who really

TIME	ACTIVITY	ZONE	METHOD	INSTRUCTIONS
One evening	Anti-bullying video	Relationships, Values, Skills	Technology, Working together, Project	Discuss the problem of bullying and make a video or photo-story suggesting ways of tackling it as a problem.
Half an hour	TGI Friday!	Relationships	Working together, Games	Create some challenges that focus on the Task, Group and Individual. Examples could be building a bridge out of paper to reach across the hall, or building the tallest tower out of straws. Then discuss the roles that different people took and encourage the more dominating ones to observe the Group dynamics.
One evening	Diverse alert!	Relationships	Project	Challenge your Explorer Scouts to consider whether or not the Unit reflects local diversity of gender, ethnicity, special needs etc. How could you make the Unit more welcoming to a range of young people?
One evening	Orphans	Relationships, Values	Visitor, Technology	Find out (on the internet) how many orphans there are in Angola. Invite a visitor from Barnardo's or Christian Aid to find out what these different organisations do to support orphans.
Half an hour	A sight more difficult	Relationships, Values	Working together, Outdoor activities	In pairs, with one person blindfolded, go to the local shop to buy two or three specific items. The person who is blindfolded must do the buying while the other guides and supports. Discuss what it must be like to have to rely on other people for support all the time?
One evening	Expedition team	Relationships	Project, Working together	What support do you need from one another in an expedition team? What different roles are there? What do you need to think about? There's some useful information on this in the Duke of Edinburgh book. Make a leaflet for those approaching their expeditions.
One hour	Teenage pregnancy	Relationships, Values	Debate, Discussion	Have a debate about the issue of teenage pregnancy. What should be done to support teenagers and whose responsibility is it?