

The Learners Questionnaire – The Results Jan 2008

Introduction

The Scout Association's Adult Training Scheme has been in place since 2004.

As part of the on going support and development of the Scheme, we are continuing with the research that was started last, year with the first ever Learners Questionnaire.

The learners' questionnaire offers a focused and systematic way to capture the learners' experience of completing their Wood Badge. The results from the questionnaire should expose those areas in the scheme that are perceived as going well and equally identify areas in the scheme that may need further development and support.

A full copy of the results can be found in **Appendix 1**.

This questionnaire was targeted at learners who had been awarded their Wood Badge in 2008.

In 2008, 3,858 members were awarded their Wood Badge.

That's 31% more than the 2,943 wood badges awarded in 2007.

From this number 59% had an email address that we could access. An email with a link to the online questionnaire was sent to this group.

Out of those who it was sent to around 40% replied, compared to 30% in 2007. Therefore 22% of the people who gained their Wood Badge in 2008 completed the questionnaire. This is 5% up on responses from 2007.

The questionnaire is split into 6 areas.

1. About you
2. Your experience and training
3. Training Methods
4. Training for your role
5. Training Advisers
6. Final Questions

1. About you

This is a breakdown of roles of those who completed the questionnaire:

69% - Assistant Section Leaders and Section Leaders.

They represent the following Sections:

19 % Beaver Scouts

33% Cub Scouts

34% Scouts

13% Explorer Scouts

2% Scout Network

17% were a manager (Commissioner/GSL)

2% were a DESC/CSNC

6% were a supporter

The representation in general was well spread over the UK.

2. Your experience of training

79% gained their Wood Badge within a 3-year period. Up 3% on 2007 results.

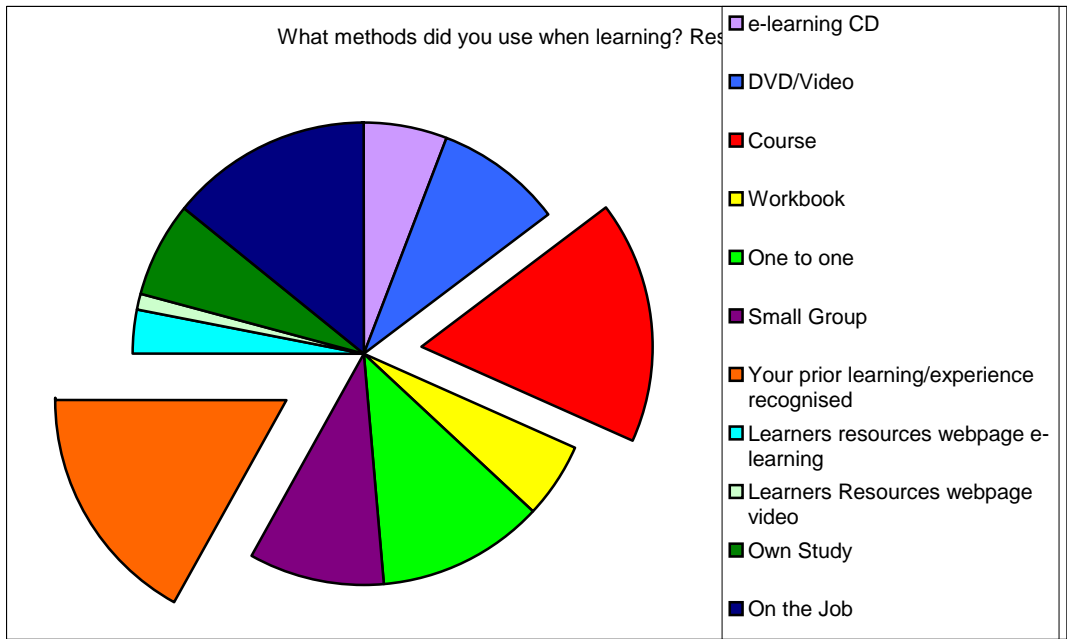
92% believed that 3 years was enough, or a generous amount of time to complete their Wood Badge.

Only 8% believed that 3 years was too short a time.

3. Training Methods

This year courses and recognition of prior learning were equal in methods most commonly used when learning at 68%

However, other methods were also well used, see graph below:

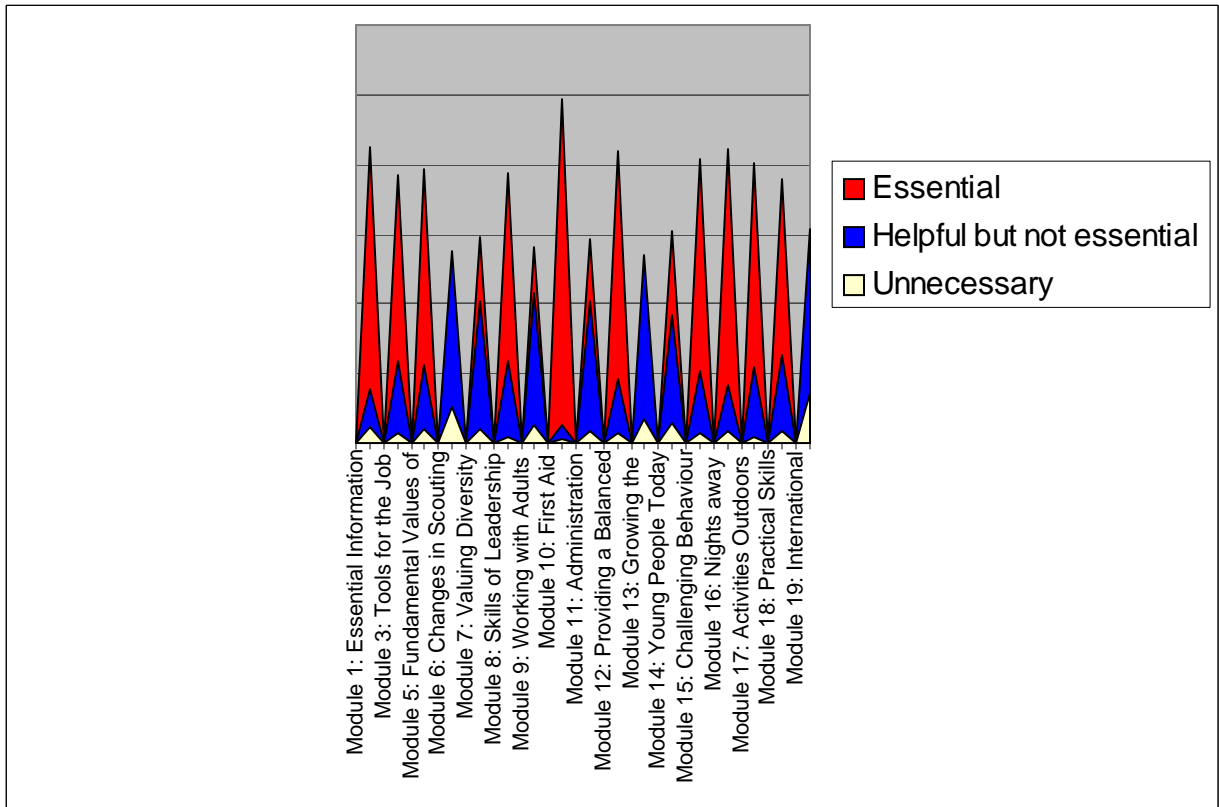


In general all methods scored highly on being flexible and easy, however Courses (34%), were considered to be the most time consuming.

4. Training for your role

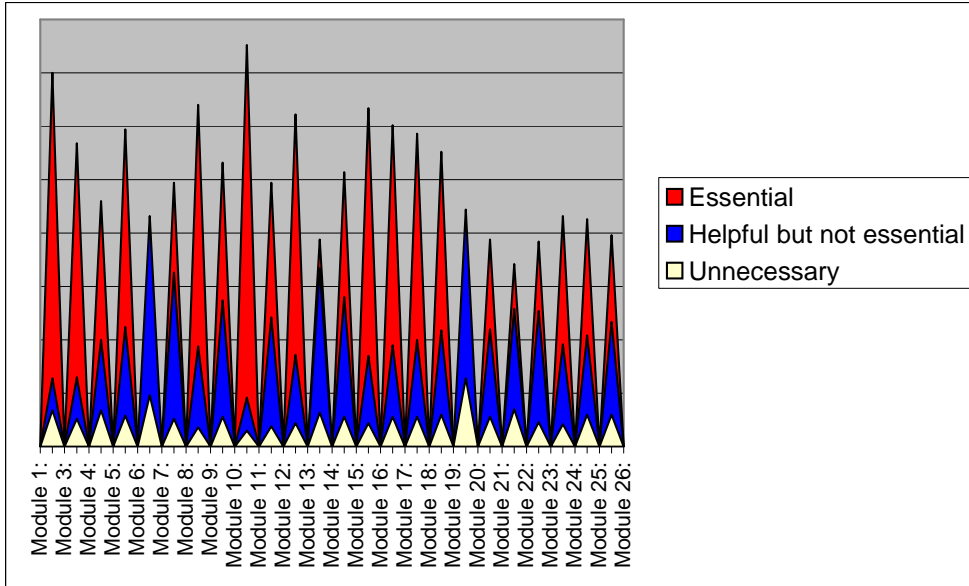
The graphs below show the responses when asked if they thought the module they did were essential, helpful but not essential or unnecessary for their role. A significant change this year, is that Nights Away, Activities outdoors and Practical skills were rated by most as essential this year.

Section Leaders:



Manager/Supporter:

The modules that were felt to be 'essential' were similar to that of the section leaders. Interestingly, the manager modules 20 – 26, were rate only rated as essential by 60% of people.



5. Training Advisers

83% of people said they had a training adviser.

9% attended open validation evening

8% didn't have one.

Learners described Training Advisers as the following:

Helpful (93%)

Supportive (91%)

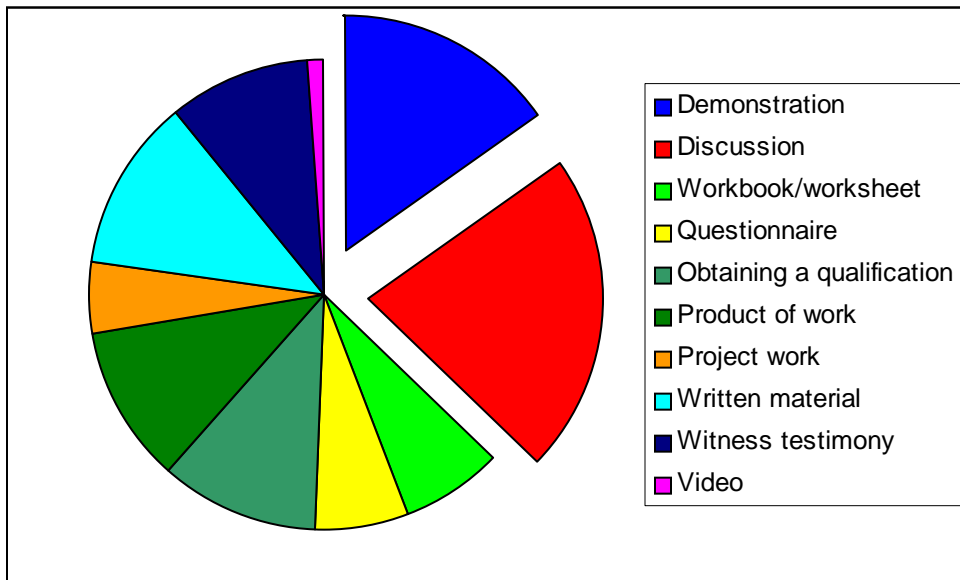
Useful (88%)

Friendly (97%)

Professional (91%)

Motivating (82%)

This year we also asked about methods of validation that were used. Discussion (91%) and demonstration (62%) were used the most, and project work and written material were the most time consuming.



6. Final Questions

85% had their training explained to them at the beginning of the role.

91% thought that the training they did should have been a requirement for their role.

From the question 'if you could change anything about your training experience what would it be:' the main themes were –

- More support from managers
- More flexible, being able to use a range of methods, or having more courses available at appropriate times
- Better administration, so that once the training is complete, they get recognition and wood beads in a short space of time
- Better quality of trainers
- Getting prior experience recognized
- Making validation easier, to do and understand

Interestingly, prior learning being recognized, a higher standard of trainers and the need for more flexible learning methods to be available in counties were also highlighted in the 2007 Learners Questionnaire.

83% rated the quality of training they received as good or very good

77% rated the usefulness of training as good or very good

46% said that they would consider becoming a TA.

Conclusion

Once again the questionnaire has provided some useful insights into the learner's experience. High percentages in areas such as quality, relevance and usefulness continue to be encouraging. It is also encouraging to see a wide range of learning and validation methods are being used.

Much of the data and comments will help in informing work the Adult Training Steering Group is already doing, as well as future work.

e.g.

- The learners' views on what modules are relevant to their role
- The development of manager training
- Need for more practical skills
- Development of support from Training Advisers

The feedback through the comments show that in many places the scheme is working as it should, being accessible, flexible and tailored to the learners need. However they also highlight that this is still not a universal experience of training, and that some of these key messages still need to be reinforced in some areas.