

Coaching and Mentoring: All you need to know

A letter from the National Program Services Committee

Times are changing...and Scouts Canada is moving with the times! We have been moving away from the more traditional, formal training workshops for leaders, towards a competency-based system where leaders-in-training will be able to receive credit for skills they already have. The coaching and mentoring initiative will enhance new leaders' options for acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct our programs.

It is our wish to state our position here as clearly and simply as possible, to aid you in implementing this process in your back-home situations.

As a starting point, it is important to understand that volunteer accreditation will now be based on a competency model as identified in the Basic and Advanced Learning Objectives. Each Scouter will work with a coach/mentor to determine which skills they have and which they need to develop. This means that as long as the Scouter demonstrates to a coach/mentor that they can perform the competencies identified in the Basic and/or Advanced program guidelines (found on our national web site), they may achieve their Basic and/or Advanced accreditation. How, when and where they acquire these competencies becomes secondary.

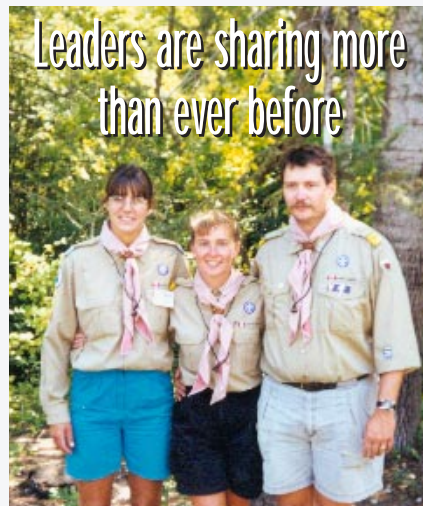
This now leads us into the knowledge/skill acquisition phase. With the guidance of their coach/mentor, the Scouters decide which methods are best for them to acquire the skills and knowledge required.

The options open to Scouters are:

- Self-study (reading program materials and books)
- On-the-job training
- Workshops or modular learning events

- Sharing sessions with other Scouters including but not restricted to their coach/mentor
- Any other option that meets the objectives

It is important to note that, should it meet the needs of the Scouters and should they so desire, workshops or modular learning events can closely resemble what we currently know as



traditional Part I and Part II courses. However, only the current guidelines posted on the national web site are applicable and no accreditation or accreditations will be presented on these learning events. It is important to note that workshops are only one learning option in the many that are available. The purpose of the numerous options is to accommodate various learning styles, personal preferences and the efficient use of Scouting resources.

After the knowledge and skills have been acquired/developed, leaders demonstrate their new skills to their coach/mentor or to another qualified individual jointly agreed to by themselves and their coach. This means that in a workshop or modular learning event, some competencies or acquired knowledge may be signed off on the Scouter's passport.

Topics such as child abuse awareness sessions and camping skills may fall into these parameters, and could be signed off at a workshop. However certain topics such as "games" must be demonstrated to see if competency

has been achieved. This is paramount in ensuring the quality of our programs. Running a game at a workshop using adults as Beavers is quite a different matter than actually playing the game with five to seven-year-old youth members.

Note: The acquisition and demonstration phases will normally be concurrent activities. As each skill is developed it can be demonstrated while another skill is learned.

Once all the required skills have been demonstrated and signed off, then the appropriate recognition can be presented (woggle for the Basic, neckerchief and beads for the Advanced).

All of the above presently applies only to the program guidelines. We will likely choose a more traditional approach to impart the required knowledge and skills, for providing service and support to our leaders, for those Scouters who volunteer in Group Committees or on Service Teams. More information will be made available on learning initiatives for volunteers in support roles shortly; for the time being councils will follow past learning models. As we formulate the servicing structure, the competencies for these positions will be developed.

Council commissioners at their appropriate level will select coaches/mentors, based on the coach/mentor's expertise in certain program proficiencies. Council commissioners or their designates will also assign coaches/mentors to Scouters.

Note: Trainers who have been accredited under our past system will retain their current trainer accreditation.

Guidelines for Coaches and Mentors

Definitions:

Coach/Mentor - An experienced and trusted advisor who tutors, trains, gives hints, primes with facts (in Scouting terms: a successful and experienced leader who assists with the

Photo: Ted Aplett

development of other leaders by sharing his/her knowledge and skills).

Goal/Objective – To help new leaders acquire the appropriate knowledge and skills (Basic and/or Advanced Learning Objectives) required to deliver an effective program as quickly as possible. This is critical, as providing these opportunities has a significant impact on the quality of the program and our ability to attract and retain new members.

Benefit – Leaders have opportunities to develop the necessary skills much sooner than ever before and can do so in a much more time-efficient manner. The Coaching/Mentoring process maximizes the use of everyone's time as it typically takes place during the regular meetings and outings etc., not requiring additional evenings and weekends. Coaching and mentoring also closely models how leaders interact with the youth, teaching and passing badge requirements, reinforcing a tried and proven method.

Process – Coaches/Mentors will demonstrate/teach how to properly conduct the meetings, plan events, etc. and then allow the new leaders opportunities to develop and demonstrate the same skills. Once the coach/mentor believes that the new leader has developed and performed the competencies identified in the Basic and/or Advanced Learning Objectives, they "sign off" next to the criteria on the checklist, much the same as when a leader, parent, coach or teacher signs off on a Cub or Scout badge requirement. Upon completion of all of the requirements the new leader's name

is presented to the local Commissioner for appropriate recognition.

Qualifications for Coaches/Mentors – Coaches/Mentors will be selected/appointed by a Commissioner based on their experience, ability to conduct the program and pass on those skills to others. To coach/mentor, a leader must have completed the learning objectives for the level in which they will be coaching/mentoring plus have a minimum of one year of successfully operating the section following the completion of their own Learning Objectives.

Timelines – The time required to successfully develop and demonstrate the competencies identified will vary from leader to leader. While there is no established timeline it is important to note that every new leader is expected to be able to demonstrate the competencies identified in the Basic Learning Objectives within the first year.

NOTE: Councils will be expected to create/provide opportunities for all new leaders to achieve the Basic Learning Objectives within their first year. Recognizing this, councils must consider timing, location, etc. when providing these opportunities and may choose to conduct Basic workshops to complement the coaching and mentoring process.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q – Who can coach/mentor?

A – Commissioners will select coaches/mentors based on the criteria above.

Q – What training is required to become a coach/mentor?

A – No training is required. Coaches/Mentors will be selected by a commissioner based on their demonstrated skills and abilities in conducting the program and their ability to share that with others.

Q – What about recognition - what is received upon completion?

A – When the leader has met the requirements, the coaches/mentors "sign off" and forward the leader's name to the commissioner. The commissioner then ensures that they are presented with the appropriate recognition - i.e. woggle, neckerchief and beads.

Hopefully, this will clear up any confusion. Please note - our tent flaps are always open so if you have any questions don't be shy. As we have said in previous communications, we are proud to serve with you and grow Scouting together. ^

Yours In Scouting,



Jeff Smith
Chair
National Program Services
Committee



Ross Francis
Executive Director -
Program

(This information is also located on the Scouts Canada web site at www.scouts.ca.)



The Medal of Merit

(for especially good service to Scouting)

Yvette Couture, Assistant Commissioner – Training, Winnipeg, MB

In her 22 years in Scouting, Yvette has been a Beaver Leader, Cub Leader, a District Service Team Member, a Trainer, a member of the provincial Training Committee and Assistant Provincial Commissioner for Training. She played an integral role in organizing many district events. Yvette has served on staff at three Canadian Jamborees and a number of provincial jamborees and wolforees. She has been a trainer or course leader for numerous Part I and Part II Woodbadge Courses. She was instrumental in re-writing the course outlines for Woodbadge II and played a major role in implementing changes to the Woodbadge I program in Manitoba. Yvette has been ready to step forward to take on any task at group, area and provincial levels. Scouting has benefited greatly from her enthusiasm and energy.