

Training, Training, And Training



In the early days of Scouting, it is said that someone asked our first Chief Scout Executive, James E. West, what the three greatest needs of Scouting were. His response was said to be “Training, Training, and Training.”

There is no doubt that he believed that. He spent a great deal of energy and resources on training. He hired and recruited eminent educators to help design training and to train Scoutmasters.

We got away from that over the last couple of decades. In most cases, rather than working with instructional designers *and* subject matter experts, we only worked with subject matter experts to create training.

In many cases we also all too often worked with the wrong subject matter experts: the ones that had a total dedication to Scouting, and not the folks the training was intended to help.



Unfortunately the objective of much training today has become very simple:

“Check the box”



And all too often, this is what training feels like to new leaders. We get them in a room, or sitting in front of a screen, and we try to cram as much as we can into their heads before they run away.

The training we have designed using subject matter experts alone attempts to bring the new leader up to their knowledge level from the start.

We do not, or only devote limited time to, train a leader to do their actual job. Much of the content is unrelated to “what do I do when eight seven-year-olds show up at my meeting next week?”

At times our training is neither fun nor meaningful – so they avoid it and future training. The current Cub Scout leader training has over 250 PowerPoint slides!

And we have not seriously looked at unit leader, role-based, training since the late 1990’s.



For example, one of the things we know is important if we want to enhance learning, is to train in the “language of the learner.”

One of the challenges for a new leader is training that is conducted in the “language” of experienced Scouters. Try as we might, we tend to default into a “Scouting language” and the new leader gets lost in the translation.

It is not just “the SPL is joining the OA and wants the PLC to go to NYLT.” There are other issues as well. In our diverse nation many councils serve a significant population of Scouts and potential Scouts that has its own terms or culture.

We know that many new leaders are reluctant to ask when they hear a term they do not understand or the training does not relate to them, so they begin to “tune out.” If we teach in terms or - in cases where there is a significant culture, faith group, or population that uses Scouting to serve their youth - concepts at the beginning of the training that they are familiar with, we can help them get off to a better start and they will soon “speak Scouting” and be able to “understand” additional conversations, training, and resources more easily.

We also know through our research that new leaders want to know two basic things: how to conduct meetings and what resources are out there to help. They do not want to know everything our experienced folks know – at least not yet.



While there is a place for e-learning, educators know that web based learning by itself is not as effective as in-person, instructor-led training. Considering what we do in Scouting, the importance of hands-on, feedback filled, mentor-led training enhances learning. And is a lot more fun!

Plus, we know that 25% of the US population does not have a computer in their home

And 36% of the population does not have broadband internet in the home

Even if the e-training was as effective, we can't forget about these folks.

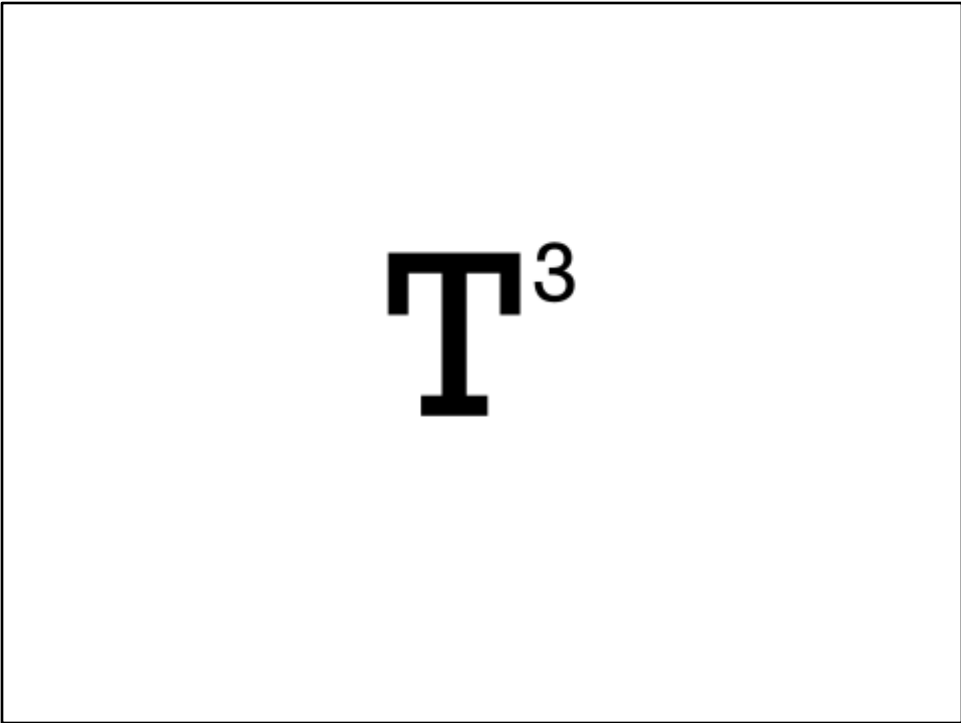
One of our goals is to make instructor-led deliverable in a convenient way – and that will include web-based learning that results in learning.

But the preferred method for most training is face to face.



Today, the volunteer training committee wants to get rid of the “Check the box” objective.

We have re-focused our energies towards unit leaders and learning.



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We also think that we have been missing another important piece of training – training the trainer.

We need more trainers and we need for them to know how to make training more effective.

You will soon see a new train the trainer course, or courses. We are calling it T-cubed for both the “TTT” and the fact that we intend it to have three parts – part one for basic training trainers (*The Fundamentals of Training*), part two for advanced training (*The Trainer’s EDGE*), and part three for our new Master Trainer program.

Team Based Learning

- **Small groups**
- **Accountability**
- **Team assignments**
- **Feedback**

We are learning that in education circles, especially universities, there is a spreading method of instruction based on what is called the *Team Based Learning* model:

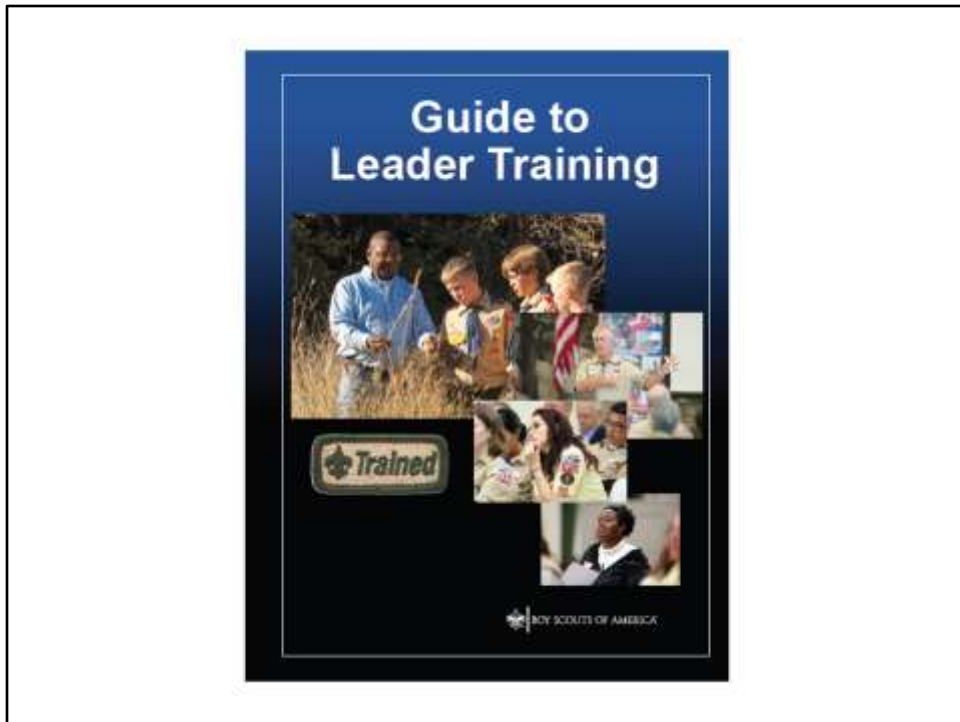
- Designed, permanent, small groups
- With individual and group accountability
- Given team assignments that promote learning and team development
- With frequent and immediate feedback

Does that sound familiar?

Centers Of Excellence

We are also working on the concept of Centers of Excellence.

We think that leaders can learn from visiting great dens, troops, roundtables, districts, camps, councils, or any excellent Scouting venue. Learning by watching and participating with the best and most successful is very effective. In the coming years, we believe that the BSA will be establishing and recognizing Centers of Excellence, where formal training for volunteers and professionals will occur through observation and participation in successful programs.



We are headed in a new direction in training – but in many ways it is an old direction.

Our primary focus is on helping new leaders learn how to best serve youth in their role.

We have created two new training design task forces that are staffed with educators and instructional designers who are also Scouters: Current State, and Future State.

Their goal is to make sure our training is effective and that learning actually occurs. They are looking at updating what we have now, (current state) and where we want to be with both content and delivery in the future (future state.)

**Who is trained?
Am I trained?**

But no matter how good the training/learning is, if we do not have good records so we know who is trained, it has a lessened value.

So we are also working with other departments in the BSA to create new tools to get needed information.

**www.scouting.org
/training**

Bookmark and keep an eye on our training page on Scouting.org – especially the “Training Updates” tab for the latest information!

**Train Leaders,
don't just run
training
courses**

Remember - Train Leaders, don't just run training courses