

Expert Online Training

Subscriptions for Camp Counselor Training Videos

What is Expert Online Training? EOT is an online training resource for use with camp counselor and camp staff training. The Leadership Essential series includes a library of 49 videos which teach by demonstrating essential camp skills. Real camp staff acts out scenarios with real campers to show how to work with youth and identify expectations for carrying out their role as counselors. The series was developed by Dr. Chris Thurber, a trained psychologist and long time camping professional, and each video is hosted by well known educators in youth development from the camping field. In order to take advantage of this resource each unit (county or camp facility) will purchase a one year subscription.

What does it cost? The program normally costs \$399 a year. Last year with the leadership of Christy Leeds, Ohio counties were able to purchase the subscription for \$299. For 2011, the Ohio 4-H program has negotiated a price of only \$99 for each subscription, which also includes 10 free individual accounts for each “dashboard”. In addition, a grant application was funded by the Ohio 4-H Foundation to pay \$49 for each subscription leaving the cost per county at only \$50.



What are the benefits? 26 county 4-H programs in Ohio purchased a subscription last year. According to a sample of 4-H educators who utilized the training videos last year, there was a noticeable difference in the attitude and demonstrated skills of camp counselors. This was particularly realized with child development, camper behavior management, handling conflicts in cabins and groups, social issues, disciplinary and supervisory challenges, getting children to participate, homesickness, and other counseling skill areas.

Camp counselors that viewed the videos indicated that they were “on target”, short and to the point, more engaging and interesting than they anticipated, represented real camp life situations, and that they gained skills that they actually used at camp in their role as counselors.

Camp directors from non-4-H camps indicated that counselors were better equipped to handle a variety of challenges and situations and felt that there was a “ripple effect” in camp that flowed from the counselors to the campers. They also thought that filming at camp with real life settings, counselors and campers increased the interest and impact. They felt that the videos represented the expertise of a psychologist, parent, and camping professional, along with some humor.

In light of these identified impacts for counselors, camp directors, and campers, we would hope that the Expert Online counselor training would have a similar impact on the Ohio 4-H camping program by having more counties utilize the videos in their counselor training.

Challenges? Five of the counties/camps that purchased the subscriptions last year used the videos five or less times. There was a variety of reasons for this—the educator left one county, some purchased too late in year to take full advantage, etc. At least one camp had some technical problems. Expert Online training more than doubled their subscriptions in 2010, their second year of operation. They acknowledge that the growth caused some major growing pains for them. They have addressed all of the known challenges and are prepared to handle the subscriptions with additional support.

Changes from 2010? In addition to fixing any problems leftover, EOT has updated four of the videos and added five more videos to the library. They have put additional resources in place to assist subscribers, added handouts and other resources to accompany the training and should be able to address the handful of technical challenges that arose last year. The addition of the 10 free individual accounts, which had to be purchased for \$12 each last year, affords each county or camp with the opportunity to utilize the videos beyond just face to face training. They can certainly be used with counselors who miss training, counselors who are away at college, for camps and camp staffs who come from a variety of locations, and for camp directors who have counselors from more than one county camping together. Besides the videos there are handouts and on-line quizzes that can be tracked by each “dashboard.”

How Do I Sign Up? The registration form to purchase a subscriptions is available now by zoomerang survey at: <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22BRYL37UWH/> There was a paragraph in January 24 issue of News and Notes with a link to the zoomerang registration. A link to the zoomerang survey will also be on the Ohio 4-H website under resources in the camp section. Payments will be made directly to the State 4-H Office with checks made out to The Ohio State University. Methods of acceptable payment include checks from non-appropriated accounts, transfers from appropriated accounts, and checks from 4-H Committees or other camp support groups. There is no deadline for signing up, but if you plan to use the videos, you will want to put your plans in place and build your counselor training program around the videos.

Who Is Eligible? Any county 4-H program or unit, including Adventure Central and Youth Outdoors; any 4-H camp facility (for use with camp staff or other non-4-H camp groups); and any statewide 4-H camp program (eg. OMK, Leadership Camp, Sea Camp, etc.) may take advantage of this reduced rate subscription. Multi-county groups who camp together may want to discuss the limitations of purchasing a subscription together.

Questions/Need More Information for a Donor or 4-H Committee? For a complete list of objectives, goals, and benefits of utilizing the subscription from Expert Online Training or with any questions you have on signing up, payments, etc., please contact Niki Nestor McNeely at mcneely.1@osu.edu or by calling 513-470-0352. If you would like to speak to a 4-H educator who utilized the videos in 2010, Niki can provide you with a list of counties. You may also want to look at the sample videos and get additional information on the dashboards and individual accounts on the Expert Online Training website at: <http://www.expertonlinetraining.com>