

Focus Group Findings for New Items to Measure Work-Related Training and Education Among Adults in the United States

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Prepared for the National Center for Education Statistics by:

**Shugoll Research
7475 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 200
Bethesda, Maryland 20814**

**American Institutes for Research
1000 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW
Washington, DC 20007**

Introduction and Methodology

The National Center for Education Statistics and the American Institutes for Research (AIR) have been working together to develop new survey items to measure the prevalence and characteristics of work-related education and training among adults in the United States. As a preliminary step in this process, Shugoll Research was engaged to conduct focus groups with working adults who had participated in work-related training or education in the past two years. The purpose of these focus groups was to better understand the terminology that individuals use to discuss work-related training and education. The groups also assessed participants' ability to quantify the training they take, as well as their perceived motivations for and benefits of work-related training and education.

Shugoll Research conducted six focus groups in suburban Washington, DC, on May 20, 22, and 29, 2013. The groups were held in a specially designed focus group facility with a one-way mirror that allowed for observation of the groups and the opportunity to provide input to the moderator. Each group focused on an occupation or set of related occupations. These occupations were selected because they are among the most common occupations by educational attainment in the United States. They also were selected in order to represent a variety of fields that take part in different types of work-related training. The occupational groups were as follows:

1. Construction workers, skilled trades, and mechanics.
2. Secretaries, administrative assistants, and retail workers.
3. Licensed practical nurses, registered nurses (RNs), and health technicians.
4. Insurance agents, accounting/auditing clerks, accountants/auditors, personal financial advisors, and financial analysts.
5. Teachers (preschool through secondary) and teacher assistants.
6. Computer support specialists, computer systems analysts, and software developers.

Respondents were recruited by telephone in early May 2013, using a database of potential participants maintained by Shugoll Research. Each prospective respondent was screened using a recruitment screener (see appendix A). Participants had to have at least six months of experience in the target occupation and had to have participated in work-related training or education in the past two years. Educational attainment requirements were varied by occupation in order to represent the typical educational attainment of American adults in that occupation. The participants in all six groups were required to be 21 to 55 years old, and those with at least some college had to be at least 25 years old. Full-time students, retirees, and Federal government employees (except for members of the military) were excluded from the groups.

Twelve respondents were recruited for each focus group, with the expectation that fewer actually would participate. The actual size of each group ranged from 8 to 10 participants and included a mix of ages, educational attainment, and gender. (The numbers of respondents with these

characteristics are small and are therefore not reported in order to maintain respondent confidentiality.) The groups were led by a professional moderator who used a topic guide developed by AIR to ensure that all of the study's objectives were met (see appendix B). The focus groups, which lasted about 90 minutes, were audiotaped and videotaped. All respondents received a \$75 honorarium at the conclusion of their participation.

This report summarizes the results of the focus groups. Where appropriate, the findings are supported by verbatim comments from the respondents.

Limitations

A qualitative research methodology seeks to develop direction rather than quantitatively precise or absolute measures. Because of the limited number of respondents involved in this type of research, the study should be regarded as exploratory in nature. The results should be used to generate hypotheses for decision making and further testing. The nonstatistical nature of qualitative research means the results cannot be generalized to the population under study with a known level of statistical precision.

Summary of Findings

- The participants had experience with a wide variety of work-related education and training, including online courses, college courses, training videos, apprenticeships, and self-study.
- Training experiences differed along several dimensions, such as location, instructor, duration, and whether or not they included an assessment.
- The participants seemed able to quantify the amount of training they had received and how much this training cost. However, some had a broader definition of work-related training than others. Thus, some types of training were inconsistently reported, including training of short duration (less than an hour), informal training (such as on-the-job training), and training related to a routine aspect of one's day-to-day job (such as training on equipment necessary to do one's job).
- The participants reported a range of motivations for completing work-related training, including certification/recertification requirements, continuing education requirements, employer requirements, pay increases or promotions, job security, and to stay competitive in the job market.
- Employer support for work-related training and education varied across employers. Some employers pay for training (at times with strings attached), others are supportive of training but tend not to pay for it, and yet others are perceived as being unsupportive.

- Satisfaction with work-related education and training also varied across participants. Those who were dissatisfied felt that the training was not related to their job, that it was repetitive, or that the course was teaching to a test.

Detailed Findings

Terminology

The meaning of “on-the-job training” varied across participants. To some, it meant observing another employee; this may be referred to as “shadowing” or “orienting.” Others referred to “on-the-job training” as any instance when you have to learn on your own and figure things out as you go.

“It’s learn as you go.”

“We’re also learning every minute of every day [in] on-the-job training.”

Still others used it for any training that takes place on the job site during the workday.

“On-the-job training means that we’re training in the office on the job, online training at the job. It overlaps with the other categories we talked about.”

“My on-the-job training was actual trainers coming in to do the classes. And there were three days they were training us. So I wouldn’t say it was someone mentoring us.”

Participants used a variety of terms when referring to continuing education requirements, such as “continuing education,” “continuing education units” (CEUs), “continuing professional education,” and “continuing medical education” (CME), depending on the field.

In the financial services field, some made a distinction between “certification” and “designation.” Both require training and testing, but the latter is more rigorous, requiring more training hours.

“Certifications are a little less training hours, I guess, or learning hours, if you will. For us, like the Charter Financial Analyst designation. I mean, that’s a rigorous . . . program. It’s almost like getting a master’s degree. The shortest you can complete it [in] is two and a half years.”

Characteristics of Work-Related Training

Location

Much training takes place at the employee's place of employment; however, training also may take place elsewhere. This offsite training typically is provided at a training facility or conference center. Few, other than teachers, routinely take courses offered at colleges.

"We had offsite training for our people from different like stores, locations. At times they hold it in a hotel room on specific days. Usually it takes most of the day, but they do give you a break for lunch."

Offsite training is usually local. But employees are sometimes sent out of market for training. This type of training often includes people from different companies across the country.

"When I was working in the audiology department, there was a new device that's come out instead of hearing aids... And there's a company called Sonitus, who is the maker of it. And we actually took a three-day trip over to California to be trained on that."

Offsite training is sometimes delivered to multiple people from the same company. Elective training (as well as training for certification or recertification) programs are often made up of people from different companies.

Instructor

Training may be delivered by a live instructor, usually to a group of employees from one company. The instructor could be a manufacturer's rep, a trainer, a manager at the company, or a staff person.

"We use eClinical, so the representative of eClinical came into the office and showed us how to use their system."

"Well, we just kind of had our own employees [deliver the training] because we had the system for so long."

"For us, we had people who were certified through the American Heart Association, so we had staff who were certified instructors. But some of it is taught by an outside company. It depends on what it is."

Sometimes an outside company trains one or more staff, who then train the other employees.

"They just send a couple of us to go and learn it and then we train the staff."

"They went and learned something and then they brought it back to us instead of spending all the money and sending us all. They save money that way, I guess."

In cases where there was an outside instructor, employees could not always articulate what organization had provided the instructor. They assumed the instructor had experience in the area of the training. Some also assumed the instructor was certified in that area.

“I don't know who the instructors are.”

“My job uses an outside service. I think they're out of Ohio, I can't remember. They're a group of trainers and they just go around to different companies that do education, corporate training.”

“The instructor had another job in the field during the day. They came at night and taught.”

“The instructors will be certified people who have been doing it for a long time.”

In some industries, there are staff whose job it is to train others. In nursing, training may be provided by RNs called “nurse educators.” Some schools have a teacher coordinator, and some companies have training departments.

“A specific job is being a nurse educator. It's just an RN that's assigned maybe to the critical care area, making sure that everybody is up-to-date on their critical care skills.”

“The English department chair is a teacher coordinator. She doesn't teach any classes. She does the professional development for the school. And she has a couple of other jobs that she does, but she doesn't teach any classes.”

“Through my job we have a training department, so we take writing courses, public speaking courses, and things like that. I guess there'll be seminars, but it's an all-day thing at my job.”

Training also may be delivered to an individual via computer and may not have a formal instructor. Sometimes, there may be a person available to answer questions online.

Assessments

In any training, but most frequently in online training, there may be unit tests to measure whether someone is ready to move to the next unit. There may or may not be a proficiency test at the end of the training.

“At the end of the training, there are some questions that they ask, about 20 questions. And it gives you a score [afterward] . . . , and then you print a certificate.”

“There was a test at the end. When you passed it, you either got a certificate or some kind of acknowledgement that you completed it. If you don't pass, you don't get certified.”

Certification usually requires passing an exam. To retain one's certification often means being retested every few years.

"Every two years you have to be recertified, retake a test."

An alternative to graded testing may be a discussion of the topic to see if the group generally grasped the lesson (with no individual evaluations). Another alternative is that the employees just fill out an attendance sheet to show they were at the training.

"It's really like a group test. It's nothing you're getting graded on, just as a review."

"So . . . you said . . . 'Yes, I've trained to it,' just as a way of assuring that you were there at that training that day."

Timing

Respondents may complete online materials at their own speed. Many are allowed to complete the training during work hours around their other tasks. In some cases, some of the work is done at home.

"It's up to you. If you have downtime at work, you can do it."

"In between time [for your job tasks], you have a little bit [of time] to work on training materials. But mostly out of the office, at home, reading."

"Basically, you do it at your own convenience. Like for me, I can do it online at home or can do it at work during my free time."

Respondents who take part in training during the regular workday are usually still paid their regular salaries or hourly rate during training.

"I took a two-week course, and you got paid while you took the course."

Teachers typically have a planning period built into their day. This is often used for training, much of which is done online.

"We can do it on our planning period, which is an hour and a half block."

The pressure to stay current can mean working regular job hours and doing some training at night or on weekends.

"We are in class two nights a week, and probably 15 Saturdays. It's until 7:30 p.m., and I live an hour away from school. And I get up at 5:30 a.m. and go to work."

Progression

Most training reported by respondents appears to be one-off training that teaches a particular skill. Few reported training experiences are sequential in nature, unless they are needed for certification or recertification.

“The training teaches you a skill. There isn't a 100 level, 200 level, and 300 level in the same area.”

“You take a certain test. If a position opens up, you take the next test, say, for a produce manager. In other words, it has to be in that order.”

However, in some industries, like nursing, there is a formal ladder where pay is tied to completing training and continuing education. The steps may vary by institution in the same industry. In some cases, climbing the ladder includes a requirement to provide training to other staff.

“It's part of, like, clinical ladder programs at different hospitals. There are certain things you have to do to get to the next step. And you need to get a certain number of points. Every CME you do, there are a lot of other things, but every CME you do . . . adds points to you getting to your next step.”

“I mean a lot of places have them, but the requirements are set individually.”

“Sometimes the RNs will train others as part of their moving up the clinical ladder. They have to learn something and then teach it to us.”

Duration

Training can last several hours or days, or it may be as short as 30 minutes. The length depends on the complexity of the topic.

Examples of Work-Related Training and Education

The types of training programs that participants had participated in varied significantly.

Apprenticeships

Those in skilled trades or construction may do formal apprenticeships. These programs can last four to five years.

Courses at a University

Those who take training courses at a college or university typically are not enrolled in a college degree program. However, they may earn credits toward a college degree if they choose to go back to school. Some take college courses in order to get a degree to improve their job status.

“I attend . . . College just to get credit, classes on my record.”

“Well, also you can do supplemental college courses, which I’ve done. I didn’t have to have it, but I took an auditing class because it helped me to prepare for the audits that we have every year, and I have a better understanding of what the auditors are looking for so that I can gather the documentation required for them being onsite.”

“For continuing education, I have chosen to actually continue on and pursue my master’s while I am still in school because I would like to move forward in my position, and it opens more options for me.”

Teachers are more likely to take courses at colleges than are those in most of the other occupations included in the focus groups. In some states, teachers are required to take 6 to 12 credits in a five-year period. Teachers who are not on 12-month contracts may use the summer to fulfill some of their continuing education requirements. In addition to continuing education to stay certified, teachers may be required to get their master’s degree (or equivalency) within a certain number of years to reach maximum salary levels.

“I go to . . . College. And I usually do the ones during the summer. It’s like five days in a row. And you get your three credits really quick and easy.”

“If you’re doing a non-degree program, then you can get the three credits, which is calculated toward recertification of your teacher’s certification. And we have to take six credits in, what is it, five years?”

“Really how it works is [that in] your first five years you need 9, it’s either 9 or 12, credits. And then [in] the second five years, you must complete your master’s.”

Training Videos

Training may consist of watching videos. This is often true for those who sell new products introduced in retail stores.

“At my job, every month we have new products that come in. And corporate, they have set up online videos that we have to watch. And they’ll like train us on a new product that hits the shelf. All of the employees have to watch.”

Online Training

Several participants reported participating in online training. Some had taken webinars with a live presenter. Even with a live presenter, a webinar may be viewed as less engaging than an in-person presentation.

“Well the person isn’t physically there in person, but the person that you’re hearing the message from is on the screen. So can’t really interact with them. So you’re sitting there taking notes. There can be like 25 people on it and if you want to type something, your question will come up on the screen.”

“. . . that’s their new thing, these webinars. But usually we go to a place in the county, you know, where they give the classes, which I prefer. I think the webinars are just, you know, not as stimulating.”

Self-Study

In a few cases, participants had just been given materials to read to learn about new products or procedures. There were no tests to measure competency.

“I guess the ‘test’ is on your work performance.”

While some take formal training to prepare for a certification or recertification exam, many prepare on their own, either by reviewing materials (mostly available online) or taking practice tests. Some merely conduct an Internet search on topics related to the certification exam to prepare for it.

“These days, if you Google a question from a test, the whole test and answers pop up. Everything is right there.”

“You’ve got to pass the test. If you feel you know the answers, you just go in and take it.”

“Just reading books pretty much, then like taking practice tests online, is about it. No formal training to prepare for the certification test.”

“I just didn’t feel the need to pay somebody to sit there, so I did a lot of online reading, because you’re going to get the same materials as somebody talking to you. So for me it’s easier to do it on my own time, and when I felt like I was ready to take the test, I took the test.”

Staff Meetings/Brown Bags

Staff meetings are sometimes used for informal training. For example, teachers have regularly scheduled faculty meetings where they may share techniques they use successfully. Often these presentations are brief (5 to 10 minutes each), and there may be several in one meeting.

Some industries (teaching and nursing, for instance) refer to planned presentations on a topic by fellow staff as an “in service.” A similar concept in accounting is “development workshops.” In other industries, these presentations may be referred to as “brown bag” training sessions.

“In-service is like they’ll pick a topic, say like hypertension, so they’ll have the clinical staff come in and they’ll do an in-service on what it is, what’s the treatment. What is the disease process of any disease.”

“Development workshops are where the entire department will get together, and you have management training and problem-solving training for personal development.”

“We do brown bag lunches at my office where you bring your own lunch and you listen to presentations. [They] . . . could be [on] . . . how to use Excel, how to use publishing software, and a variety of other things, other topics.”

“At our faculty and staff meetings, we do these ‘Take Five’ or ‘Take Ten’ presentations. So if somebody has done something interesting, they’ll show . . . what they did. If there’s something like that, they try to start each faculty meeting with you learning [something] . . . new. It might be a management technique. It might be somebody just did something interesting in their classroom that they want to share [so] that you might pick up something from them.”

Regularly Scheduled Training Blocks

Some companies and schools have regularly scheduled training blocks in addition to staff or faculty meetings. These may include presentations by training professionals.

“Every Tuesday, we have what is called a ‘Chalk,’ and it’s from 3:30 to quarter to 5 [p.m.]. And our instruction specialists, they bring someone in. We’ve been using this year something called Kagan Training. And it’s the best professional development I’ve ever had.”

“We have, or we’re supposed to have, monthly professional development. The first 30 to 40 minutes they will do a different topic, like note-taking methods.”

On-the-Job Training

Another form of onsite training is on-the-job training. “On-the-job training” typically means getting instruction from someone with more experience.

“Basically they’ll either hand you off to an employee that’s been there a while or a manager, and they’ll kind of just walk you through what your job is and what you need to learn and make sure that they don’t just, like, send you off not knowing anything.”

“It's informal. They'll demonstrate it, like how to refold clothes customers tried on in the shop, and then they'll give you a check sheet or whatever in case you forget.”

“Well, for me it was a crash course of four hours when I got the position that I have now. The individual that was leaving the organization sat with me and walked with me through all of the processes that I was going to be responsible for and then allowed me to participate in the activities that I was trained in.”

Cross-Training

This type of training allows staff to fill the role of others if they leave suddenly, become sick, or go on vacation. In a retail department store, some cross-train in different departments in order to get more work hours.

“It's a lot of cross-training, because the way our organization works they want everybody to be well rounded so that there is not just one workforce, so that if something does come in you're able to help your colleagues out and alleviate their workload and stuff.”

“I cross-trained in children's bicycles because I wanted to work there and get the hours.”

Conferences

A small number of people said they attend industry conferences. These are usually offered by professional associations.

“I attend a lot of conferences out of state. I do it to network. It's not training.”

“I would definitely put that in kind of the training bucket because I've noticed that those conferences have gone light years in terms of the type of technology that they're incorporating for audience participation and in that they [provide] . . . a lot of information. The speaker will speak and then you kind of do a Q&A back and forth, and that is extremely beneficial, I think, in communicating.”

Government Training

There is training provided by the government in certain occupational areas. In construction and skilled trades, many take training from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). They may take offsite training delivered by OSHA staff or an OSHA-certified trainer, or they may review OSHA-provided materials in the workplace. In nursing, offsite training could be at the State Department of Health. In some school systems, some of the training is provided by the state.

“We get trained by DES—Department of Development Disabilities—they do come and train us.”

“I went to the Division of Health, which is where they train you to be a certified medication technician...So, they pay you to drive out there and go for training, which was like a total of four days, and each class was four hours.”

“With that particular workshop that I went to, they had representatives from the state of Maryland because they're trying to get it as a requirement for graduation.”

Quantifying Work-Related Training

The participants had no difficulty distinguishing between work-related training and any education they had completed prior to entering the workforce. They seemed to understand what is meant by the term, could discuss their experiences, and could quantify the amount of training they had received in the last year.

One complication was that some participants had a broader definition of training than others did. Thus, some participants excluded certain types of experiences—for instance, training related to a routine aspect of their day-to-day job (for instance, how to use equipment necessary to perform the job).

“I didn't count it because it's almost inevitable that it's going to happen. It's just something that's just like, okay, we know we're going into this and I wouldn't really consider that training.”

“I wouldn't want to count it as training because every job does it. You more or less expect it.”

“I never considered it as training. Okay, yes, I'm going to train someone to shadow me or something, that's fine. But if you were to ask me what type of training I did, I wouldn't have included that.”

Other experiences were excluded because they were informal in nature (such as on-the-job training).

“It's still training, but I guess I wouldn't call it formal training. It's kind of more informal. I probably wouldn't count it, but that's just me.”

Finally, some experiences were excluded because they were short in duration (such as under an hour) or were completed at the participants' home on their own time.

“I didn't count none of that, to be honest. Because when I think of workshops and training, I'm thinking about at least an hour. So that's what my number is based off of. But doing faculty meetings, it's required by contract that they continually remind you of protocol, things you should be doing, things you shouldn't be doing, and so forth. So I kind of overlooked the whole staff meeting thing.”

Other examples of experiences that were inconsistently reported include compliance training, cross-training, self-study to pass a test, reading manuals to understand how to operate new equipment, online training completed at home after work, elective training that is not relevant to one's job, professional conferences, time spent preparing materials for training colleagues, and informal presentations offered by colleagues at brown bag lunches.

Additionally, in fields where employees are required to make progress toward a degree, such as teaching, employees inconsistently included for-credit courses. To some teachers, the term "training" connotes only professional development training (not for-credit courses at a university). Most, however, included both in their tallies of training. When asked how much training they had completed, teachers broke the training into credit-earning courses and professional development training.

"I just included everything."

"You said 'training.' So I added up the hours for training only. Not courses."

Since respondents referred to these types of training using different terms, the survey question to quantify training experiences could include multiple parts to differentiate types of experiences (e.g., compliance training, skills development training, professional development) or include instructions that define the types of training that respondents should include and exclude.

Within these constraints, respondents seemed to be able to accurately approximate the number of training experiences they had in the last year. Units of measurement for quantifying training must be clear in the questionnaire, as some in the focus groups reported training duration in hours, others in days, and still others in weeks. For longer training experiences, some described the duration in terms like "2 weeks, 4 days a week, 5 hours a day." They appeared able to convert these longer training experiences into total hours, if necessary. Workers also could break their training into employer-provided training and training they sought out on their own, if that information is desired.

Some respondents suggested that, given the large number of training opportunities they have, the language in the questionnaire must be very specific if it is intended that all of the training be counted.

"If you say something specific, like how many online trainings I did, how many seminars I did, how many continued education hours, something like that, I can add it up. But just trainings, because you do it so much, you learn all the time. Sometimes it's not even on the job, it's something that you learned from a colleague or from a friend. So is it training? Yes, because yesterday I didn't know it, today I know it. Sometimes they help you along the way."

“I am still thinking of my total training hours, because the way you put it there, it’s going to be a big number because you might think of, like, how many times I did an online tutorial, webinar, a seminar, but then we do stuff like cross-training. On-the-job training is something that happens at least once every two weeks, so you’re going to learn something new there. The way you break it down there, it’s so much that you forget, like it’s not something you can easily tally.”

“[My total number is] 365. Every day. It’s ongoing. Every day is a training day. It’s an opportunity to learn, especially in my office.”

Costs of Work-Related Training and Education

Participants seemed able to recall what they ultimately paid for work-related training. In part, this is because most training experiences discussed in the focus groups cost the employee nothing (the training was either offered in-house, paid for by the company, or reimbursed by the company). Many respondents who had spent money on work-related training were able to break out costs into their component parts (books and materials, tuition, testing, etc.).

Some company-paid training, especially offsite training, comes with a string attached—if the employee does not stay at the job a defined length of time, he or she must reimburse the company for the training. A variation of this is that some companies will reimburse employees for training they paid for if they stay a set time with the firm.

“Sometimes they require you to stay with them for like two years, and if you leave before, you reimburse them.”

“So they’ll pay for you to get Cisco certified, which is a pretty, pretty penny, but you better stay here for two years if they pay for you to take this Cisco certification.”

“They’ve had people that have left. The company paid for it on the front end, and they kind of run off. So their thinking is you pay for it and then we’ll give you the money back for it. It’s like a few months process, so you can’t literally get it and leave.”

Other companies have a set training budget. When they reach that budget, they don't pay for additional training.

“In my company, they have a ceiling. They only pay up to a certain percentage and then after that you’re on your own.”

“I think there’s a budget that they have. I was in the budget department for training, and I think that’s the main reason they don't pay for some training.”

Some companies encourage training but do not pay for it. They feel it is the employees' responsibility to update their skills, although they may give paid time off to do the training.

"My company, they like people that are educated. But they don't want to pay for it. If you can get it, they appreciate it. But they've never offered to pay."

"With my company, they don't ask us to get trained. For A+ certification, it came down to a couple hundred dollars for the test, but basically it was just buying the book and reading the book. I did it myself."

"I would call it confusing, and I'll tell you why. The agency that I work for, they're very supportive outwardly, you know, 'Oh yes we want you to go and explore and learn for professional development all the way.' But they're not going to pay for it. They'll pay for the mandatory stuff, but if you have somebody who's really motivated, you know, they're not really that supportive."

In calculating the cost of training paid for by an employee, the phrase "out-of-pocket costs" may be confusing. Some considered this to be the cost of formal training not covered by their employer (e.g., fees and testing). To others, "out of pocket" also meant personal costs incurred to attend employer-underwritten training outside the office (e.g., gas, mileage allowance, etc.).

Motivations for and Benefits of Pursuing Work-Related Training and Education

Certification or Recertification Requirements

In certain fields, training may be part of a certification or recertification requirement. Certification/recertification falls into two broad categories. One category consists of general credentials needed to work in the field (necessary for nurses and some teaching positions). The other category consists of more specific certifications to operate a particular piece of machinery (i.e., construction, skilled trades, etc.) or be deemed proficient in a particular analytical technique (i.e., accounting) or computing solution (i.e., information technology). The duration of training and frequency of recertification requirements vary across certifications and occupations.

"Some certifications are as short as just a couple of hours. Once you finish it, you take the exam and pass it. [For] . . . others, there are a certain number of credits you have to complete before you can be awarded the certification."

"For me, in Maryland, I do it every two years. But it depends because sometimes you're just doing just a quick renewal, and sometimes it's extensive."

Continuing Education Requirements

In some cases, recertification also requires completing a certain number of continuing education hours. A professional association may track these hours and ensure someone has met the requirements for certification or recertification.

“People that hold a designation or a license for different states are required by . . . [those states] to have a certain number of continuing education credits in order to maintain their license or their designation.”

“As nurses, we need to have a certain number of CMEs every three years.”

“In DC, the nurses in DC, you have to have 18 CEUs or CMEs, doesn’t matter. Every two years for renewal, and if you don’t, you won’t get paid.”

“Whichever professional organization that you apply for your certification from tracks your hours. And sometimes you don’t have to submit it. Sometimes they audit you.”

Pay Increases or Promotions

In some cases, companies reward those who complete training with pay increases, bonuses, promotions, or more seniority or responsibility. Often this is the result of being certified.

“Sometimes it can be incentive-based. They’ll say if you get this certification, you’ll get a raise.”

“They say if you’re a Master Tech, you’ll get a \$10,000 bonus. That’s a lot of why I am doing it.”

“Who is making enough money in this room? Probably no one. Everybody wants to be making more. So in order to make more, you have to be trained, and sometimes you have to get certified.”

“It usually gives you a better chance of qualifying for maybe higher paying positions or higher level positions. It shows the employer skills. And you’re up-to-date.”

However, some companies that once gave their employees salary increases after completing certification have stopped doing so for budgetary reasons.

“I just want to say in [my] county, all of that is frozen. It’s been frozen for five years. I don’t have my master’s. And I am hesitating to get it because I have to pay [for] that, and I don’t get a pay increase.”

Occupational or Employer Requirements/Expectations

In many cases, employees are required by their employer to take training, or the field they are in may require a certain level of training.

“A lot of my training is mandatory. We have CPR [cardiopulmonary resuscitation] training every year, forklift training every year, welding every year.”

“It’s not an option. This is part of the job. How can you work here if you don’t know it?”

For example, in skilled labor areas, unions may require hires to have certain skills, so people will train in these areas to qualify for union jobs.

“Union contractors call the union hall, and they want a guy that knows this and this and this. And they keep a book of your certifications and everything. If you don't have the stuff, you don't get hired.”

In other cases, training is not mandatory for employees but is recommended by their company.

“Training is strongly suggested. Not required, but usually my boss will suggest something. Usually when he suggests, it just means go do it, because he’ll bring it back up, like, ‘Did you? No. Why not?’”

“My foreman told me, ‘If you get papers for operating that equipment, you get more money.’ So he didn't actually tell me; it was a suggestion on how to enhance my employability.”

Staying Competitive in the Job Market

In some occupational areas, such as construction, skilled trades, or computer-related occupations, employees said that regularly completing training is an important part of how they stay current in their field.

“With building codes and stuff like that, as times change, different things change. You've got to keep up to date. So you pretty much just update [your skills training] as a necessity.”

“It's like sports. A team is only as good as its players. So you have to continue to work out and keep yourself in shape and that kind of thing. And it's no different in what we are doing.”

“Things are changing. Technology, everything is changing all of the time. You have to keep up.”

“The health care industry is constantly changing (the technology, what we know about disease) and . . . we’re not going to be good at our job if we don’t know the standard of care.”

As a result, most employees put skills-based training on their resume. This is particularly true of certifications, certificates, and licenses.

“Every time I take something, I change my resume and put it on there.”

“So when I put that on my resume, the number one thing they see is customer service. I have a pretty good chance to get that new job because of the customer service that’s in my resume. It describes how many courses I took and all that.”

“Career wise, it helps if you’re changing jobs. On your resume it kind of jumps out, hey, they’re certified, as opposed to me coming in [to] an interview and telling you that I know this. They already know that from looking at the resume.”

“My job right now doesn't require me to have [it], but I go get [it] myself because it looks good on my resume.”

In some occupational areas, training programs and the skills learned in these programs are recognized by others in the industry. Those taking this type of training think it allows them to be more competitive when changing jobs.

“I think it keeps you marketable if you need to go to another job.”

“A lot of times you want to get a new job. If you have different skills that other people don't have, you can usually transfer to a new job.”

“I took and paid for a . . . class to learn how to draw plans. So I’m learning that and I’ll make more money doing that.”

“I wanted to improve my status from laborer to experienced laborer. I’m trying to enhance my learning abilities.”

Self-employed participants also reported that they may take training to better allow them to compete for business.

“Some people like me are self-employed. That's my focus. It's one thing if a company sends you there. It's another thing to make sure that next week, if things are changing, you're still employed.”

Job Security

Others said the best they can hope for is that the additional training gives them more job security in their current position.

“I haven’t gotten raises, but it will stop them . . . [from laying] me off.”

“We had a town hall meeting, and the CEO was like, ‘We’re cutting all bonuses and we’re not getting any raises until mid-2014.’ Why do I even bother coming to work? You don’t have any incentives for me to walk in here, like you don’t do anything to keep me here, so it’s just like why? So training to really boost my salary, no . . . keep my job, yes.”

“If you don’t get certified, somebody else is going to come in and take your place. You’re falling behind.”

“I train to keep my job.”

For example, those doing manual labor jobs also said they begin taking new skills training when they fear they cannot do the physical work anymore and want to prepare for moving into the front office.

“Unless you’re independently wealthy, you’ve got to take some classes because your back might not hold up for 30 years doing construction. Maybe you can learn to move into the office and not have to do all the grunt work here.”

In contrast, in retail, employees said that hourly employees are at risk of being replaced by lower paid, less experienced ones. Training does not open up any doors for them internally because companies cannot afford to pay more. And some companies will not invest in training because they are afraid employees will leave and take another job.

“One, I think they don’t want you to leave. Two, they don’t want you to advance.”

“The people that have been there for like 15, 16 years are making \$20. They can hire somebody new to come in and pay them half of what they’re paying.”

Finally, some take training because they want to be able to do their current job better or just find the topic interesting.

“To have confidence in your job. Performing at your best.”

“So I went, I took it, the course paid by the department. Nobody told me to, but I did it myself. I took it for all of the benefits for me, for the customer.”

“Definitely, it was to actually improve the quality of the teaching of the students that I was working with.”

“It wasn’t required. The 12-week course wasn’t necessary. It was an optional thing and as I said, it was very interesting.”

Benefits to the Employer

Employees feel that the employer and the employer’s customers benefit from their skills development.

“The better you're trained, the more competent you are, the more engaged you are in what you're doing. So, your employer benefits indirectly because the assumption is that you're giving better care.”

“I would think you as an employee and the employer both benefit. I think we both benefit from the training because you’d have a marketable employee, you have a competent employee, someone you can depend on, someone who is interested in learning and good for the company.”

“I think clients benefit from it. I think our training is very, I guess, tailored toward end users.”

Employer Support for Work-Related Training and Education

Employers’ attitudes toward training vary by occupational area and by company, and this influences employees’ frequency of training.

Some employers create a training regimen for staff to follow and recognize the benefits to the employee, employer, and customer. These employers may give employees time during the workday to train and either pay for the training or reimburse employees.

“They're serious about training. They're all about it. If you go to them and say, ‘Hey, I wanted to get trained in this,’ they’ll sign you right up.”

“My job is very important to them. They send me to classes all the time. They really encourage us to take advantage of the schooling because they pay for it.”

“Oh, mine is beyond. I was out for an accident for two weeks. They had someone come in to give me that one-on-one training that I missed when I wasn’t there. That’s serious commitment.”

Other companies will invest in training, but expect those who have been trained to train others and also complete their regular work. A few employees felt that if the company truly valued training, they would be further compensated for the time they spent training other staff.

“They sent me to training, but you better believe that they didn’t get another nurse to come in and cover for me this week to do my regular job. So, I’m going to train every single member of the staff, do my job and get paid the same. It’s supportive up to a point.”

Smaller companies may not have the resources to support training.

“My company is smaller. They don’t really offer training.”

Sometimes the attitude expressed about training varies within a company and depends on the manager.

“I think it depends on what manager you have. I’ve had two different managers. My first manager, she was very supportive in that she would do whatever she could do to assist me and help me. If I say I am doing this, then she has no problem. She helps me work it into what I am doing. My current manager is a little different.”

Satisfaction with Work-Related Training and Education

The quality of training appears to vary significantly. In some cases, people were very satisfied; in other cases, very dissatisfied.

“Every course I’ve taken, I’ve been happy with the training.”

“I was very dissatisfied with some instructors. Most of the courses I take, they’ve got a book that they have to get through in a certain amount of time. And they don’t elaborate on anything. It’s not helpful, to be honest.”

Mixed Response to Online Courses

Online courses as a methodology to deliver training generated a mixed response. Some felt they were less stimulating than in-person presentations. Others liked the ease of taking these courses at work or at home.

“I’m actually happy taking online courses. Because I’m sitting there, and if you have a question, you can very quickly find the answers.”

Teaching to a Test

Others thought the emphasis of online courses is not on learning, but on passing the exam. Still, others said learning a skill online cannot possibly simulate what you need to physically do in some occupational situations.

“With online courses, I’ve found that the main thing they want is for you to pass, because this is their business. But as far as actual learning, you have to actually go and do that job, now you’ve got a horse of a different color.”

“You can learn power mechanics online. They learn the four strokes; they learn the intake compression, the power in the exhaust. They’ve learned all that stuff and you know what? That’s not going to get it done. It’s not the same as actually having to turn that bolt.”

Similarly, teaching to pass the test can be an issue in courses leading to certification. But often respondents acknowledged that their primary goal is, in fact, to pass a test and be certified.

“Sometimes when I take a course for certification, it is geared strictly just to pass the test, and that’s it. So you really end up taking another class to actually be able to apply what you learn. You know what it says, but there is zero application when you are going for certification.”

Training Unrelated to Job

Occasionally, employees are sent by their employer to a course that they feel is not very relevant to their job.

“My company sent me to computer training. I’m not a programmer. I run wires and terminate wires all day. But they still wanted me to do it. It has nothing to do with what I do all day.”

Some required compliance training is not considered useful.

“When it’s mandated by the company, like my compliance training, you just kind of go through the motions, click on the button.”

Repetitiveness

Some compliance training is repeated annually or regularly. While it may be targeted to new employees, many existing employees are also required to attend. Since they already have been trained, they see this training as repetitive and of low value.

“It’s kind of like a PowerPoint presentation. It’s the same information every year, the same exact questions every year. And the hospital just needs to have all of the staff do it

so that they can say 100 percent of our staff has had HIPAA training, has had all of these trainings. So, it's for them to be able to say we're 100 percent compliant."

"You have a lot of compliance stuff that you need. I guess the employer expects you to refresh your memory, but this is stuff that you deal with all the time."

Some skills-based training is repeated annually to keep employees current on technology and equipment. At times, employees felt they get nothing new from the retraining.

"Some of them, like the cashiering, some of those we do like every six months or every year or something. It never changes."

"I don't know, but I find CPR to not be . . . I mean even though I use it, but every two years I think is excessive. My conspiracy theory is that the American Heart Association comes up with a change every two years just so they can charge companies to do it. But I've been doing it for so long, that if somebody keels over, I know what to do."

"Because, for me, a lot of the professional development stuff is redundant. I mean I have been teaching seven years. I already know it."

"In some instances it's very helpful, and in some instances, it's not. I don't want to learn five times throughout the school year how to deal with behavior. Like, I'll call your parents. At a certain point, I don't want to deal with it anymore."

Poor Quality of Instruction

Sometimes participants felt the quality of instruction in a particular training program was poor.

"I would not lie. I actually used YouTube for my actual training because the training sucked."

"So the training . . . can be . . . poor sometimes, just depending on who is delivering it or the method of delivery."

"I think it depends on the course and how it's provided as to what the value is. I know that some of the training that has been provided in-house by some of the people who are supposed to be experts are not experts, so they have more questions on how something is supposed to work . . . [than] I believe they should. . . . So it's kind of hard to listen to someone who doesn't have a basic skill set who is trying to teach you something that's supposed to be a little higher. It's kind of scary."

APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT SCREENER

RESPONDENT NAME: _____

DATE RECRUITED: _____ RECRUITED BY: _____

DATE CONFIRMED: _____ CONFIRMED BY: _____

(RECRUIT 12 FOR A SHOW OF 8 TO 10)

Hello, this is calling from Shugoll Research, an independent survey research company. May I please speak with _____? We are conducting a very brief survey with DC area residents, and we'd like to include your opinions. This is strictly market research, and absolutely no sales or fundraising effort is involved. I'd like to ask you a few questions.

1. Which of the following best describes your employment status? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Working full time

1

→(SKIP TO Q.6)

Working part time

2

Full-time student

3

→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

Retired

4

Not currently employed but
looking for work

5

→(CONTINUE TO Q.2a)

OR

Something else

6

→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

2a. Was your last job in any of the following occupations? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Group 1

Construction worker

1

Skilled trades, such as
carpenter, plumber, or
electrician

2

→(RECRUIT TWO OR THREE FOR GROUP 1
AND CONTINUE TO Q.3a)

Mechanic

3

Group 2

Secretary or administrative
assistant

4

Retail sales worker

5

→(RECRUIT TWO OR THREE FOR GROUP 2
AND SKIP TO Q.4a)

Or

Some other occupation

6

→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

3a. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Some high school	1
High school graduate	2
Some college	3
Technical or vocational school	4
Associate's degree	5

→ (CONTINUE)

College graduate (Bachelor's Degree)	6
Some graduate work	7
Graduate or professional degree	8

→ (RECRUIT NO MORE THAN TWO FOR ALL OF GROUP 1 AND CONTINUE; ALSO CHECK QUOTAS FROM Q7a)

(DO NOT READ)

Refused	9
---------	---

→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

3b. Which of the following categories includes your age? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Under 21	1
21 to 24	2
25 to 30	3
31 to 40	4
41 to 55	5
56 or above	6

→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

→(OKAY IF CODES 1 OR 2 IN Q.3a, OTHERWISE THANK AND TERMINATE)

→ (RECRUIT TWO OR THREE TOTAL AND CONTINUE; ALSO CHECK QUOTAS FROM Q7b)

→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

3c. Have you participated in a formal apprenticeship program in the past five years, that is, since May 2008? In this type of program, an apprentice receives both instruction and on-the-job training and is paid a training salary. Please do not count unpaid internships.

	<u>CIRCLE ONE</u>	
Yes	1	→(RECRUIT AT LEAST TWO FOR GROUP 1 AND SKIP TO Q.5a; ALSO CHECK QUOTAS FOR Q7c)
No	2	→(SKIP TO Q.5a)
Don't know	3	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

4a. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

	<u>CIRCLE ONE</u>	
Some high school	1	
High school graduate	2	
Some college	3	→ (CONTINUE)
Technical or vocational school	4	
Associate's degree	5	
College graduate (Bachelor's Degree)	6	→ (RECRUIT NO MORE THAN TWO FOR ALL OF GROUP 2 AND CONTINUE; ALSO CHECK QUOTAS FOR Q7d)
Some graduate work	7	
Graduate or professional degree	8	
Refused	9	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

(DO NOT READ)

4b. Which of the following categories includes your age? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Under 21	1	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)	
21 to 24	2	→(OKAY IF CODES 1 OR 2 IN Q.4a, OTHERWISE THANK AND TERMINATE)	→(RECRUIT TWO OR THREE TOTAL AND CONTINUE; ALSO CHECK QUOTAS FOR Q7e)
25 to 30	3		
31 to 40	4		
41 to 55	5		
56 or above	6	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)	

5a. How long ago did you stop working in your last job? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Less than two years ago	1	→(CONTINUE)
Two years ago or more	2	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)
Don't know	3	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

(DO NOT READ)

5b. For how long did you work in your last job? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Less than six months	1	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)
Six months or more	2	→(CONTINUE)
Don't know	3	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

(DO NOT READ)

5c. In that job, were you employed in the civilian Federal government?

CIRCLE ONE

Yes	1	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)
No	2	→(CONTINUE)
Don't know	3	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

5d. Are you currently looking for work in the same occupational field as your last job?

CIRCLE ONE

Yes

1

→(SKIP TO Q.9)

No

2

→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

Don't know

3

→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

6. Do you currently work or, any time in the past two years have you worked, in any of the following occupations? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE
ONE

Group 1	Construction worker	1	→(RECRUIT 4 EACH FOR GROUP 1 AND CONTINUE TO Q.7a)
	Skilled trades, such as carpenter, plumber, or electrician	2	
	Mechanic	3	
Group 2	Secretary or administrative assistant	4	→(RECRUIT 6 EACH FOR GROUP 2 AND SKIP TO Q.7d)
	Retail sales worker	5	
Group 3	Licensed practical nurse	6	→(RECRUIT 4 EACH FOR GROUP 3 AND SKIP TO Q.7f)
	Health technician	7	
	Registered nurse	8	
Group 4	Insurance sales agent	9	→(RECRUIT 3 EACH FOR GROUP 4 AND SKIP TO Q.7i)
	Accounting or auditing clerk	10	
	Accountant or auditor	11	
	Personal financial advisor or financial analyst	12	
Group 5	Preschool teacher	13	→(RECRUIT 3 FOR GROUP 5 AND SKIP TO Q.7k)
	Elementary, middle, or secondary school teacher	14	
	Teacher assistant	15	
Group 6	Computer support specialist	16	→(RECRUIT 4 FOR GROUP 6 AND SKIP TO Q.7p)
	Computer systems analyst	17	
	Software developer	18	
Or	Some other occupation	19	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

GROUP 1 - CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, SKILLED TRADES, AND MECHANICS

7a. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Some high school

1

High school graduate

2

Some college

3

→ (CONTINUE)

Technical or vocational school

4

Associate's degree

5

College graduate (Bachelor's Degree)

6

→ (RECRUIT NO MORE THAN TWO FOR ALL OF GROUP 1 AND CONTINUE; ALSO CHECK QUOTAS FOR Q3a)

Some graduate work

7

Graduate or professional degree

8

(DO NOT READ)

Refused

9

→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

7b. Which of the following categories includes your age? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE: ALSO CHECK QUOTAS FOR Q3b

Under 21

1

→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

21 to 24

2

→(OKAY IF CODES 1 OR 2 IN Q.7a, OTHERWISE THANK AND TERMINATE)

→ (RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND CONTINUE)

25 to 30

3

31 to 40

4

→(RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND CONTINUE)

41 to 55

5

→(RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND CONTINUE)

56 or above

6

→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

7c. Have you participated in a formal apprenticeship program in the past five years, that is, since May 2008? In this type of program, an apprentice receives both instruction and on-the-job training and is paid a training salary. Please do not count unpaid internships.

	<u>CIRCLE ONE</u>	
Yes	1	→(RECRUIT AT LEAST TWO WITH APPRENTICESHIPS FOR GROUP 1 FROM Q.7c OR Q.3c AND SKIP TO Q.8a)
No	2	→(SKIP TO Q.8a)
Don't know	3	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

GROUP 2 - SECRETARY/ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS AND RETAIL SALES WORKERS

7d. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

(DO NOT READ)	Some high school	1	
	High school graduate	2	
	Some college	3	→ (CONTINUE)
	Technical or vocational school	4	
	Associate's degree	5	
	College graduate (Bachelor's Degree)	6	→ (RECRUIT NO MORE THAN TWO FOR ALL OF GROUP 2 AND CONTINUE; ALSO CHECK QUOTAS FOR Q4a)
	Some graduate work	7	
	Graduate or professional degree	8	
	Refused	9	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

7e. Which of the following categories includes your age? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE: ALSO CHECK QUOTAS FOR Q4b

Under 21	1	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)	
21 to 24	2	→(OKAY IF CODES 1 OR 2 IN Q.7d, OTHERWISE THANK AND TERMINATE)	→ (RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND SKIP TO Q.8a)
25 to 30	3		
31 to 40	4	→(RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND SKIP TO Q.8a)	
41 to 55	5	→(RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND SKIP TO Q.8a)	
56 or above	6	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)	

GROUP 3 - LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES, HEALTH TECHNICIANS, AND REGISTERED NURSES

(LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES AND HEALTH TECHNICIANS)

7f. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Some high school	1	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)
High school graduate	2	
Some college	3	→(SKIP TO Q.7h)
Technical or vocational school	4	
Associate's degree	5	
College graduate (Bachelor's Degree)	6	→ (RECRUIT NO MORE THAN ONE LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE AND ONE HEALTH TECHNICIAN WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER AND SKIP TO Q.7h)
Some graduate work	7	
Graduate or professional degree	8	
Refused	9	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

(DO NOT
READ)

(REGISTERED NURSES)

7g. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (READ LIST)

		<u>CIRCLE ONE</u>	
(DO NOT READ)	Some high school	1	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)
	High school graduate	2	→(CONTINUE)
	Some college	3	
	Technical or vocational school	4	→ (RECRUIT AT LEAST ONE WITH AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE, AT LEAST ONE WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE AND AT LEAST ONE WITH A GRADUATE DEGREE AND CONTINUE)
	Associate's degree	5	
	College graduate (Bachelor's Degree)	6	
	Some graduate work	7	
	Graduate or professional degree	8	
	Refused	9	

7h. Which of the following categories includes your age? (READ LIST)

		<u>CIRCLE ONE</u>	
Under 21	1	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)	
21 to 24	2	→(OKAY IF CODE 2 IN Q.7f OR Q.7g, OTHERWISE THANK AND TERMINATE)	→(RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND SKIP TO Q.8a)
25 to 30	3		
31 to 40	4	→(RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND SKIP TO Q.8a)	
41 to 55	5	→(RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND SKIP TO Q.8a)	
56 or above	6	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)	

**GROUP 4 - INSURANCE SALES AGENTS; ACCOUNTING OR AUDITING CLERKS;
ACCOUNTANT, AUDITOR, PERSONAL FINANCIAL ADVISOR, OR FINANCIAL ANALYST**

7i. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

(DO NOT READ)	Some high school	1	
	High school graduate	2	
	Some college	3	→ (RECRUIT AT LEAST TWO AND CONTINUE)
	Technical or vocational school	4	
	Associate's degree	5	
	College graduate (Bachelor's Degree)	6	→ (RECRUIT AT LEAST TWO AND CONTINUE)
	Some graduate work	7	→ (RECRUIT NO MORE THAN TWO AND CONTINUE. OKAY IF NONE ARE RECRUITED)
	Graduate or professional degree	8	
	Refused	9	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

7j. Which of the following categories includes your age? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Under 21	1	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)
21 to 24	2	→(OKAY IF CODES 1 OR 2 IN Q.7i, OTHERWISE THANK AND TERMINATE)
25 to 30	3	
31 to 40	4	→(RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND SKIP TO Q.8a)
41 to 55	5	→(RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND SKIP TO Q.8a)
56 or above	6	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

→(RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND SKIP TO Q.8a)

**GROUP 5 - PRESCHOOL TEACHERS; ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, OR SECONDARY TEACHERS;
AND TEACHING ASSISTANTS**

(PRESCHOOL TEACHERS)

7k. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Some high school	1	
High school graduate	2	
Some college	3	→ (RECRUIT AT LEAST ONE AND SKIP TO Q.7o)
Technical or vocational school	4	
Associate's degree	5	
College graduate (Bachelor's Degree)	6	
Some graduate work	7	→ (SKIP TO Q.7o)
Graduate or professional degree	8	
(DO <u>NOT</u> READ) Refused	9	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

(ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE OR SECONDARY TEACHERS)

7l. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Some high school	1	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)
High school graduate	2	
Some college	3	
Technical or vocational school	4	→ (SKIP TO Q.7o)
Associate's degree	5	
College graduate (Bachelor's Degree)	6	
Some graduate work	7	→ (RECRUIT NO MORE THAN TWO AND SKIP TO Q.7o)
Graduate or professional degree	8	
(DO <u>NOT</u> READ) Refused	9	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

(TEACHING ASSISTANTS)

7m. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Some high school	<input type="text" value="1"/>	→ (TERMINATE)
High school graduate	<input type="text" value="2"/>	→ (RECRUIT AT LEAST ONE AND CONTINUE)
Some college	3	
Technical or vocational school	4	
Associate's degree	5	
College graduate (Bachelor's Degree)	6	→ (CONTINUE)
Some graduate work	7	
Graduate or professional degree	8	
(DO NOT READ) Refused	9	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

7n. Are you currently a graduate student teaching assistant at a college or university?

CIRCLE ONE

Yes	<input type="text" value="1"/>	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)
No	<input type="text" value="2"/>	→(CONTINUE)
Don't know	3	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

7o. Which of the following categories includes your age? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Under 21	1	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)	
21 to 24	2	→(OKAY IF CODES 1 OR 2 IN Q.7k OR CODE 2 IN Q.7m, OTHERWISE THANK AND TERMINATE)	→(RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND SKIP TO Q.8a)
25 to 30	3		
31 to 40	4	→(RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND SKIP TO Q.8a)	
41 to 55	5	→(RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND SKIP TO Q.8a)	
56 or above	6	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)	

GROUP 6 - COMPUTER SUPPORT SPECIALIST, COMPUTER SYSTEMS ANALYSTS, AND SOFTWARE DEVELOPER

(COMPUTER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS)

7p. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Some high school	1	
High school graduate	2	
Some college	3	→ (RECRUIT AT LEAST ONE AND SKIP TO Q.7r)
Technical or vocational school	4	
Associate's degree	5	
College graduate (Bachelor's Degree)	6	→ (SKIP TO Q.7r)
Some graduate work	7	→ (RECRUIT NO MORE THAN TWO IN Q.7p OR Q.7q AND CONTINUE AND SKIP TO Q.7r)
Graduate or professional degree	8	
Refused	9	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

(DO NOT
READ)

(COMPUTER SYSTEMS ANALYSTS AND SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS)

7q. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Some high school	1	
High school graduate	2	
Some college	3	
Technical or vocational school	4	→ (CONTINUE)
Associate's degree	5	
College graduate (Bachelor's Degree)	6	
Some graduate work	7	→ (RECRUIT NO MORE THAN TWO IN Q.7p OR Q.7q AND CONTINUE)
Graduate or professional degree	8	
Refused	9	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

(DO NOT
READ)

7r. Which of the following categories includes your age? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Under 21	1	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)	
21 to 24	2	→(OKAY IF CODES 1 OR 2 IN Q.7p OR Q.7q OTHERWISE THANK AND TERMINATE)	→(RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND CONTINUE)
25 to 30	3		
31 to 40	4	→(RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND CONTINUE)	
41 to 55	5	→(RECRUIT ABOUT 4 AND CONTINUE)	
56 or above	6	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)	

8a. For how long have you been working in your current occupation? (READ LIST)

CIRCLE ONE

Less than six months	1	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)
Six months or more	2	→(CONTINUE)
(DO NOT READ) Don't know	3	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

8b. In your current job, are you employed in the civilian Federal government?

CIRCLE ONE

Yes	1	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)
No	2	→(CONTINUE)
Don't know	3	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

9. Have you participated in any work related training in the past two years, that is, since May 2011? Work related training includes courses taken for continuing education credit or to remain in your current field of work. It also includes apprenticeships, internships, and externships. Occupational seminars and workshops are another example of work related training you may have participated in. The work-related training may have been provided by your employer or from a professional or trade association, a school, a community group, or other organization.

	<u>CIRCLE ONE</u>	
Yes	1	→(CONTINUE)
No	2	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)
Don't know	3	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

10. RECRUITER INDICATE: GENDER

	<u>CIRCLE ONE</u>
Female	1
Male	2

INVITATION

We will be conducting a market research focus group discussion about job training on (INSERT DATE) at (INSERT TIME) in Bethesda. The discussion will last 90 minutes, and each participant will be given an honorarium of \$75 as a thank you for your time. We will be serving a light dinner (6:00 p.m. only). Again, this is strictly market research; no sales or fundraising effort is involved. Are you available to attend?

	<u>CIRCLE ONE</u>	
Yes	1	→(GIVE DIRECTIONS)
No	2	→(THANK AND TERMINATE)

INTERVIEWER:

RECORD INFORMATION ON FRONT OF SCREENER.

PLEASE ASK PEOPLE TO BRING READING GLASSES IF THEY NEED THEM.

APPENDIX B: MODERATOR'S TOPIC GUIDE

Introduction

- Who I am.
- What I do.
- Topic—Talk about the types of education and training you get for work (90 minutes).

Ground Rules

- Taping and why.
- Articulate loudly enough to be heard.
- Talk one at a time.
- Avoid side conversations.
- Mirror and observers.
- Avoid peer pressure.
- Be candid.
- No right or wrong answers.
- Need to hear from everyone.
- Honorarium for your time and opinions.

Respondent Introduction—Tell me:

- First name.

- Where live.
- Occupation and area of specialty.
- How long working in this field.
- Favorite hobby.

Type of Work-Related Training (EXPLAIN: Want to talk about education and training since you entered the workforce, not education prior to working.)

- (RECORD ON FLIP CHART) Let's make a list of any type of education and training you've taken for work (if taken a lot, start with most recent training).
- PROBE FOR: Training your employer provided, training through a government program, or training sought out on your own.
- PROBE FOR: On-the-job training, apprenticeship programs, seminar/workshop, and college class.
- PROBE FOR: Is training formal (instructor, curriculum, classes, or apprenticeships), informal (no instructor, no organized instructional program) (e.g., on-the-job training, mentoring from a colleague, reading technical journals, going to professional conferences)?
- PROBE FOR: Whether training is “customized,” how?
- PROBE FOR: Credits or other “points” earned.
- PROBE FOR: Does training have a formal/course name?
- NOTE: If training does not seem work-related, ask why it was mentioned.
- What types of knowledge and skills did you learn from training (e.g., management skills, company policies, computer skills, technical skills to help perform your job)?

Additional Details of Training

- If had instructor, who was instructor (e.g., employee of your company, community college instructor)? Satisfaction with course using instructor.
- If used training materials, what type of materials did you use? Who produced materials (e.g., learning guides from Microsoft or other company, online program from a community college)? Satisfaction with course using training materials.
- Location of training (at work, conference center, outside vendor, community college or school).
- Time of training: during work hours or after hours?
- Others in training program: individual or group (who in group: others from your company, other companies?). Did others from your company do same training at different time?
- Is training: required, recommended, or sought out by employee?
- Is training: stand alone or part of a sequence? If sequence, what do you start with, what do you end up with? If sequence, will you take subsequent courses?
- How long did training last?
- Who paid for training? Would you be able to report how much you paid (no need to give amount now)?

Reasons for Taking Training

- Why do you do work related training?
- If needed for a license/certificate: explain how that process works.
- If required or for certification/licensing: is that the only reason for taking it?

Corporate View on Education and Training

- Describe company's view on education and training.
- Is company supportive of employees taking education and training programs? Why do you say that? How is company supportive/not supportive?

Future Training

- Would you like to have more or less training than you take now? Why do you say that?
- What types of training you don't get now would you like to receive?
- Are there education and training programs you wanted to take but did not? Why didn't you take them?
- What training are you likely to take in the next year?

Benefits of Training

- How has your company benefitted from your training?
- How have you benefitted?
- Are you better able to do your job well because of the training? Explain.
- What impact will completing education and training have on promotions, salary increases?
- Does completing the training differentiate you from others in your company/position? Explain.
- Does the training improve your marketability if you wanted to look for a new job? Explain.

- Would the training you received be recognized as an asset by a new employer? Explain.
- Overall would you say the education and training you received was worthwhile? Why do you say that?

False Close (MODERATOR LEAVES ROOM TO GET ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS WHILE RESPONDENTS ROLEPLAY)

- COMPLETE FORM: Write down name of training in last year, brief description, and how much paid out of your own pocket.

Final Comments