

Club Instructor Survey Results and Feedback January 2019

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey. There was a lot of useful information provided and it is clear that our instructors are passionate about helping others to succeed in agility. This is a very good place to be starting from as we look for ways to actively support our clubs to succeed.

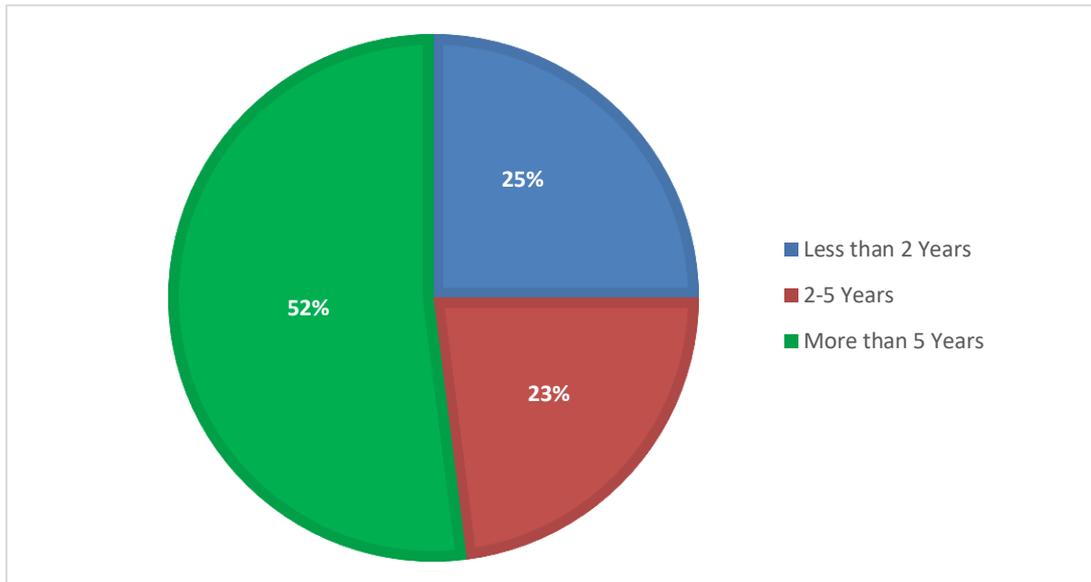
Please see a summary of results below.

Total responses received: 134

Section 1 - Instructor Conditions

This section looks at the how long people have been instructing, expected ratios of instructors to students, and number of instructors.

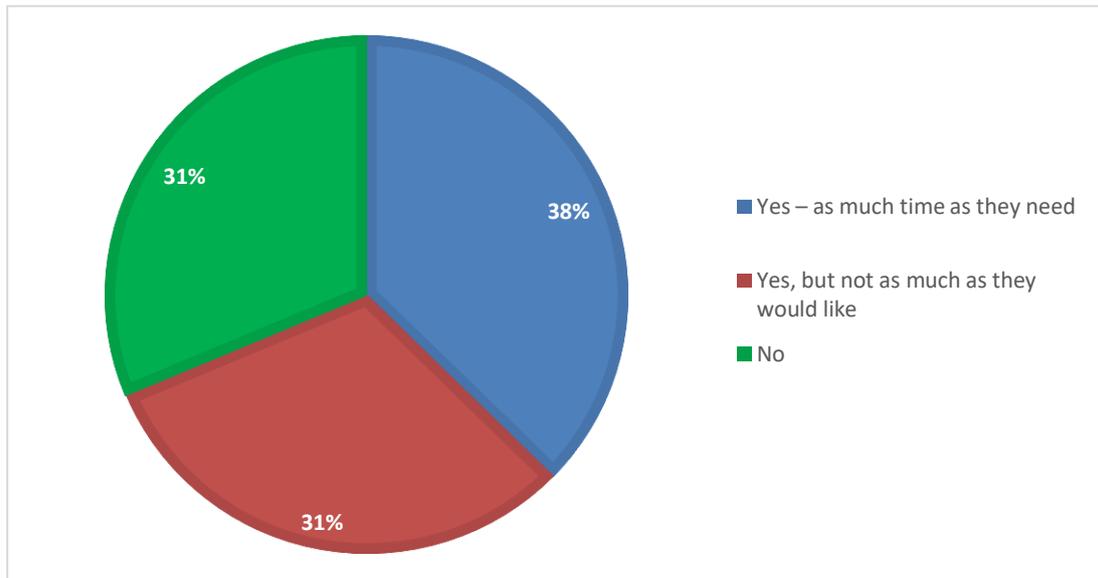
Responses to Question 4: How many years have you been actively instructing classes?



Over half of instructors had been doing it for more than 2 years. This indicates a couple of things:

- Most of our instructors have a lot of experience (good thing)
- We struggle to engage newer people into instructing (bad thing)

Responses to Question 6: Do instructors train their own dogs at club?



Most people are able to train their own dogs, at least to some degree. But instructing others stops over half of people from training their own dogs to the degree that they would like to.

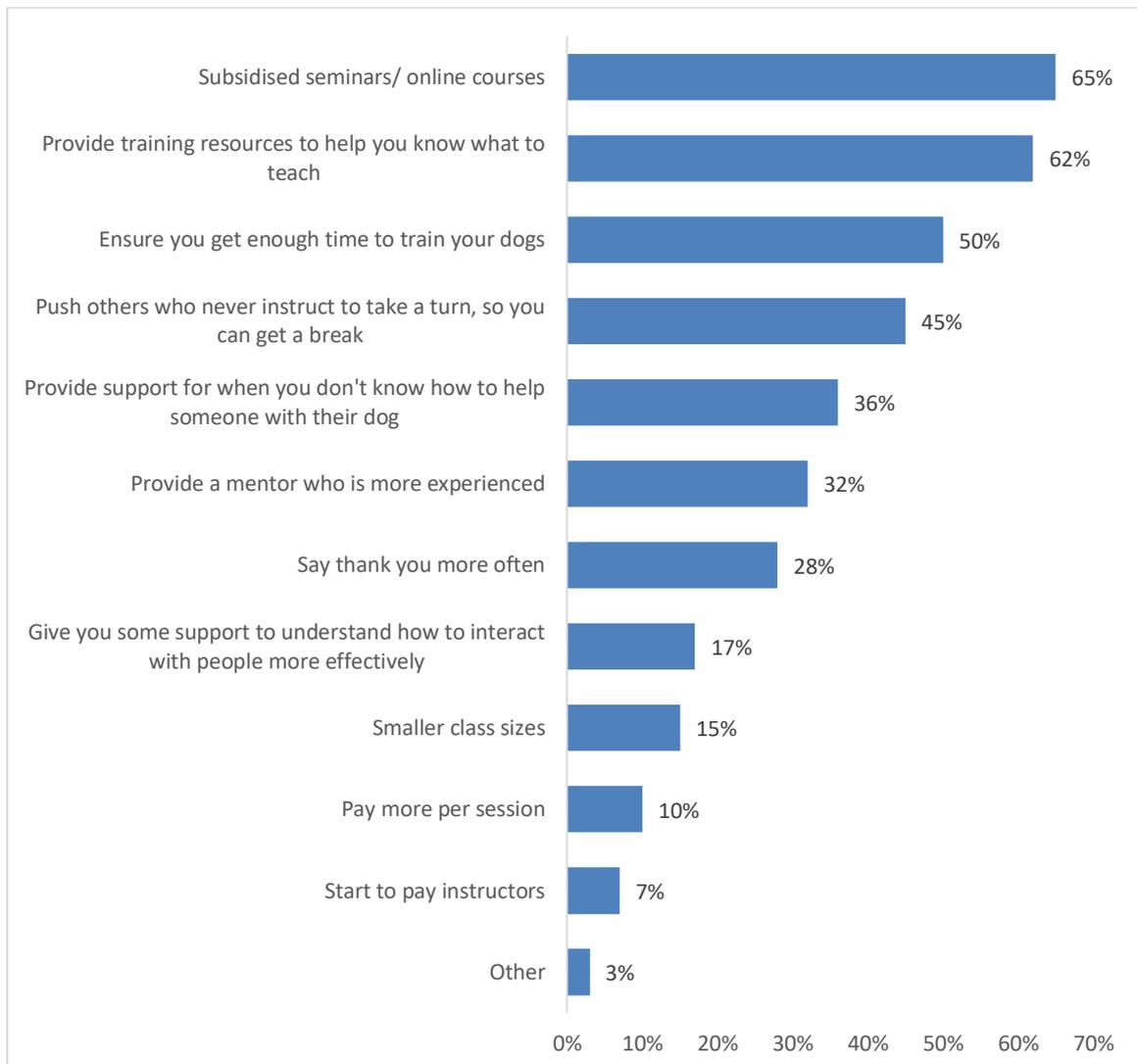
Student to Instructor Ratio

Around 75% of respondents believed that 1 instructor to 4-6 students was about the right ratio. About 95% of instructors were dealing with this ratio or less. This indicates that class sizes are generally not a major concern for most instructors.

Number of Instructors

Most respondents believed that their club did not have a large pool of instructors (74% of responses).

Responses to Question 10: How do you think your club could support instructors even more?



Level of Class

There was an even distribution across responses, indicating that people have a range of class levels and skills they like to instruct the most. It generally doesn't seem that instructors feel they are forced to instruct a level that they don't like or feel confident to take.

Encouraging more people to instruct

It seems clear that increasing the number of instructors at each club would reduce the burden on existing instructors. A large amount of useful information was received from instructors when asked what would encourage more people to become involved. The major topics are listed below:

- 1. Provide training for Trainers – Upskilling people and providing opportunities to learn how to train others.**
- 2. Support/Mentoring – Ensuring new instructors are supported by senior club members/instructors and there is a support network in place.**
- 3. Adequate Resources – clubs have access to training resources that will guide instructors on how and what to teach students.**
- 4. Providing Incentives/Rewards – ensure instructors feel valued through incentives and rewards.**
- 5. Reduce burden on instructors/covering costs – ensure instructors are adequately compensated for their time and don't miss too much time to train their own dogs.**
- 6. Promotion of the Sport/Increase membership – promote agility more widely and grow overall membership, which will in turn, create a greater pool of helpers and ease the burden on others.**

Responses to Question 15: What do people know now, that they wished they knew before instructing?

A large number of responses were received. Overall, instructors seemed to value the learning of new skills, both by students and themselves. Ongoing support from their club was seen as a necessity and many responses indicated that instructors found teaching others to be a rewarding, but time consuming activity.

There was a small but significant response rate from instructors who felt unsupported, burned out or unappreciated and found it disappointing when students didn't take on board the advice they were receiving.

The major topics are listed below:

- 1. The importance of foundation training**
- 2. Variety of skills, techniques and motivating factors**
- 3. Not everyone will be successful/appreciative**
- 4. How to motivate/communicate with students**
- 5. Sourcing information**
- 6. Time/sacrifice involved**
- 7. Instructors gain value for themselves by teaching others**
- 8. Instructors need their own ongoing training and support**
- 9. Instructing is fun and rewarding**

Section 3 – Summary and Next Steps

1. Club instructors have varied reasons for being involved in training others. Any support offered to instructors will need to consider these differing motivations.
2. Most instructors have several years of experience. Becoming an instructor can feel daunting and currently, there is not a wealth of information, resources or support for new instructors. However, this will vary greatly from club to club.
3. Most clubs offer some form of incentive or reward for instructors. Most commonly, this is in the form of free/reduced membership or training fees, small payments of \$20-\$50 per term for instructing and expense reimbursement for travel costs.
4. Most instructors do not value monetary rewards as valuable and would prefer to have more support and opportunities to be upskilled as trainers. Many instructors have benefitted from a mentor or buddy system.
5. Most instructors believe that their experiences in training others have been positive – from the enjoyment of seeing students achieve, to improving their own training skills. However, a significant group of instructors have cited negative experiences such as burnout, lack of appreciation and not being able to train their own dogs.
6. There is a need to increase the skills and confidence of existing instructors, but also increase the overall number of people who are able to instruct.

Next steps

- Talk directly with clubs about how the AC can best support them – largely through the Clubs Support Subcommittee and AC members who are appointed to specific clubs.
- Look at what clubs are currently doing and see if there are any approaches that could be replicated across the country
- Work with clubs to set priorities and develop actions that will address them.