Reviews
Reporting Research

Jim Mitchell and Philip Ryland report on the results of the AHI Learning and Development in Interpretation survey.
In the summer of 2017, AHI carried out a survey to seek views on learning and development and preferences for the topics and types of training. In this article and infographic we dig into the results to see what conclusions we can draw on how the training landscape currently looks for those that answered our survey.

Who answered the survey?
We had 79 surveys completed via the online survey site SurveyMonkey. It was broadly answered by those who had experience of interpretation, with 75% indicating more than five years' experience.

What areas of training were they interested in?
We asked people what areas of training they were interested in, using the AHI Full Membership competencies as a guide. These covered planning, delivery and evaluation. Respondents were asked if they were either very interested, interested or not interested in each area. The results could then be weighted to give a measure of the most popular topics. Results reflected a preference for practical applications, for example the most popular area in planning was 'Choosing suitable media for delivery' with 87% finding this very interesting. At the other end of the scale, 'An introduction to interpretation planning' was not of interest to 42% of respondents, reflecting the experience level of the sample. In delivery, the most popular areas were 'Accessibility and inclusion' (91% interest) and 'Mobile technology, virtual reality, augmented reality' (93% interest) and audio-visual content (95% interest).

How do they like to learn?
This question was a primary reason why we wanted a survey. It will help AHI offer learning and development to people in ways that they would most like, and help us respond to the changing training landscape. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a whopping 96% of respondents said they were interested in the single day workshop or course, showing the value of this frequently used method. Conferences also scored highly as development opportunities and interest in coaching and mentoring was strong with almost 70% of people either interested or very interested. Online methods proved popular too, whereas the least popular was the 4-5 day course. However, there still are almost a quarter of people who responded (bearing in mind their relatively long involvement in the field too) with interest to a weeklong course on interpretation.

The free text
We wanted to allow people to respond in detail to the survey, so there were several 'free text' questions. Digging a little deeper into the motivations of those completing the survey, the following themes jumped out:

• Practical learning – there was a definite hunger for practical, on the ground examples and learning opportunities, reflecting the need to make a case for learning when budgets are tight and to be able to quickly translate learning into practice. Theoretical aspects and research were wanted less.

• A big theme raised by many was developing leadership in interpretation – advocating our profession and influencing others to see the value of good interpretation.

• Up front or 'in development' evaluation was trumpeted in the free text by several – the need to road test approaches before finalising content and media.

• Several responders indicated the range and types of digital interpretation as a difficult challenge to overcome. How can learning help people understand this fast moving sector to ensure that digital interpretation is high quality and has lasting appeal?

Conclusions
The first conclusion we took was that even though we had a good response rate, the survey sample was definitely reflective of more experienced interpreters, those who have been doing this for a while. This is useful as it enables us to see a picture of what our more experienced members are interested in and how they like to learn, whilst also leaving more work to do to find the preferences of those starting out in interpretation or even doing interpretation without calling it that. We will think more about how we get this information, and perhaps run a future survey targeted at this group.

A second conclusion is that training in planning, delivery and evaluation are all of interest, and we need to maintain a broad reach of topics and skill areas to appeal to the widest number of members.

Thirdly, more flexible learning methods seemed to be preferred; we need to be mindful that one size doesn't fit all. It's also good to know that the conference is popular as a vehicle for learning – posing some interesting questions about how we can maximise this opportunity.

Lastly the favoured topic areas reflect wider trends, for example an interest in co-production (with e.g. visitors/ communities) using technology and increasing accessibility. These will all help us focus future learning and development opportunities.

Thank you to all who filled the survey in. We are still seeking views and ideas on learning and development, please get in touch to discuss! (admin@ahi.org.uk)

Jim Mitchell and Philip Ryland are AHI Trustees.

[The article continues with a two-page infographic detailing the results of the survey].