

# Coach's Playbook Job Aid

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## FACILITATING LEARNING

A key element to coaching individuals is facilitating learning. There are many proven methods that exist to help you in the transfer of knowledge and skills. The methods below are just a few of the many methods that exist. Some methods go by several different names.

- **Chaining:** Chaining is defined as “a process whereby a series of discrete behaviors are linked to achieve some reinforcing outcome.” This is best used when a skill consists of a sequence or chain of individual responses. When a learner performs the final step in the sequence, a form of reinforcement occurs that indicates the chain is complete. Each individual component of the chain reinforces the previous step and functions as a stimulus to the next step. In simple terms, a larger skill is deconstructed into smaller, more manageable skills that are taught and practiced sequentially until the whole skill is mastered.
- **Crawl, Walk, Run:** This method is typically used for complex, difficult skills. Crawling usually involves presenting information via lecture. The coach describes the task and demonstrates it slowly step by step, while answering any questions. During the walking phase of this method, the coach has the individual perform the task, typically at a slow pace, while the coach observes, questions, and critiques the individual's performance. If a mistake is made, feedback is given and the walk phase begins again. During the run phase, the individual performs the task at a normal, combat pace. The coach allows the individual to perform the entire skill before offering feedback and criticism. At the end of the performance of the task, a review of the individual's performance is conducted. If at any time the coach believes the individual is not mastering the skill, they can return to the previous phase and repeat the process.
- **Shaping:** Shaping is similar to chaining except that the skill to be coached has components that must occur simultaneously rather than in sequential fashion. For example, if the skill requires the individual to perform two or more functions at the same time, you would coach with emphasis on one of the functions as the primary and the other in a secondary or non-challenging state. Once the first function begins to be mastered, you begin to introduce the second in increasingly more difficult levels with the first function. This is repeated until both functions are mastered within the skill. To use an example from the world of track and field, shaping might be used to coach the hurdles. At first, the coach places small cones on the track at the right intervals. The coaching focuses on getting the runner's stride correct between each of the cones. As the stride is mastered, the coach might place increasingly higher hurdles on the track in place of the cones and coach the hurdling aspect of the skill in conjunction with the stride.
- **Whole-Part-Whole:** In this method, individuals are first exposed to the “whole” skill. During this time, the coach emphasizes the various “parts” that make up the whole. After this introduction, the coach breaks the whole down into more manageable parts and the individuals are coached on each part until that part is mastered. Once all of the various parts are mastered, the “whole” is brought back into the coaching, and the individuals are expected to demonstrate competency of the entire skill.
- **Practice Regimen:** A practice regimen is characterized as any coaching method that focuses on repeated practice of a skill. The theory is that the more the individual practices, with variations in the conditions and level of difficulty, the more their performance in the chosen skill improves. Initially, they should not be left to practice on their own. Practice must be coupled with constructive feedback and critique. Once the coach feels the skill has been mastered, additional practice can be self-guided. This can be an effective coaching method if done in this manner.

## COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

In this lesson, you can explore effective communication using the guided discovery learning technique. Sometimes referred to as inquiry-based learning, it has its foundations in the belief that people learn best when they construct their own understanding of the subject.

- **Powerful questioning:** Guided discovery learning is based on asking questions that result in discovery. Ask open-ended questions that challenge the individual's assumptions. For example, ask the individual why they did something one way versus another. Ask follow-up questions based on the individual's response to help them gain further self-awareness and insights.
- **Active listening:** As a coach, you must attend to the individual and listen to what they are saying. You must be in tune with their values, beliefs, and goals. Maintain eye contact and pay attention to not only the words they are speaking but also their non-verbal cues, such as body language and tone of voice. Also avoid distractions, such as checking your phone, tablet, or email while the individual is talking. You want to invest yourself—and come off as invested—in the substance of what the other person is saying.
- **Direct communication:** Be open and honest when communicating with the individual you're coaching. Clearly state your message using simple words to reduce the risk of misunderstanding. Don't talk in circles

## PROVIDING FEEDBACK

Effective feedback must be timely, focused, and balanced.

<b>Timely</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide immediately</li> <li>• Listen to the individual's explanation</li> <li>• Allow time to absorb the feedback</li> <li>• Follow up</li> </ul>
<b>Focused</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on what can be changed</li> <li>• Show what "right" looks like</li> </ul>
<b>Balanced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance the positive and negative</li> <li>• Be upfront and honest</li> <li>• Give positive points for motivation</li> <li>• Point out areas for improvement</li> </ul>