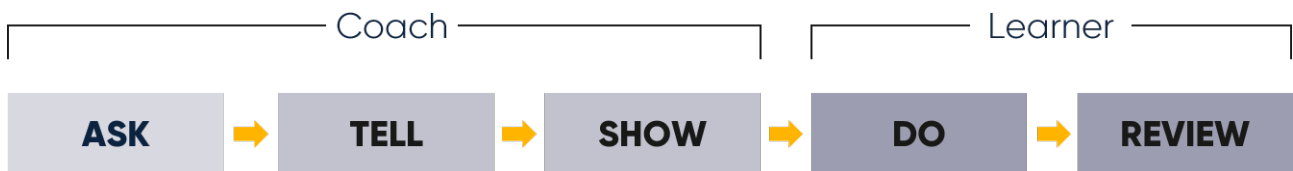


Principles of Skill Coaching

Skills learning has a hierarchy where the coach/farmer needs to possess the skills necessary to move a novice from a baseline level of awareness and knowledge of a particular skill through the higher levels of showing an ability to perform the skill, and ultimately to their achieving mastery.



Modified from Miller GE. GE Acad Med 1990;65: S63-S67



#1: Ask (Discover)

When introducing a new skill to learn, we suggest asking questions about their prior experience with that specific task. This is mainly to get them involved in the learning process and share their learning or practical experience.

Employees may come to us each with their own prior knowledge, conceptual understanding, skills and beliefs. The knowledge they bring forward formulate their understanding of the subject and their behaviour. When we present them with problems or new information, their prior knowledge and experiences influence their thinking and may alter their behaviour to align with your farm practice and culture.

- Ask them and find out existing skills and experiences about prior experience
- link what you are about to teach to personal experiences
- You may need to re-align, confirm, or introduce new skill

#2: Tell (Inform)

This stage is a one-way communication channel, where there is no learner interaction; you just present information to the learner. Here you introduce him/her to new task, concepts; the steps of a procedure; and the features and parts of a machine or a process.

These are the coaching strategies to keep in mind:

- Explain why the new skills is relevant and how it fits in the big picture
- Break-down the new skills to be taught into smaller components or tasks
- Reiterate the learning objectives to establish relevance and whet interest.

Remember to:

- Tell learners: What, why, how, when and if applicable, Where.
- help learners discover and become aware of what they already know.

#3: Show (Demonstrate)

This is where you demonstrate the new skills or provide specific examples, concepts, and processes introduced in the Tell phase to help learners apply their knowledge in the next stage (Do).

Focus on delivering context to build relevance to daily farm operations. After all learners need to link the new knowledge to its real-life situation or use.

Here is the coaching strategy:

- Demonstrate the task and explain the skills to the employee slowly.
- Pause between steps and be sure all steps are clearly understood
- Demonstrate the new skills in a pace to let your learners take charge of the next step, where they practice and apply the skill.
- Round off by listing the critical learning points and encouraging learner to ask questions to reinforce their understanding.

Remember to:

- Think though the steps in advance and always present in an organised manner.
- Explain with examples from real-life scenarios that the learners can relate to. This reinforces the relevance of the skill.
- How a procedure is being carried out is not always apparent from textual explanations or even photographs. Video or guided animations clarify better.
- Comparison and referencing relevance help learners visualize complex information and show relationships.
- Demonstration pace is relevant to task complexity. New complex tasks should always be broken down into its constituent steps in a slower pace.

#4: Do (Practice)

This is the 'Let Me' phase of coaching the new task where learners can apply the knowledge and the skills they have learned.

Here are the strategies to keep in mind:

- Allow the employee to go through the new skill step-by-step while you explain what is to be done.
- Allow employee to demonstrate the skills on their own without your input.

Remember to:

- Be patient and allow the employee to made mistakes.
- Prepare your coaching approach with practice activities. Repetition aids learning and recall.
- Focus on tasks and activities that mimic the reality of the learners.
- Structure your coaching approach so learners can train themselves.
- Choose the appropriate practice tasks depending on the nature of the content and safety level.

#5: Review (Feedback)

This is the phase that evaluates the learner's performance against the stated learning objectives. This is an opportunity to recap and answer any questions, and an opportunity to let the participants demonstrate what they have learned.

Here are the strategies to keep in mind:

- Map your feedback to the learning objectives of the task
- Provide meaningful and constructive feedback that eases the process of learning
- Ask the employee to reflect on how they did:
 - What did they do well?
 - What did not go well? `
 - What do he/she think can be improve?
- Give feedback to the employee on how they performed the skill

Remember to:

- Do not forget to note the positive points.
- Provide feedback, so that it becomes another learning opportunity.
- Use this phase to evaluate learning gains.
- Provide feedback that encourages the employee and redirect as necessary to perform the task correctly.