

On-the-job coaching conversation card



Part of the AUSMASA Trainer and Assessor VET Career Framework

Instruct directly when:

- There is an immediate safety risk
- The task is new, and the learner needs a clear sequence first
- the standard is non-negotiable, such as isolation, permits or critical controls
- Time pressure means the task must be stabilised before discussion
- The person is unsure, overloaded or about to make a serious error.

Direct instruction prompt: "Stop there. The next safe step is ... Now show me that step."

Coach when

- The task is stable and safe enough for discussion
- The learner has some base knowledge or experience
- you want to build judgement, independence and problem-solving skills
- The goal is to improve quality, consistency or efficiency
- The person needs to think through what they saw and explain why it matters.

Coaching prompt: "Talk me through what you notice and what you will do next."

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24 Coaching Questions

Coaching focus	Questions
Observation and awareness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you notice first? 2. What tells you if this task is on track or off track? 3. What risks or quality issues stand out here? 4. What is different from what you expected?
Decision-making	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. What would you do next? 6. Why is that the best next step? 7. What are your options here? 8. What could go wrong if you chose the wrong option?
Standards and process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. What standard, procedure or specification applies here? 10. Where in the sequence are you right now? 11. What step cannot be skipped? 12. How will you confirm the job is done to standard?
Problem-solving	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. What is the actual issue, not just the symptoms? 14. What evidence supports your judgement? 15. What else do you need to check before you act? 16. If that first fix does not work, what is your next move?
Learning and improvement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. What part of this task are you most confident about? 18. What part needs more attention or practice? 19. What could be improved next time? 20. What would make this task safer, cleaner, or more efficient?
Ownership and transfer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. How would you explain this step to another worker? 22. How would this change if conditions on site or in the workshop were different? 23. What would you do if you had to complete this without me? 24. What will you do the same next time, and what will you do differently?

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How to use this card

- Start with safety. If there is risk, instruct first, then coach once the task is stable.
- Use short questions. Ask one at a time and allow the learner time to think before answering.
- Focus on performance, evidence, and standards, not personality.
- Use the learner's answer to decide whether to coach further, demonstrate, or step back to direct instruction.
- Finish with one clear next step so the conversation leads to action.

Use plain language. Keep questions short. Coach for judgement, not just task recall.

Learn more about the Trainer and Assessor VET Career Framework

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