STEP TWO – SUPPORTING THROUGH SUCCESS

Once the mentor–apprentice relationship has been established and you've spent some time discussing how you'll work together, it's time to launch!

Most of your mentoring time will be focused on technical training—walking the apprentice through the core skills required to become a credentialed professional. Those core skills will be outlined in the Work Process component of your apprenticeship program standards. Depending on your program, each component will require a certain number of hours spent (for a time-based (TB) program), demonstration of proficiency (competency-based (CB)), or both (hybrid (HY)). Your apprenticeship program manager will provide both the set of occupation-related tasks and model (TB/CB/HY) that your company is using for training, as well as instruction in how to certify completion of those hours or tasks.

WHEN YOU MEET: TECHNICAL TRAINING

The core components of providing technical instruction and training are:

- **Introducing the topic** – Explain what skill you'll be teaching and connect it to the broader scope of the occupation.
- **Setting the stage** – Ask if your apprentice has direct or related experience to the task at hand. Ask if they have general questions about the task or how it fits into the larger area of practice.
- **Using "show and tell"** – Depending on the apprentice's direct or related experience with the skill being taught, explain that you're going to "show and tell" the entire task. The apprentice will watch you complete the task (show) while you explain each step along the way (tell).
- **Asking for impact** – Immediately after doing the initial "show and tell"—and throughout the training process—move from yes/no questions to more open-ended ones to ensure that your apprentice is thinking critically about what they've seen.

Instead of asking	Try asking
Do you understand what I just did?	What step of that process would you like me to repeat?
Do you have any questions?	Where in the sequence of events do you think an error would be most likely to occur?
Do you think you can do this on your own now?	On a scale of 1-5 how ready do you feel to try this on your own?

- **Practicing** – Active learning involves hands-on practice. Once the apprentice has watched you complete the task and you've discussed the steps, have the apprentice practice the skill while you observe. Monitor them as they work through the task once more, asking them to explain what they're doing along the way.
- **Providing constructive feedback** – The more specific and immediate feedback you can provide your apprentice, the more effective it will be in helping them master the skill.

Instead of saying	Consider commenting
Great job!	The way you double-checked your work before submitting is a great habit to build.
Looks terrific!	You followed the process exactly as outlined.
Well done!	You asked a really important clarifying question. Great critical thinking!

If you need to provide negative feedback:

- o Be aware of whether there are other apprentices and/or supervisors present. Consider how public the feedback should be.

- o Stay focused on the task, not the person. The feedback should describe specific errors in the process and not be about the apprentice as a person.

- o Keep it short and focused. Lengthy criticism of what went wrong is rarely helpful. Point out the error and then talk about how to do the task differently moving forward.

- o Encourage the apprentice to start again, incorporating your feedback.

- **Evaluating** – After working through the task a few times, discuss the process with your apprentice. This should be time for both you and the apprentice to evaluate their performance and provide direction before letting them continue to build skills on their own.

- **Moving into mentor mode** – After completing skill instruction, observing their practice, and providing constructive feedback, you should move from training to mentoring. This means:

- o Assign your apprentice specific work.

- o Let them work on their own (or with a specific team/ additional mentor as appropriate).

- o Give them a deadline.

- o Check their work and provide feedback before moving to the next skill for training.

- o Certify their work by signing off on their required hours or how they demonstrated competency (using the system your apprenticeship program manager provides).

NON-TECHNICAL MENTORING

While you are the lead person to provide technical training, your role as mentor can—and should—extend beyond instruction. By checking on your apprentice and serving as a sounding board and teammate, you're much more likely to encourage your apprentice to persist and complete the program successfully. Some additional topics to talk about include:

- **Related instruction** – Ask how their coursework is going. If they share that they're struggling, have them speak with the apprenticeship program manager about helpful resources (e.g., tutoring support or additional non-technical mentoring within your organization).

- **Professional growth** – Often apprentices are not just new to an occupation, but to the workforce in general. Encouraging them to grow professionally may include feedback on topics such as:

- o managing time;

- o communicating effectively with peers and supervisors;

- o handling conflict with peers and supervisors; and

- o overall work ethic and attitude.

Combining these tips for technical training and positive mentoring will help your apprentices learn and grow in their occupation and gives you an opportunity to develop your leadership skills.