



## STEP 4: Practicing a Skill



### Introduction

You are now aware of the responsibilities of workplace mentoring, the six step approach to teaching skills in the workplace, the importance of identifying the point of the lesson and how to demonstrate a skill. This part of the course is all about planning and guiding practice opportunities, and giving hands-on experience with a skill.



### Objectives: Your Learning Plan

In order to...	Complete the following learning activities...
<i>Recognize the importance of practice as a part of teaching and learning skills</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on your experiences relating to skill practice (3 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Consider the key word definitions (2 minutes)
<i>Describe a complete set-up for skill practice</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read information about "Setting-Up for Practice" (5 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Watch and think about "Printer Case Example" (2 minutes)
<i>Identify, with examples, three types of skill practice</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read information about "Guided Practice" (5 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Watch and think about "Cooper Case Example" (2 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Read information about "Limited Practice" (5 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Watch and think about "Printer Case Example" (2 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Read information about "Independent Practice" (5 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Watch and think about "Storekeeper Case Example" (2 minutes)
<i>Describe the process of recycling steps</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read information about "Recycling" (5 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Watch and think about "Storekeeper Case Example" (2 minutes)
<i>Distinguish strategies for practicing skills in the workplace</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Read information about "Practice Conditions" (5 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Review key word definitions (3 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Complete "Reflect on different perspectives" activity (5 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Review "Helpful Tips for the Workplace" (5 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Consider and select tips for the workplace (5 minutes)



### Progress Check: After Finishing Learning Activities

- ☐ Complete assessment self check and review your responses (10 minutes)
- ☐ Complete application assignment in Course Handbook (15 minutes)



**reflect**

## ***Your Experiences Relating to this Step***



Try to think back to a time when you were being given the opportunity to practice a new skill. Try to think about a time when you set up a practice opportunity for someone. What did/did not work well for each?



## ***Key Words Introduction***

Think about what the key words mean. Watch for how they are used.

- Practice Conditions:
- Guided Practice:
- Limited Practice:
- Independent Practice:
- Recycling:



## ***Setting Up for Practice***

Before moving into skill practice, it is important to ensure that the apprentice has in fact completed with the skill demonstration. Moving in to the skill practice step without completing the skill demonstration increases sharply the likelihood of mistakes and injuries. If an apprentice's first experience with the skill is one of success and safety, the person will have an easier time developing mastery of the skill.

When both the journeyperson and the apprentice are satisfied that the demonstration step has been completed, move on to skill practice.

*"I think you've got it. Why don't you see what you can do now..."*

*"If you feel ready, I think you could begin to work on ..."*

When conducting skills training in the workplace, it is important to set up the *practice conditions*. These are the arrangements or the plan for the skill practice. Remember that the apprentice is still basically unfamiliar with the skill and uncertain about its application. The journeyperson must set out the conditions for skill practice so that the apprentice can be more independent in the learning activities for this skill. These conditions include:

- Safety procedures related to skill practice

- Where and when it is OK to do skill practice
- Materials and tools to be used for skill practice
- Who will supervise or review skill practice



With these conditions clearly set out and the agreement to the conditions, the journey person and apprentice are able to share responsibility for the learning activities. As the apprentice progresses, much of their skill practice will go on without the journey person even being present. Knowledge of the conditions for skill practice allows the person to proceed more and more independently until they have mastered the skill.



## ***Printer Case Example***



### **Part 1: Setting Up For Practice**

Take the time now to watch the video clip pertaining to the Printer and how she sets up practice for her apprentice (duration: 70 seconds).

[VIEW the video clip ONLINE by clicking on this link](http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step4_T01.rm)

[http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor\\_Step4\\_T01.rm](http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step4_T01.rm)

OR view the video from your course CD-ROM (Be sure to insert CD-ROM first)  
OPEN this file: Mentor\_Step4\_T01.rm

**What Happened?** Establishing the ground rules for practicing a skill is an important part of coaching. Conditions for skill practice include:

1. Safety procedures (this one is essential)
2. When and where to practice
3. Materials and tools for practice
4. Who will supervise or review the skilled practice

### **Part 2: Checking In**

Take the time now to watch the video clip pertaining to the Printer checking in to see how the apprentice made out with their practice (duration: 50 seconds).

[VIEW the video clip ONLINE by clicking on this link](http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step4_T02.rm)

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**What Happened?** It is important to recognize the need to recycle as early as possible. When this is done you need to make sure that you help to emphasize the linkages to other learning and skills.



## A Type of Practice - Guided Practice

There are three types of skill practice – *guided*, *limited*, and *independent* practice. The journeyperson will help the apprentice to progress through these different types of skill practice as his or her ability improves and as the job allows. As apprentices progress through the three types of practice, they gain more independence in applying the skill. They also learn to take more responsibility for the finished product or job.

Guided practice is the final stage of the skill demonstration step (Step 3) and the beginning of the skill practice step (Step 4). The demonstration is completed and the apprentice is making their first attempt at applying the skill on their own. The journeyperson stays with the apprentice and provides step-by-step guidance to develop their basic ability to perform the skill. The journeyperson is the skill expert and needs to observe the apprentice's level of skill. The journeyperson and apprentice need to come to an agreement as to when the next level of practice is needed (when the apprentice is ready to work more independently).

*"You're doing well. Are you ready to try it on your own?"*



## Cooper Case Example



Take the time now to watch the video clip pertaining to the Cooper and how he guides his apprentice through practice (duration: 40 seconds).

[VIEW the video clip ONLINE by clicking on this link](http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step4_C01.rm)

[http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor\\_Step4\\_C01.rm](http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step4_C01.rm)



OR view the video from your course CD-ROM (Be sure to insert CD-ROM first)  
OPEN this file: Mentor\_Step4\_C01.rm

**What Happened?** Seeing how skill training unfolds in an actual situation is helpful. Once again, you may be surprised at how many of the steps you were already doing without realizing it. This case reinforces why supporting practice is so important. Guided practice is actually a repeat of a skill demonstration.



## ***A Type of Practice - Limited Practice***

When the apprentice is ready to work on his or her own, the journeyperson sets up the conditions for limited practice. It is important to clarify expectations for how this will work up front. Since the apprentice will be working alone, both the journeyperson and the apprentice need to be very clear about how it will work. At this stage, the apprentice may be working with sample or scrap materials because the likelihood of mistakes is high. For the same reason, be sure to clarify safety equipment and procedures before starting the practice. The journeyperson will check the apprentice's work at pre-set checkpoints, to be sure progress is being made and ability is improving.

*"Let's see how you're making out with that."*

*"Try to do it more like this."*

The journeyperson observes the apprentice's level of skill and discusses readiness to apply the skill as part of a workplace job.



## ***Printer Case Example***



Take the time now to watch the video clip of the Printer's explanation of how she sets up for practice (duration: 40 seconds).

[VIEW the video clip ONLINE by clicking on this link](http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step4_T03.rm)  
[http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor\\_Step4\\_T03.rm](http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step4_T03.rm)



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**What Happened?** When an apprentice has the basic skill, the journey person can then allow them to move from limited practice to independent practice. For independent practice, an apprentice must be ready to work on their own.



## ***A Type of Practice - Independent Practice***

When the apprentice is skilled enough to work on his or her own with actual job materials and tools, the journey person sets up the conditions for independent practice. The journey person explains related workplace safety equipment and procedures (that may vary from the limited practice conditions). The apprentice will work alone on a job task or assignment, applying newly developed skill. When the job or product is completed, the journey person will inspect the quality of the finished work.



## ***Storekeeper Case Example***



### **Part 1: The Practice Opportunity**

This clip shows the storekeeper encouraging practice (duration: 30 seconds).

[VIEW the video clip ONLINE by clicking on this link](http://nscrcal.nscrc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step4_S01.rm)  
[http://nscrcal.nscrc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor\\_Step4\\_S01.rm](http://nscrcal.nscrc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step4_S01.rm)

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### **Part 2: The Storekeeper's Views on Practice**

The second clip allows the Storekeeper to explain how she encourages practice (duration: 10 seconds).

[VIEW the video clip ONLINE by clicking on this link](#)

[http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor\\_Step4\\_S02.rm](http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step4_S02.rm)

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**What Happened?** Independent practice is for people who are ready to work on their own. Again, an important part of this type of practice is having the mentor set up the conditions for the practice. As an apprentice progresses through the types of practice they gain more skill and gradually take on more responsibility.

- *Think about a time when you were being left to do a task for the very first time independently. How did that make you feel?*



## Recycling

All along in the process of skill practice, the journeyperson will observe the apprentice and check the quality of work in order to make decisions about the next stage of progress. Based on how the apprentice is doing, it may be necessary to repeat a stage of the coaching plan. We call this repetition *recycling* because you are able to re-use the experiences of the person learning the skill when you go back to redo a particular step.

When a journeyperson observes that an apprentice is off track or missing something in the application of the skill, it may be useful to repeat an earlier coaching step. The apprentice may need more guided practice, for example, in order to get a certain part of the skill. Or, it might be necessary to simply conduct the demonstration again and recycle the learning opportunity.

It is not just the journeyperson who identifies the need for going back and recycling - the apprentice shares this responsibility. The apprentice may also identify the need to recycle a step in the lesson. Often apprentices are the most aware of what they need in order to improve their own performance.

The need to recycle is a natural part of any learning process. It does not mean a failure for either the journeyperson or the apprentice. Very often, both may think that a necessary point or ability has been fully covered, only to discover later that something was missed. This is a moment where the learning partnership must be evident. Don't try to decide if it was someone's fault. The trick, for both, is to discover the need to recycle as early as possible in the lesson. Both the journeyperson and the apprentice need support and encouragement when the need to recycle is identified.

*"I see the problem. Let's take another look at how this is done."*

Recycling is repeating the steps that are needed. Don't be afraid to go back, depending on what the person needs.





Whenever you decide to recycle any step in the lesson, it is useful to briefly review the learning objective and how the learning fits. This will help to focus both the journey person and the apprentice on the key outcomes of the training.



## ***Storekeeper Case Example***



Take the time now to watch the video clip pertaining to the Storekeeper and something that she did wrong (duration: 30 seconds).

[VIEW the video clip ONLINE by clicking on this link](http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step4_S03.rm)

[http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor\\_Step4\\_S03.rm](http://nsccreal.nsc.ca:8080/ramgen/Apprenticeship/Mentoring/Videos/Mentor_Step4_S03.rm)

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**What Happened?** The reflection of the Storekeeper shows how no one is perfect. Sometimes as a trainer we take things for granted or can even forget and leave things out of our own demonstration. Don't be afraid to recycle the learning and go back to repeat things.

Think back to a situation where you were showing someone else how to do something and left out a step. How did you find out that the step had been missed - what did you do to make sure that the information was provided?



## ***Setting Up Practice Conditions***

When you are trying to determine how to proceed with setting up practice opportunities, you once again need to use your problem solving skills. It is important to consider all of the related information. Depending on the skill being practiced, there may be limited choices in how to proceed.

Just as you went through a series of questions to help define the context of the demonstration, it is also important to be thinking about the context of the practice. Think about a skill in your workplace. Think about how opportunities



to practice that skill could be created. As you get started, it can be helpful to use some guiding questions to set out the conditions of practice:



- ☐ Where can the skill be practiced?
- ☐ When is it best to practice?
- ☐ What tools or equipment are required?
- ☐ What materials are available for practice? Any limits?
- ☐ What safety procedures and risks are involved?
- ☐ What are some things to watch out for when practicing this skill?
- ☐ Will the practice be supervised - why or why not?

Before you know it you will find yourself automatically asking yourself these questions and setting up the practice conditions in your mind.

*How do you think that answering these questions in advance will affect the practice opportunity?*

After the practice opportunity, be mindful of how things went - always be thinking about how it might have worked better, or how you might want to approach it next time.



## Key Words Review

<b>Practice Conditions</b>	The plan or the set-up for the practice sessions
<b>Guided Practice</b>	Skill practice where the mentor provides step-by-step directions
<b>Limited Practice</b>	Skill practice where the person works on his or her own, and the mentor checks the work at pre-set stages or times
<b>Independent Practice</b>	Skill practice where the person is left alone to complete a job task or assignment and the mentor checks the finished job or product
<b>Recycling</b>	Reviewing or re-doing an earlier step or set of steps in the lesson in order to strengthen skill development



## **Think About Different Perspectives**



Think about these different points of view. How might you respond?

### **One Apprentice's Point of View:**

*"The journeyperson I work with seems to be just using me as a gopher. It seems like I'll never get to do any of the stuff I should be learning to do..."*

### **One Mentor's Point of View:**

*"You do have to pay your dues before you get the glory jobs. You need to start at the bottom and work your way up, just like I did..."*

### **One Employer's Point of View:**

*"These apprentices keep making mistakes. Each one of these mistakes is costing the business money..."*

**What are some similar situations OR differing points of view that you have encountered in your experiences in the workplace? Discuss your experiences - we all learn from each other!**



**stop**

## Assessment Self Check



notes

*The self check presents questions as a reminder of some key points. Complete the questions, and then check your responses at the end.*

1. What type of practice is it when the apprentice is skilled enough to work on his or her own with actual job materials and tools?
  - a. guided practice
  - b. limited practice
  - c. independent practice
  
2. What type of practice is it when the apprentice is ready to start working alone but with practice materials?
  - a. guided practice
  - b. limited practice
  - c. independent practice
  
3. What type of practice is it when the journeyperson stays with the apprentice and provides step-by-step guidance to develop their basic ability to perform the skill?
  - a. guided practice
  - b. limited practice
  - c. independent practice
  
4. What are examples of when you will use the different types of practice in your trade?



**complete**

## Application Assignment

**Complete the Step 4 Application in your Handbook.**

Application Assignments can be completed in written format and/or contributed in a group discussion and/or compiled in another way that makes sense.



## Helpful Tips for the Workplace



*What are some tips for getting the most out of a mentor and/or apprentice?*

### Knowledge:

- ☐ **Be aware of the value of practice:** Practicing is an important part of learning a new skill. Always be on the lookout for opportunities to practice - be ready to take advantage of them.
- ☐ **Plan ahead:** It has been said before and it will be said again, planning pays off. Think through when might be an appropriate time given other work timelines, obligations, and tasks.
- ☐ **Keep Track (Somehow):** Find a system that works for you, and use it. Some people's tracking systems are in their head but most of us need other tools to help us keep track of our learning.

### Attitude:

- ☐ **Help others to problem solve:** If someone asks question on things that they have been shown before, help them to learn to think it through for themselves.

### Behaviour:

- ☐ **Make choices to ensure practice opportunities:** Try to coordinate your lunch and/or your break to ensure there is needed practice time.
- ☐ **Reduce, Re-use, Recycle:** The motto of "reduce, reuse, recycle" can be applicable to the environment but it is also applicable to learning. Reduce waste - that goes without saying, get rid of what you do not need. Re-use - if you find something that works, re-use it yourself again, again and again. Recycle works too - pass on your ideas that work to others to try. They may make changes to what you have done, but the essence of the idea is being passed along.
- ☐ **Hands-on experience is essential:** Allow people to try - Don't do it for them! An apprentice needs to learn - doing for a person does not really help them to learn in the same way that doing does,

**Learning never ends - keep track of what works best for you...**



## ***Self Check Answers***



1. Independent Practice is when the person is skilled enough to work on his or her own with actual job materials and tools. Participants will have trade specific examples.
2. Guided practice is when you stay with the person and provide step-by-step assistance in developing their basic ability to perform the skill. Once again, each participant will have individual trade examples.
3. Limited Practice is when the person is ready to work on his or her own, but only under defined conditions. Participants will have individual trade examples.
4. Each course participant will have their own trade specific examples - knowing when to use the different types of practice and what the advantages and disadvantages are of each is important and will help you in deciding when to use which type of practice.



## ***Learning Notes***