



On-the-Job Training | Quick Guide


Introduction. This Quick Guide is a succinct reminder of the key steps for effective OJT. For video examples and more OJT support visit <https://training.lbl.gov/OJT/>

NOTE: “OJT” is training people receive while performing some part of their job. It’s an opportunity to address the specific hazards, controls, and safe work practices associated with the work the person will be doing. For this reason, most lab- or safety-orientations aren’t examples of OJT.

Before you begin: You and the student introduce yourselves. Ask about the student’s prior training and experience with this task so you can tailor your OJT session to match. Explain how the session will be organized, how long it will take, and what the student must do to “pass” the OJT.

Part 1. Instructor Demonstrates. Demonstrate the task for the student, including using any job aids. Encourage the student to ask clarifying questions. Ask the student questions to keep them actively engaged in the learning process.


1



Instructor: EXPLAINS and PERFORMS each step. ASKS QUESTIONS. USES JOB AID(S).
Student: OBSERVES each step and asks clarifying QUESTIONS.

Part 2. Student Guides Instructor. Have the student tell you what to do at each step while you either perform each action or refuse if it’s unsafe. Repeat until the student can guide you through the whole process without mistakes. Ask questions to ensure the student knows key threshold values. Your goal is to find and correct any misunderstandings *before* the student performs the task on their own in **Part 3**.


2



Student: TELLS the instructor what to do at each step.
Instructor: PERFORMS each step and QUESTIONS the trainee.

Part 3. Student Performs Task. Have the student perform the task under your direct supervision. Intervene only if the student is about to do something unsafe, and in that case, provide coaching and ask the learner to try again. Repeat until the student can perform safely without your intervention.

3



Student: PERFORMS each step and EXPLAINS what is important about each step.
Instructor: CONFIRMS or CORRECTS the Learner as needed.

Debrief: When the student is able to perform the task safely with no intervention from you, the student has “passed” the OJT. Hold a short debrief session with student to let them know they’ve passed. Explain any additional steps they may need to take before they are authorized to perform this task unsupervised. Clarify the limits of their authorization.

Techniques

Within the three-part structure we're recommending for OJT at Berkeley Lab, you can use various techniques to improve the effectiveness of your OJT sessions.

Asking Questions

- In **Part 1**, as you're demonstrating the task, pause frequently and ask your student questions:
 - "Why is this step important?" / "What would happen if I skipped this step?"
 - "If at any time I see that my gloves are contaminated, what do you think I should do?"
- In **Part 2**, use questions to make sure the student knows what to do in other circumstances, or knows the boundaries and values that might change the appropriate choice of actions:
 - "You're correct that the current O₂ level of 20.3% is safe. But how low could this value be before it would become unsafe to enter the room?"
 - "What if I had noticed a hole or another problem with my insulating gloves?"
- Benefits of asking questions include:
 - Keeps students actively engaged in their own learning
 - Answering your questions forces students to recall information from their short-term memories, and this helps build pathways to their long-term memories.
 - Allows you to assess if the student understands what you're teaching.

Have the Student Explain in Their Own Words

- Whenever you need to explain something important to the student, ask the student to repeat the explanation back to you in their own words.
- Benefits include
 - Reformulating the answer in their own words forces retrieval from short-term memory, which helps build pathways to the person's long-term memory.
 - Allows you to verify that they actually understood your explanation.

Use and Refer the Student to the Job Aid

- No matter how good your demonstration is, most people won't be able to remember all the steps and nuances just from your demo. So get or make a printed job aid that outlines the procedure and the crucial criteria (for example, voltage limits) that drive key decisions.
- If you want the student to **use** the job aid, you have to "give permission" by using the job aid yourself during your demonstration. Similarly, if the student gets stuck in Parts 2 or 3, ask them to consult the job aid to figure what's wrong and how to fix it. They will remember this much better than if you just tell them.

Purposely Do Some Things Wrong

- In **Part 2**, as the student guides you through the steps of the task, you can purposely do some things wrong (as long as you don't do anything unsafe) to see if your student can both identify what's wrong and how to fix it. This technique allows you to bring common problems (for example, unbuttoned lab coats) to the student's attention in a memorable way.

Refuse to Take Unsafe Actions

- In **Part 2** If the student asks you to do something unsafe, refuse and then use other techniques such as asking questions and directing the student to the job aid to have the student figure out why you have refused and what needs to happen for you to be able to safely proceed.