

#### 5.4.1 **Coaching**

Coaching is perhaps the most effective type of semi-formal learning. It is a systematic process where a more experienced person helps a learner develop expertise through a structured or semi-structured programme of guidance, feedback, demonstration or collaborative work experience, primarily to improve performance (often short-term) in a specific area of skill. While the learner has primary ownership of the learning goal, the coach has primary ownership of the coaching process.

A coach assists an individual in understanding performance and developing expertise. Coaching is particularly effective at enhancing existing skills and modifying behaviour. It can be directive – that is, telling someone what to do – or non-directive – that is, helping someone decide what to do. The latter approach involves active listening and questioning. If the existing skill level is good and improvement, rather than basic-level performance, is sought, non-directive coaching is more effective.

The main benefit of coaching is that it is tailored to meet the specific learning needs of an individual. It generates frequent and targeted feedback and allows individuals to take responsibility for their own development. But the coach needs good coaching skills and there has to be a positive relationship between coach and learner. The purpose of the coaching sessions needs to be clearly defined and planned. In many organizations, managers take responsibility for coaching their teams, but a more experienced colleague could perform that task as well.

#### 5.4.2 **Mentoring**

Mentoring is a process by which a respected, trusted and competent individual provides guidance and advice to help less experienced people maximize their potential, develop their skills and improve their performance, often based on a long-term relationship. The learner owns both the learning goals and the learning process.

Mentoring is similar to coaching, but the mentor tends to be a highly experienced or senior person who has no line management responsibilities for the individual being mentored. A mentor provides more general and less frequent feedback than a coach, because the mentor is consulted at the instigation of the learner.

The mentor acts as a role model and a source of advice for work and career issues rather than providing the targeted, directive guidance of a coach. But as with coaching, success depends critically on a positive relationship between the two people and their desire for a successful process. The mentor might be a colleague, especially for someone taking up a post requiring new skills. Newly trained forecasters might, for example, benefit from having a mentor when they start at an operational station, particularly after they have already had sufficient on-the-job training and have attained a functional level of competence.

NOTE: The text above was extracted from:

[WMO-No.1114 Guidelines for Trainers in Meteorological, Hydrological and Climate Services](#)