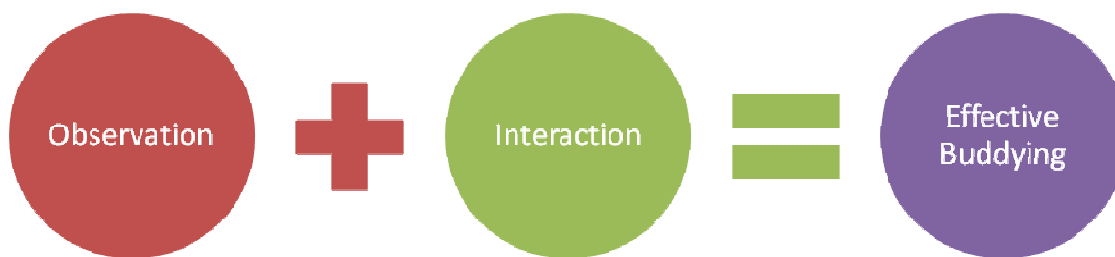


How to Optimise the Buddying Process

This guide offers suggestions on how to get the best out of buddying time. Our model for effective buddying is to combine the strength of close **observation** of real work, and the understanding that comes from **interaction** (explaining, questioning and clarifying) between the experienced buddy and their learner.



Guide for the Experienced Buddy

Your role as a buddy is a very important contribution to the capability development of your learner buddy.

It's the combination of **observation** and **interaction** that fuels successful buddying.

- ❑ Having a learner **observing** what tasks you perform and how you perform them is the basis of buddying.
- ❑ Real learning also depends on **interacting** with your buddy: providing explanation, highlighting key points, responding to their questions and uncertainties, and over time, inviting them to provide their own ideas. (Without the interaction, buddying would be just like watching a video of someone doing your job. Nothing much would make sense!).

Talk about 'buddying'

- ❑ Tell the learner that they learn more if they ask questions. Encourage and reward questions by answering them carefully and patiently.
- ❑ Encourage the learner to be an active observer. Look for signs that they are paying active attention to what you do and say. Ask questions of the learner if their attention seems to be wandering.

- ❑ In quieter times, ask your buddy to summarise the key points they have picked up during the last period of observation. This is a chance to confirm that the learner is on the right track; and also to correct any misconceptions.

Talk about what they will observe

- ❑ What do they already know about the job?
- ❑ Explain the main functions or duties (in overview only – detail will come later)
- ❑ Introduce to key technology and uses (as above – at overview level only)
- ❑ The key functions that you will be performing whilst the buddy is observing
- ❑ Remember that at the beginning everything will be new and confusing for the learner. Your buddy will need to see many examples before they will start to see the trends and underlying patterns.

During observation

- ❑ Model the behaviour that we want new staff to adopt – go through step by step even though an experience person may do some of the steps invisibly (or intuitively).
- ❑ Explain what you are going to do, and **why** you are doing it. Understanding the why is an important part of developing capability
- ❑ Highlight the very important or most critical parts of what you are doing.
- ❑ Where appropriate to their level of understanding, ask your buddy what they think the next step should be.
- ❑ If the task or process you are carrying out is unusual or atypical, highlight this and contrast it with what you would more usually do. Explain why the less typical approach is being taken in this instance.
- ❑ As the learner's understanding of the key chunks of work improves, you can start to provide more of the ifs, buts and maybes – the exceptions and complexities that demand particular expertise.



Useful questions to ask your learner:

- ❑ 'What are the key things that you are hoping to learn today?'
- ❑ What are the main points that you have picked up in the last hour?
- ❑ Thinking back over what you've observed in the last 20 minutes, which bits do you need to better understand?
- ❑ Which parts of the job are you now most confident about? Which parts of the job are still a bit of a mystery to you?

Guide for the Learner Buddy

- ❑ Observe carefully. 'Active' observation means that you are paying attention and trying to make sense of what you see and hear.
- ❑ Expect that what you see and hear should make sense. Tell your buddy if you don't understand a particular point.
- ❑ Take notes to remind you of important points and key steps.
- ❑ Early in your buddying time, try to build a high level picture of the major parts of the job.
- ❑ As your buddying time increases, you will be able to grasp more of the detail.
- ❑ Your understanding of all the ifs, buts and maybes will come last – these are the more specialised parts of the job.

Useful questions to ask your teacher:

- ❑ Can I check if I understand that last point?
- ❑ Can you give me an overview of what you're doing now?
- ❑ Can you give me an example of when you would do x?
- ❑ Why was it important to do x?
- ❑ How does that fit with what you said before about y?
- ❑ What would I need to do next?
- ❑ I'd like to summarise where we're up to – can you confirm that I'm on the right track?

