

Activity: Scaffolding in Action

Facilitator Guide

Time:

12 to 15 minutes

Purpose:

Make decisions while training a new team member now and see how those decisions impact them and your team both short and long-term.

Materials:

- Scenario Cards

Setup:

1. Prior to the workshop set up the cards face down on the table. (Create additional groupings and setup enough cards per group count)
2. Split the members into groups of 3 or 4 individuals.
3. Instruct the groups to work together and start with card 1, then determine the best decision in the moment.

Facilitator Notes:

Allow the groups to work on their own and only step in to answer direct questions they have for you. Take notes on some of the commentary to address during the debrief.

Group Debrief

Ask the full group:

- "How did the decisions you make as the trainer impact Jordan's overall success?"
- "How did you adjust your approach in the moment, when a chosen response elicited a poor outcome?"
- "If you could go back through the training process, what would you do differently?"

Key Takeaway to Reinforce:

- "None of the scenarios ended in Jordan electrocuting himself. Our teams have so many safeguards that is hard to literally blow up a job in our factory, but even though a scenario may look successful, it still has subtle reinforces that either promote or restrict good behaviors and actions."

Train the Trainer

Scenario: Jumping a Car

Card: 1

Scenario: Jumping a Car Card: 1

You are teaching a new trainee, Jordan, how to safely jump a car battery. They've never done this before but are eager to learn.

Jordan arrives at the parking lot. The car won't start. You have jumper cables and a working vehicle. Jordan is looking at you, waiting for direction.

How do you start?

- A. Hand Jordan the jumper cables and explain as they go → Card 2A
- B. Explain the steps verbally without showing them, then let them try → Card 2B
- C. Demonstrate the full process first while explaining why each step matters → Card 2C

Train the Trainer

Scenario: Jumping a Car

Card: 2A

Scenario: Jumping a Car Card: 2A

You handed Jordan the cables and gave verbal instructions. Jordan looks at the battery, picks up a red cable, then hesitates. They're clearly unsure which terminal is positive.

What do you do?

A. Point to the positive terminal and tell them to connect there → Card 3A

B. Ask, "What are you looking for on the battery?" → Card 3B

C. Take the cable and do the first connection yourself to show them → Card 2C

Train the Trainer

Scenario: Jumping a Car
Card: 2B

Scenario: Jumping a Car Card: 2B

You explained the steps verbally without demonstrating. Jordan nods along but when they pick up the cables, they pause and look confused. Jordan says, "Wait, which one is the metal ground?"

How do you respond?

- A. Tell them to just connect it to any metal part of the engine → Card 3A
- B. Ask, "What did I say about where the last black cable goes?" → Card 2A
- C. Realize they're lost and demonstrate the full process now → Card 2C

Train the Trainer

Scenario: Jumping a Car

Card: 2C

Scenario: Jumping a Car **Card: 2C**

You demonstrated the full process while explaining the "why" behind each step. Jordan watched closely and nodded along. Now it's their turn to try.

What do you do?

A. Step back and let them try it alone while you watch → Card 4A

B. Do it together step-by-step, guiding them through each connection → Card 4B

C. Have them talk through what they'll do before touching anything → Card 4B

Train the Trainer

Scenario: Jumping a Car

Card: 3A

Scenario: Jumping a Car Card: 3A

You've been giving Jordan direct answers without making them think. Jordan completes the task by following your step-by-step directions. The car starts. Jordan smiles.

How do you respond?

A. Move on to the next task—they got it done → Card 7A

B. Have them repeat it alone to see if they retained it → Card 5A

Train the Trainer

Scenario: Jumping a Car
Card: 3B

Scenario: Jumping a Car Card: 3B

You've been asking guiding questions instead of giving direct answers. Jordan figured out the connections through your prompts. The car starts. Jordan looks proud.

What do you do next?

A. Move on—they clearly understand it → Card 5B

B. Have them repeat it alone to see if they retained it → Card 7C

Train the Trainer

Scenario: Jumping a Car

Card: 4A

Scenario: Jumping a Car Card: 4A

You demonstrated once, then stepped back and let Jordan try alone. Jordan connects the first red cable correctly but hesitates on the second red cable. They reach toward the negative terminal of the good battery instead of the positive.

What do you do next?

- A. Stop them immediately and correct it → Card 5A
- B. Ask, "Which terminal are you connecting to?" → Card 7C
- C. Let them connect it and see if they notice the mistake → Card 7C
- D. Let them finish incorrectly to see what happens → Card 6A

Train the Trainer

Scenario: Jumping a Car
Card: 4B

Scenario: Jumping a Car Card: 4B

You did it together step-by-step, or had them talk through it first. Jordan successfully completed the task with your support. The car started. Jordan seems confident.

What do you do next?

A. Move on to the next task → Card 5B

B. Have them repeat it alone while you observe → Card 7C

C. Keep guiding them through 2-3 more attempts before stepping back → Card 7D

Train the Trainer

Scenario: Jumping a Car

Card: 5A

Scenario: Jumping a Car Card: 5A

You gave Jordan direct answers earlier. Now you've asked them to repeat the task alone to see if they retained it. Jordan disconnects the cables and starts over.

What do you do?

A. Walk them through it again step-by-step → Card 7A

B. Ask, "What did I connect first when I demonstrated?" → Card 5B

Train the Trainer

Scenario: Jumping a Car
Card: 5B

Scenario: Jumping a Car **Card: 5B**

Jordan completed the task successfully with guided questions or after one demonstration. They seem confident. You moved on to the next training task.

Two days later:

You ask Jordan to jump a car on their own. Jordan picks up the cables, pauses, and says, "Can you remind me—do the black cables go on first or the red ones?"

They didn't practice enough to build long-term retention.

→ Card 7B

Train the Trainer

Scenario: Jumping a Car

Card: 6A

Scenario: Jumping a Car Card: 6A

You let Jordan complete the task with the wrong connection (red cable to negative instead of positive). The car doesn't start. Jordan looks confused and says, "Why didn't it work?"

What do you do?

A. Tell them what they did wrong and fix it → Card 7B

B. Ask, "What do you think went wrong?" → Card 5B

C. Let them troubleshoot on their own for 1-2 minutes before helping → Card 7C

Train the Trainer

Scenario: Jumping a Car

Card: 7A

Scenario: Jumping a Car **Card: 7A**

Short-Term: Jordan completed the task, and the car started. You moved on quickly.

Long-Term: Jordan never built true understanding or confidence. Every time a car needs to be jumped, Jordan comes to you for help or asks you to walk them through it again.

Your workload: Stays high. You're still doing the thinking for Jordan.

Jordan's confidence: Low. Jordan doesn't trust their own ability to do this task.

Scaffolding principle violated: You provided answers instead of building understanding. Jordan learned to depend on you, not to problem-solve independently.

Train the Trainer

Scenario: Jumping a Car
Card: 7B

Scenario: Jumping a Car **Card: 7B**

Short-Term: Jordan completed the task successfully and seemed to understand it.

Long-Term: A few days later, Jordan can't remember the sequence or makes mistakes. You have to re-teach parts of the task.

Your workload: Medium. You'll spend time re-teaching or correcting mistakes later.

Jordan's confidence: Shaky. Jordan knows they've done it before but doesn't feel solid.

Scaffolding principle violated: You didn't provide enough repetition or independent practice. One or two successes don't equal retention.

Train the Trainer

Scenario: Jumping a Car

Card: 7C

Scenario: Jumping a Car Card: 7C

Short-Term: Training took a bit longer because you had Jordan repeat the task 2 to 3 times independently.

Long-Term: Jordan can jump a car confidently without your help. Jordan even helps train the next new hire on this task.

Your workload: Decreases. Jordan is fully independent and can support others.

Jordan's confidence: High. Jordan owns this skill and feels capable.

Scaffolding principle violated: You demonstrated, guided practice, asked questions to build thinking, allowed repetition, and stepped back gradually. You built competence, not dependence.

Train the Trainer

Scenario: Jumping a Car
Card: 7D

Scenario: Jumping a Car **Card: 7D**

Short-Term: You spent a lot of time guiding Jordan through multiple attempts, but you never fully stepped back.

Long-Term: Jordan can do the task well when you're there guiding them, but struggles when working alone. Jordan still looks to you for reassurance or confirmation on every step.

Your workload: Stays high. Jordan needs you present to feel confident.

Jordan's confidence: Medium. Jordan knows the steps but doesn't trust themselves without you.

Scaffolding principle violated: You didn't fade support. You stayed at Level 2 (do together) instead of moving to Level 3 (observe) and Level 5 (step back).