# Nimble Training (*Learning!*) Models

## Self-Directed Achievement (SDA)

Structured, informal learning approach between a supervisor and a staff member with a weekly process where the staff member sets a goal, the supervisor provides 1 scheduled hour to achieve it, and both meet for 15 minutes at the end of the week to review and plan the following week.

During their weekly 15-minute meetings:

* The supervisor asks 3 questions:
  + Did you accomplish your goal last week?
  + If not, what got in your way?
  + What is your goal this week?
* The staff member communicates their SDA goal for the week;
* The supervisor schedules the SDA hour for their staff member;
* The staff member uses their SDA hour, knowing their learning won't be interrupted;
* The staff member records their learning in their training log.

## ‘23’ (or any number) Things

Also self-paced and similar to SDA but with directed goals. Learners are provided a list of X number of things, where each week they spend some amount of time learning the thing assigned that week. It might be a piece of equipment, software, app, online service, coding language, etc. They can be as simple or complex as you want. Learners are required to document and record their learning via some online service or method – written, video, audio, images, whatever they choose.

## Cohort-based Learning (in-person, online)

Still more informal, but instead of an individual process, learners join with others to form cohorts—either in-person or online—as they all study the same content. Learning resources can be in any form: books, webinars, lecture, self-paced course, independent exploration, etc. The key is the sharing of experience, learning and questions between the cohort members.

## Peer Learning – Coaching

Still somewhat informal, though it can be easily formalized if desired. One person guides the learning of one or more other staff members. The guide is (usually) neither a trainer nor a supervisor. Without the normal formal learning queues of an instructor or ‘boss’ watching, staff can often be more relaxed and receptive to learning new skills. This mode often fits well with the way that most technologically adept staff members are often not your trainers or upper level management.

## Online Self-Paced

Purely online self-paced courses have the advantage of learners being able to access more formal training material, while working at their own speed and at the time that is most convenient. There may be issues with maintaining motivation. The very high up-front level of effort to create self-paced courses also means they are only economical for large scale training deployments designed for thousands, and not at all cost effective for training a small number of people for a short period of time.

## Live Online

Live online is not just for large scale webinars. It can be a very effective replacement for face-to-face training when it is difficult or expensive to get everyone in the same room at the same time. Caveats to this form are that although it is the closest online format to face-to-face, it is only effective for shorter durations (usually 90 minutes or less), and the skill set needed by the trainer is not at all the same as for face-to-face training. If you want to pursue this, respect the training mode by making sure your trainer is prepared for online delivery.

## Blended Face-to-face & Online

There is an almost endless array of options and combinations you can create when blending online and face to face learning. It is possible to take advantage of the flexibility and self-direction of self-paced learning while combining that with social interaction and motivation support. It can also be a way to drive down the cost of traditional training while still retaining the most valuable aspects of it. A common format is to have the first and last sessions in-person, then much of the learning in between happens either together or individually online. This approach can be very helpful with large system, state or national level training programs.

## Face-to-face Classroom

Last but not least, everyone loves traditional face-to-face classroom training. It is not always the most convenient, and it is very often the most expensive, but there are good reasons many people prefer it above all the other modes. If you have the luxury of available trainers, facilities and learners who are close by, it is still a very viable model. As we have seen, it also blends well with almost any of the others.