Increasing Job Performance by Training Employees How to Request Instructions and Feedback

LaVerne Talley Alebiosu

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INCREASING JOB PERFORMANCE BY TRAINING EMPLOYEES
HOW TO REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS AND FEEDBACK

by

LaVerne Talley Alebiosu

A Project Report
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INCREASING JOB PERFORMANCE BY TRAINING EMPLOYEES
HOW TO REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS AND FEEDBACK

LaVerne Talley Alebiosu, Ed.S.
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This study investigated the effectiveness of a procedure to increase the job performance, defined as task completion, of four black adolescents serving as child care aides in a day care center. The trainees were taught to request instructions and feedback from their supervisor. They were also taught to self-record the number of requests for instructions and feedback and the tasks they completed. Training procedures therefore involved a method to increase task performance without any direct intervention on increasing tasks and incorporated these direct instruction techniques: Small group instruction; active responding; the model, lead, and test format; and the use of minimally different examples to teach the trainees to discriminate between correct and incorrect responses. Task performance increased from an average of 49% before training to an average of 87% after training. The remaining subject completed tasks on an average of 92% before training and maintained slightly above that level after training. Increased performance was also maintained for two subjects during follow-up measures five weeks after training.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the completion of a major project such as this, it is impossible to recognize everyone who contributed in one way or another. However, I would like to acknowledge the work of a number of individuals who contributed in major ways to the success of this venture. First and foremost, special credit goes to Dr. Cheryl Poche for her helpful suggestions and guidance throughout this project. I would also like to thank Dr. Howard Farris and Dr. Galen Alessi for their valuable input. Credit goes to Diane Moffit, Ervin Armstrong, and participants of the Youth Opportunities Unlimited Program. I am deeply indebted to Kevin Coleman and the staff at the Child Development Center for their assistance and cooperation during the data collection phase of the project. Thanks to a very dear friend, Leslie, who showed me the way. A very special thanks to my family for their inspiration and to my mother, Vernice, whose sacrifices have made my education possible. And lastly to my husband, Abiola, you are everywhere in this project. Ose dada! It is to them that I dedicate this work.

LaVerne Talley Alebiosu
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INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the effectiveness of a procedure to increase the job performance, defined as task completion, of four black adolescents serving as child care aides in a day care center. The development of effective techniques for increasing job performance has been a major concern in most organization settings. Traditionally, the task of increasing and improving human performance has been the responsibility of the immediate supervisor. Miller (1978) stated that managers should identify systematic and positive methods that produce behavior change and increased performance in their workers. Recently, organizational literature has provided new and effective techniques for training supervisors in how to increase their employees' job performance as well as their job satisfaction. In short, supervisors are being trained as better "people-handlers" (Rosenbaum, 1978).

Techniques such as behavior modeling (Goldstein & Sorcher, 1978; Burnaska, 1976; Moses & Ritchie, 1976) have been used to train supervisors to deal with employee problems such as improving the quality and quantity of job performance, reducing absenteeism, and providing appraisal feedback. Moses and Ritchie (1976) also stressed training supervisors to interact more effectively with their subordinates on issues involving insubordination, resistance to a new supervisor, and management of a work force composed of minorities.

Kearney (1978) proposed that with an appropriately designed job description and an appraisal instrument, job performance could be improved. Other conditions such as employees with motivation,
knowledge, the physical ability to perform, and an understanding of the demands of their jobs are necessary in order for an appraisal instrument to be effective.

Holley (1973) investigated the effects of various training programs that facilitated effective performance by disadvantaged workers. Explicit job descriptions, job instruction by demonstration, and frequent recognition for any improvement in job performance were conditions that proved to be effective in training the disadvantaged worker. The unique characteristics of disadvantaged workers such as lack of experience in any specified area of work, a low self-concept, and lack of motivation are aspects that require development of training routines for this group of workers.

To meet the needs of the disadvantaged or hard-core unemployed, federal job training programs have been established to assist the unemployed trainee in developing good work habits that could be beneficial in later employment situations. One such program, the Summer Program for Economically Disadvantaged Youth (SPEDY) provides "on-the-job" training sites in several work areas, including day care, recreation, landscaping, and clerical work.

In the vast majority of this and other federal job training programs, agencies are asked to provide job opportunities for individuals who would normally not be hired, in exchange for increasing their available manpower without the additional employee payroll. When an agency agrees to this arrangement, they take on the task of supervising workers that have little training when they are accustomed to professionals or para-professionals that have been academically trained.
In this situation, a supervisor's skills are really put to task.

As earlier mentioned, conditions that proved to be effective with the disadvantaged worker—explicit job descriptions, job instruction by demonstration, and frequent recognition for improvement in work performance—are not found in the typical work setting. These conditions usually are not found at the level that this group of workers need in order to be successful. When the workers do not fulfill their assigned tasks, often the only resource a supervisor has is to fire them. By this time, however, the agency will undoubtedly have suffered from the worker's low level of job performance. Additionally, dismissal from one agency often only means transfer of the worker to another job site.

Statistical analyses of unemployment rates have indicated that the black teenage unemployment rate has been consistently greater than 30 percent for 9 years, with no recovery from the recession of 1973-75. This lack of substantial improvement stands in contrast to the recovery among black men and women over age 25 and among white men and women of all age groups, including teenagers (Newman, 1979). The development of effective job training programs for black teenagers is thus especially critical.

In a study of Neighborhood Youth Corps members employed as paid aides, Pierce & Risley (1974) suggested a procedure for increasing job performance. In their study, when thorough job descriptions and threatened termination of employment were insufficient to maintain adequate job performance, pay was based on the number of assigned tasks completed instead of on the number of hours allegedly spent working on
the assignments. Although this method was successful at maintaining employees' job performance at near perfect levels, it required the supervisor to develop specific and objective job descriptions for each worker.

For many agencies, training techniques are needed that will lessen the supervisor's burden and shift some of the responsibility to the worker. One alternative to training the supervisor is to train the workers in skills that will be beneficial to them in any work setting.

In educational settings, children have been trained to control the behavior of adults during social and academic interactions. Cantor & Gelfand (1977) studied the effects of the responsiveness of children to adults' behavior. The children were trained through instructions, modeling, role playing, and monetary rewards to look at and smile at adults, to talk politely and enthusiastically with adults, and to ask for feedback after completion of tasks. The authors found that responsive children received more attention and assistance from the adults than unresponsive children. In addition, the adults rated the responsive children more positively on personality characteristics such as likeability, adeptness at task, naturalness of behavior, and intelligence.

Graubard, Rosenberg, and Miller (1971) taught seven children from special education classes to modify the frequency of positive and negative contacts with teachers in regular classes. The children were taught to make eye contact with teachers, ask for help, sit up straight, and make positive comments to teachers (e.g., "I like the way you teach that lesson"). They were also taught to ignore teacher provocation.
Positive teacher-child interactions increased and negative contact decrease during the intervention period.

Sherman and Cormier (1974) trained students as teacher change agents. The students' disruptive behavior was modified without the teacher's knowledge. The teacher's reactions toward the student were monitored on several dimensions. They were (a) teacher behavior which included teacher attention to appropriate or inappropriate stimulus classes of the students' behavior, (b) teacher attitude toward students which involved the rating of each student in class on a scale from zero to 100 as to how irritating each student was to the teacher, and (c) the quality of teacher verbal statements which involved rating the statements as positive, negative, or neutral. The results indicated that students possess potent reinforcing properties for teachers.

Stokes, Fowler, and Baer (1978) taught preschoolers how to increase positive teacher-child interactions involving academic work quality using reinforcement techniques. The children chose a small toy for attending the training session which consisted of teaching the children the dimensions of good work. The children were also taught through instructions, role-playing, feedback, and praise to prompt or cue the trainer for positive evaluations when their work had been of a high quality.

These skills may be especially important to children who find themselves bereft of attention in classrooms, perhaps because they are labelled deviant or because they do not represent a problem to their teachers. Hard-core employees may find themselves in similar situations as the labelled deviant.
Seymour and Stokes (1976) taught four adolescent girls to increase work and comments that evoked staff praise using self-recording techniques during vocational training sessions. Self-recording of work was introduced and tokens were received for work recorded by the girls. The procedure was the same for self-recording of comments. Work and comments increase following self-recording and increased comments evoked higher rates of staff praise. These behaviors were maintained during short follow-up periods.

The present study sought to use a similar method to increase the completion of assigned tasks of four Youth Opportunity Unlimited workers being given on-the-job training as child care aides at a day care center.

**Background**

In past summers, the trainees were simply instructed to assist the teachers with their daily activities. No other specific instructions were given. It became the responsibility of the teachers to give daily instructions to their assigned trainees. Many of the teachers lacked supervisory skills. They had had experience only with undergraduate psychology students who had been specifically trained to work in the setting. It was difficult for the teachers to work with staff that needed detailed instructions and training.

In addition, the trainees often did not follow the teacher's instructions. This situation led to dissension and disruption of the center's programs. Summer 1979, 20 YOU workers were hired at the center. Seven of them completed the 10 week summer program. One left the program to go on vacation. Five were fired by the center and seven
dropped out of the program. The average number of absences for the workers were two times per week and tardiness occurred on the average of three time per week. The present study aimed to correct these conditions.

In an effort to initiate communication between trainee and supervisor the trainees were first taught how to ask for instructions. They were then taught how to ask for feedback. The trainees were also taught to self-record the number of requests for instructions and feedback and the tasks they completed. In this way, a chain of responses were taught: When you need help, ask for instructions, then keep track of the quantity of your work, and, when you need to evaluate the quality of that work, ask for feedback.
METHOD

Subjects

The subjects were four black adolescents, one male and three females, placed by the Youth Opportunity Unlimited Program (YOU) as child care aides at the Child Development Center, a participating job station of the program. Their ages ranged from 15 to 18 years. They were participants in the Summer Program for Economically Disadvantaged Youth (SPEDY). The primary purpose of the SPEDY program was to provide meaningful work experience with earnings that would assist enrollees in developing good work habits that could benefit them in later employment situations. The trainees were paid the minimum wage of $3.10 per hour and worked 15 to 35 hours per week. The adolescents were selected for the study based on the criteria of working at least four hours per day and being scheduled to work at the center for at least 10 weeks.

The day care center staff appointed a placement coordinator (a black female graduate student) to supervise the trainees. The coordinator was responsible for submitting progress evaluations and time sheets to the counselor that had been assigned to each SPEDY enrollee.

Setting

The study was conducted at the Child Development Center, a community day care center for youngsters ages 2 to 6 in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The center provides a comprehensive curriculum in educational
and social skills. The center has eight classrooms in operation. There are two classrooms at each of four major skill levels. Within each classroom children are divided into three groups, usually with five children per group. Each YOU trainee was assigned to assist the teacher in each room.

**Target Behaviors**

Supervisors recorded information on the occurrence or nonoccurrence of five behaviors. Three of the five behaviors were trainee behaviors, which included requests for instructions, requests for feedback, and task completion. These behaviors are defined as:

1. **Requests for instructions:** Asking the supervisor for information concerning tasks that were to be performed while at CDC.
2. **Requests for feedback:** Asking the supervisor for information concerning one's work performance while at CDC.
3. **Task Completion:** Completing an assigned task within a twenty minute time section or any other time limit that was established (e.g., returning from break within 15 minutes; returning from the kitchen with the snack within 5 minutes).

The remaining two behaviors recorded were the number of instructions and the number of instances of feedback given by the supervisor to the trainee.
1. **Giving instructions:** Providing a staff member with verbal or written information describing tasks that were to be performed while at CDC.

2. **Giving feedback:** Providing a staff member with verbal or written information describing their work performance while at CDC.

Information was recorded on these two behaviors to measure the number of instructions and feedback that were given to the trainees and to discriminate behavior that was prompted by the trainee from behavior that occurred without trainee prompts.

**Observation Procedures**

A task performance sheet was designed for the supervisor, and a similar one was designed for the trainee. Both data sheets involved recording data on the same behaviors (See Appendix A & B for task performance sheets for supervisor and trainee). Each supervisor completed a task performance sheet during three time sections per day. A time section lasted for 20 minutes and a different activity occurred in each time section. The supervisors' task performance sheets were placed in a folder, and, at the end of the day, the folders were collected by the placement coordinator and returned each morning. The trainees did not see these folders during the study.

**Reliability Procedures**

The placement coordinator and the author served as reliability
observers. Agreement between these reliability observers was checked weekly on days when both observers were present during the same time section. The percentage of agreement was calculated on an item-by-item basis for each target behavior. The mean agreement for all five categories of behavior was 96%, ranging from 93% to 100%.

The reliability observers recorded trainee behavior for 20% of the 75 total time sections that were recorded by the supervisors. Table 1 shows that agreement between supervisors (primary observers) and the reliability observers ranged from 66% to 100% and averaged 85%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Behaviors</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Requests for Instructions</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>66-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests for Feedback</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>66-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks Completed</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>75-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructions Given</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>70-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback Given</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>72-100%</td>
</tr>
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Reproducibility of Self-Recording

The trainees' self-recording data was compared to the data recorded by the reliability observers. The agreement between the trainees' self-recording and the reliability observers' recording ranged from 33% to 100% and averaged 76%.

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A low reliability coefficient did not always mean a large discrepancy between the primary and reliability observers in the recorded frequency. If the frequency of responses was low, the two observers might disagree on only one instance but produce a low reliability.

**Training plus Self-Recording**

The trainees were excused from their jobs to attend two training sessions, lasting approximately 3½ hours each. Training of requests for instructions occurred on the first day of the training sessions. Self-recording of requests for instructions began on the first day after the training session and continued for 10 days. Training of requests for feedback occurred 10 days following the first day of the training sessions. Self-recording of request for feedback began on the following day.

A number of features of direct instruction were incorporated into the training program to enhance its effectiveness (Becker & Engelmann, 1977). First, instruction occurred in small groups throughout the training sessions. Second, active responding was required from all the trainees. This technique allowed every trainee to respond overtly to every trial and to receive immediate feedback regarding their response. Individual responding was required. A third feature of direct instruction, the model, lead, test format, which was designed to minimize errors and maximize initial correct responding, was employed during the role-playing portion of the training. The trainees were given examples of how to ask for instructions and examples of how to ask for feedback. The examples were modeled for them by the placement coordinator and
the author (model). The trainees verbally practiced each example and were assisted on words or phrases that were difficult for them (lead). The trainees role-played each example (test). They were also given non-examples of asking for instructions and feedback and were asked to contrast them with the examples. This final feature of direct instruction required subjects to discriminate between examples (correct responses) and non-examples (incorrect responses) which differed only slightly. (For examples see Appendix D & E)

Self-recording consisted of teaching the trainees how to keep track of the target behaviors. This technique was used to provide information as well as reinforcement for requesting instructions and feedback. The trainees did this by completing a task performance sheet daily for three time sections. To maintain consistency, the trainees did not select time sections but were told to complete task performance sheets during the same time sections that their supervisors completed task performance sheets. The trainees returned their forms to the placement coordinator before leaving each day. Once they had turned in their forms, they received their time cards to "clock out" for the day. If they did not "clock out" they did not receive pay for that day. Examples of completed task performance sheets were given and explained to the trainees. They were asked to complete a task performance sheet and have it checked and corrected if necessary before leaving the training sessions.

The trainees did not lose pay for attending these sessions. The sessions were considered a part of their work experience. The placement coordinator commended and praised the trainees for attending the training sessions and completing the task performance sheets each day.
Supervisors continued to complete a task performance sheet on each trainee three times daily during training.

**Follow-up**

Five weeks after the study, task performance sheets were completed three times daily on the two trainees who remained at the center. The trainees did not record their own behavior during this time; therefore, follow-up was a return to conditions that had occurred before training and self-recording.

**Experimental Design**

The experimental design was a multiple baseline design across two behaviors, requests for instructions and requests for feedback. Data were also collected on the percentage of tasks completed during all experimental phases of the study, although no direct intervention occurred on task completion in any phase of the study. This multiple baseline design across the two behaviors was replicated over four subjects.
Figures 1-4 show the number of requests for instructions, the number of requests for feedback, and the percent of tasks completed by each trainee for each condition during the study.

During baseline, before the subjects were trained to request instructions and feedback, none of them asked for instructions, with the exception of Subject 3, who asked for instructions on Day 1 and Day 5 of baseline and subject 2 who asked for instructions on Day 2 of baseline. Figures 1-4 show that after training of requests for instructions, all subjects requests for instructions increased to an average of 3.3 per day, with a range of 2.5 to 4 requests per day. This increased level of requests was maintained throughout the study.

Requests for feedback did not occur until after the trainees had been trained on this skill. After training, the number of requests for feedback averaged 4.8 and ranged from 4 to 6.5 per week. Trainees always received instructions and feedback upon request.

The percentage of tasks completed also increased during training. During baseline, an average of 61% and a range of 38% to 92% of the assigned tasks were completed. Subject 1 was the one exception; she generally completed an average of 92% of her assigned tasks during baseline. After training the percentage of tasks completed averaged 88% and ranged from 78% to 93%. Subject 1 had a minimal increase from 92% to 93% completion of assigned tasks.

Figures 1-4 also show the number of instructions and the number of instances of feedback given by each of the subjects' supervisors that
were not requested by the trainees. These included initial instructions that were given along with an assigned task. Each supervisor gave some instructions during baseline. The number of instructions given varied, as did the number of tasks assigned to each trainee. During baseline, the number of instructions given averaged 3.7 per day with a range of .4 to 11.8 per day. Subject 1’s supervisor gave the greatest number of instructions, averaging 8 per day and ranging from 5 to 12 per day.

No instances of feedback were given by the supervisors during baseline. Every supervisor gave feedback during training that were not requested by the trainees. The number of instances of feedback averaged 2.5 and ranged from 2 to 3.5 per week.

Follow-up

For the two subjects that remained during the follow-up condition, each subject continued to request instructions and feedback. The percentage of tasks completed was also maintained throughout follow-up. Requests for instructions averaged 3.95 per day, requests for feedback averaged 1.3 per day, and the percentage of tasks completed averaged 84% per day.

Instructions and feedback given by the supervisors were also recorded. Instructions given averaged .3 per day and instances of feedback averaged 2 per day.
Figure 1. The number of requests for instructions, the number of requests for feedback, and the percent of tasks completed by Subject 1 during baseline, and training and self-recording conditions. This figure also shows the number of unrequested instructions and the number of instances of feedback given by the supervisor.
Figure 2. The number of requests for instructions, the number of requests for feedback, and the percent of tasks completed by Subject 2 during baseline, training and self-recording, and follow-up conditions. This figure also shows the number of unrequested instructions and the number of instances of feedback given by the supervisor.
Figure 3. The number of requests for instructions, the number of requests for feedback, and the percent of tasks completed by Subject 3 during baseline, and training and self-recording conditions. This figure also shows the number of unrequested instructions and the number of instances of feedback given by the supervisor.

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Figure 4. The number of requests for instructions, the number of requests for feedback, and the percent of tasks completed by Subject 4 during baseline, training and self-recording, and follow-up conditions. This figure also shows the number of unrequested instructions and the number of instances of feedback given by the supervisor.
DISCUSSION

Recent organizational literature has provided new and effective techniques for training supervisors in how to increase their employees' job performance as well as their job satisfaction. These responsibilities are traditionally given to the supervisor. The present study demonstrated an alternative to these techniques that would shift some of the responsibility from the supervisor to the employee. Employees were taught two important skills, requests for instructions and requests for feedback. The findings provide evidence that changes in requests for instructions and feedback occurred after training. The findings also suggest that the training procedures were effective in increasing the task performance of the trainees without any direct intervention on task performance. Task performance increased for three of the four subjects and was maintained at a high level for the remaining subject. Performance was also maintained for the two subjects who remained for the collection of follow-up data five weeks after the training sessions had been completed. Although task completion did not increase for Subject 1 who performed at a high rate before training, her behavior did not decrease and in fact remained at a high rate throughout training. Subject 3's behavior began to increase before training but it did not decrease to the initial baseline level.

Variables of possible importance that were not controlled, such as the number of assigned tasks, the difficulty of those assigned tasks, as well as the specificity of the instructions for those tasks. It is
possible that Subjects 1 and 3, the two subjects that performed at a high level during baseline, may have had supervisors who assigned few tasks and easy tasks and who provided specific instructions for those tasks. The number of assigned tasks varied for each trainee. Subject 3 received the lowest number of assigned tasks, an average of 5 and a range of 3 to 7 per day. Subject 4 received the next lowest number of assigned tasks, an average of 9 and a range of 7 to 11 per day. Subject 2 also averaged 9 assigned tasks per day with a range of 7 to 11. Subject 1 received the highest number of assigned tasks, an average of 11 and a range of 8 to 13. Thus, it was the case that Subject 3 was given only a few tasks to complete daily. Assigned tasks varied from simple custodial tasks such as cleaning tables or preparing for snack to more difficult tasks such as teaching children how to tie their shoes, designing bulletin boards, and helping children with academic assignments. No one supervisor gave all easy tasks or all difficult tasks: They each varied. There was no set format in which instructions were given. They were usually verbal instructions, but sometimes they were written, especially when the supervisor was not in the room.

Subject 1, the subject with the highest performance during baseline, received the greatest number of instructions during baseline and training. These instructions varied in difficulty. Subject 1 may have had a number of skills before entering the program.

Such training should establish optimal rates of requesting, i.e. rates high enough to be consistently successful, but low enough so that the trainee will work relatively independently and therefore not be considered a nuisance. A valid question, though, is whether a low rate
of requests is the correct rate to train. In different situations a low or high rate may be acceptable. There are as yet no guidelines; it is an empirical question to which the answer might vary for different trainees, different supervisors, different tasks, different settings, and different times. It may be assumed that the rates displayed by these trainees were appropriate because the supervisors responded positively or at least neutrally to the requests at all times. If a rate of appropriate requests does vary across situations, then how is an optimal rate determined? Whenever possible, consulting supervisors may offer potential suggestions.

The low frequency of requests was partly a function of the number of opportunities to make such requests. The trainees were taught to make requests at appropriate times such as when their supervisor was not busy, at the beginning or ending of an activity, or at the end of the day. Also the recorders may not have been frequently present at these appropriate times.

Data on the two supervisor behaviors, giving instructions and giving feedback, show that all supervisors tended to give fewer unrequested instructions as the trainees increased their requests for instructions. This inverse relationship indicates that as the trainees asked for instructions, this in turn lessened some of the supervisor's responsibility.

The data recorded on feedback given by the supervisors show that the supervisors tended to offer more unrequested instances of feedback after the trainees increased their requests for feedback. The increased percentages of completed tasks by the trainees may have been effective
in increasing the supervisors' unrequested feedback.

The present study was also successful in avoiding dissension and disruption of the center's programs. All of the trainees completed the 10 week program. At the center's request, two of the trainees remained at the center after completion of the program. The average number of absences for the workers was less than one per week. Two of the trainees had perfect attendance. Tardiness also did not occur as frequently as it had in past summers. It also averaged less than 1 per week for the trainees. Subjective evaluations by the supervisors were favorable and indicated that they were pleased with the trainees' work. All stated that they would recommend their trainee to future work settings.

It was informally observed that the trainees' requests reflected the diversity of the three or four examples and nonexamples taught in training. However, stereotyped responding often occurred initially and variations of responses therefore were stressed whenever possible during training. This diverse training may have helped the maintenance of the behavior.

Self-recording was used to provide information and reinforcement for the trainees. Knowledge of the quantity of work is quite important to workers that have resistant supervisors who place an emphasis on the negative aspects of their work performance. However, there were no contingencies for accurate recording. According to Rosebaum and Drabman (1979), self-recording need not be accurate to produce desirable behavior change. Kazdin (1974) asserted that, when used as a behavior change technique rather than an assessment device, the accuracy of self monitoring is less crucial and perhaps irrelevant.
The setting was structured to insure that the trainees turned in their task performance forms. Once the trainees turned in their forms, they received their time cards to "clockout" for the day. Through no formal announcement of these contingencies and social reinforcement this behavior was established and maintained.

Further research might be conducted which controls for the number and difficulty of assigned tasks and for the specificity of instructions for those tasks. Another issue that might be interesting to investigate is the cost effectiveness of such a program. Training supervisors often results in time consuming and costly inservices. If trainees can be trained at a lower cost but with equal efficiency, our supervisor training techniques could be switched to employee training techniques. If supervisors are paid as the trainees in this study were paid during training, a program such as this would be cost effective. Supervisor salary is greater than minimum wage (trainees' salary).

Finally research in this area may support and extend previous studies of adult-child interaction and natural communities of reinforcement. Graubard (1971), Cantor and Gelfand (1977), Seymour and Stokes (1976), provided evidence that children can effect adult behavior. Like these studies, the present study established that employees can affect their supervisors' behavior (increase requests for instructions and feedback). However, it was not clearly shown if the increased instances of feedback were positive. If this could be clearly shown, such data would support that trainees can recruit a natural community of positive reinforcement. The present study is somewhat different in supporting that trainees can recruit corrective feedback. Corrective feedback is
very beneficial in that it provides strengths as well as weaknesses to the recruitee. Having the skill to request corrective feedback from a supervisor that may be untrained or reluctant in providing such feedback could prevent employer-employee conflicts that often result in firing.

This type of training might be readily used in most job training programs. Increasing task performance through training two very important social skills shifts the responsibility to the trainee. Once these skills are mastered, they increase and maintain task performance. They also provide the trainee with constructive feedback, increase the trainee’s success rate, and provides a profitable work experience which is considered a significant aspect of any training program.
APPENDIX A

Supervisor Task Performance Sheet

Date________________________
Name_____________________
Time Section________________
Activity____________________

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Task Descriptions</th>
<th>Asked for Instructions?</th>
<th>Instructions were given?</th>
<th>Task Completed?</th>
<th>Asked for feedback?</th>
<th>Feedback was given?</th>
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Comments:__________________________________________

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APPENDIX B

Trainee Task Performance Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Time Section</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Task Descriptions</th>
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<th>Were instructions given?</th>
<th>Task Completed?</th>
<th>Did you ask for feedback?</th>
<th>Was feedback given?</th>
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Comments: ______________________________________________________

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APPENDIX C

Directions for Completing
Trainee Task Performance Sheet

Starting out on a new job is not easy. There are times when there are things that you know you should be doing, but it's hard to figure out just what. When this happens, you should ask your supervisor for instructions. Asking for instructions is easier said than done. To help you to do this it is a good idea to figure out just when to ask for instructions. Keeping track of the number of tasks that you complete without asking for instructions will give you a lot of information about what you are doing at work as well as letting you know when to ask for instructions.

You should ask for instructions whenever your supervisor has not given you specific instructions and you do not know exactly what is expected of you at work.

Filling out a task performance sheet will help you to keep track of the tasks you complete. Completing this form three times a day will give you a sample of the amount of work you do each day.

Listed on your sample task performance sheet are the three time sections that you will begin to sample your work behavior. Write down the activity that is occurring. Examples of time sections are 8:30-8:50, calendar; 10:30-10:50, snack; or 1:00-1:20, nap preparation. Write down all the tasks that you do within that time section. Beside each task, record if you were given instructions or if you asked for

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instructions and if you completed or did not complete the task.

At first, this may seem very awkward, but by doing this every day it will become a part of your daily routine.
APPENDIX D

How to Ask for Instructions

What you need to know

1. Who to ask?
2. What to ask (say)?
3. When to ask?
4. How to act?

1. Who to ask?

You should ask your supervisor or any other individual that is in charge of the classroom or playground area.

2. What to ask (say)?

There are many ways to ask for instructions. No one way is the right way. Here are some examples. They sound easy. Practice and give them a try.

a. "What should I do now?"

b. "Is it time for snack? Should I get the kids ready?"

d. "I'm not quite sure what you want me to do, Could you give me an example?"

d. "What will we be doing today?"

3. When to ask?

You should ask for instructions when your supervisor has not given you specific instructions and you may not know exactly what is expected of you on the job or if your supervisor gives you instructions that you do not understand.
4. How to act?

You should be courteous, use a pleasant tone of voice, and look at your supervisor when asking for instructions.

Let's practice example of asking for instructions.

**EXAMPLES**

1. After recess the teacher begins to work with a group of kids. Donna approaches the teacher and in a pleasant voice says, "Excuse me, but before you get started, what would you like me to work on with the other students?"

NONEXAMPLE: After recess the teacher begins to work with a group of kids. Donna sits in the back of the room and reads a magazine since the teacher has not told her what to do next.

2. The teacher asked Heather to work with group 3 on fine motor activities for the next time section. Heather, in a calm voice says, "I don't quite understand what you want me to do. Could you give me an example?"

NONEXAMPLE: The teacher asked Heather to work with group 3 on fine motor activities for the next time section. Heather begins working with the kids on identifying objects without actually knowing what she is supposed to do.

3. The teacher has planned a movie for the kids this afternoon. Mary was not aware of this and prepared the kids for recess. When the kids informed her of the movie, Mary approached the teacher and in a polite voice said, "Will the kids be going out for recess today or will we be doing something else?"

NONEXAMPLE: The teacher has planned a movie for the kids this afternoon. Mary was not aware of this and prepared the kids for recess. When the kids informed her of the movie, Mary played, tickled, and told jokes to the kids.
When the teacher has not arrived for the day or has had to leave the room for an extended period of time you should analyze the situation by asking yourself the following questions:

1. What time section is it?
2. What did you do at this time yesterday?
3. What do you like doing with the kids?

4. The teacher has called in sick and the substitute has not arrived. Jody takes the kids to the room and begins calendar (morning activity). After calendar, she will read the kids a story until the substitute arrives.

NONEXAMPLE: The teacher has called in sick and the substitute has not arrived. Jody runs to the office to find out how long she has to be alone with the kids.
APPENDIX E

How to Ask for Feedback

What you need to know

1. Who to ask?
2. What to ask (say)?
3. When to ask?
4. How to act?

1. Who to ask?

You should ask your supervisor.

2. What to ask (say)?

There are many ways to ask for feedback. No one way is right. Here are some examples. Practice and find out which way is right for you.

a. "I'd like to know if we could talk about how I'm doing on the job at a time that is convenient for you?"

b. "Did I do that o.k.?"

c. "I'm not sure if you like the way I taught Shanna to tie her shoes; could you watch next time and let me know if it's o.k.?"

d. "Thanks for telling me that I'm doing a nice job. Can you tell me exactly what I'm doing right?"

e. "Have I improved in talking with parents?"

3. When to ask?

You should ask for feedback at a time when it is convenient for you and your supervisor or if you would like to know how you performed in doing a particular task that you have just completed. A few minutes
at the end of the day is usually a good time to talk with your supervisor.

4. How to act?

You should be courteous, use a pleasant tone of voice, and look at your supervisor when asking for feedback. You should be willing to handle the feedback in a positive manner. For instance, if your supervisor suggests that you try to arrive on time more often, you should ask for their advice and make a sincere effort to be on time more often. Communicating with your supervisor will help your job to proceed more smoothly.

EXAMPLES

1. Leslie approached her supervisor during snack time and in a pleasant voice said, "I'd like to know if we could talk about how I'm doing on the job at a time that is convenient for you?"

NONEXAMPLE: Leslie approached her supervisor during snack time and in a pleasant tone of voice said, "Can you tell me what I'm doing wrong, whenever you get the time?"

2. John approached his supervisor at the end of the day and said, I'm not quite sure if you like the way I taught Bobby to tie his shoes. Could you watch next time and let me know if it's o.k.?

NONEXAMPLE: John approached his supervisor during a reading lesson and said, "I used a new way to teach Bobby to tie his shoes. Watch!"
3. During lunch, Carol politely said to her supervisor, Thanks for telling me that I'm doing a nice job. Can you tell me exactly what I'm doing right?

NONEXAMPLE: Carol approached her supervisor while she was passing out class materials. Carol used a demanding tone of voice and said, "What do you mean about nice job, fantastic work, could use improvement? That's all I hear! What else do you have to say about me?"
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Seymour, F. W., & Stokes, T. F. Self-recording in training girls to increase work and evoke staff praise in an institution for offenders. Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 1976, 9, 41-54.


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