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The Effects of Written Instruction on the Giving of Feedback

Robert L. Kowalski
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THE EFFECTS OF WRITTEN INSTRUCTION ON THE GIVING OF FEEDBACK

by

Robert L. Kowalski

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment
of the
Degree of Master of Arts

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
December 1979
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Robert L. Kowalski
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Introduction

Recent research in organizational behavior management points to the importance of training managers in the use of specific techniques when handling employee relations and performance problems; and businesses develop training materials and hire personnel to implement programs, yet there is no consistent agreement as to what methods are the most effective in producing desired results.

Researchers have suggested numerous reasons for engaging in management training. Burnaska (1976) reported that interpersonal skills training reduced employee turnover. Smith (1976) stated that employee morale improved after managers had undergone training on how to communicate effectively. Another study (Robinson & Robinson, 1978) suggested that the training of managers can help them cope more successfully with employee performance issues.

The work on management-training procedures has involved several features, many of which are common to all. Goldstein and Sorcher (1973) presented one of the most frequently used training approaches. Their program began with a modeling phase where an individual exhibited the specific behavior(s) to be taught. The models were live or on audio or video tapes. After the modeling phase, trainees practiced the behavior of interest while role-playing, allowing them to receive feedback and social reinforcement for their performance. To enhance generalization, the trainees then practiced dealing with a problem typical of their own work situation. Robinson and Robinson (1978) used a modification of this approach with seven components. They began with an overview
of the importance of the particular objective and then followed with a description of the specific behavior. Trainees would next view a modeling film and complete a critique of the film. Role-playing followed where the trainees received feedback on their performance, in addition to later having an opportunity to role-play with their own novel situations.

Since training programs are expensive to develop and implement, those developing such programs should examine the contribution of each component to determine its importance to the overall success of the program. In a review of the organizational behavior management literature Andrasik (1979) stated that many components may not significantly contribute to the obtained effects and thus we must partition out the independent effects of each component, retaining only those that are cost-effective. Although component analyses could help minimize training costs, no research on performance problems and employee relations training seems to systematically evaluate the components of such programs. It may turn out that many of the individual components may not contribute greatly to the training effect.

Researchers in other settings have successfully done component analyses. Krumhus (1978) and Quilitch (1975) reported that written instructions were not effective in generating desired behavior. Krumhus (1978) found that an instructional package did not increase the percentage of descriptive social reinforcers that staff delivered during tutorial sessions with school aged children. She reported that audio tape modeling, during the next phase, dramatically increased staff performance. Quilitch (1975) found that written instructions in the form of a memo were not effective in increasing staff compliance to
the memo that instructed them to run educational sessions with an institutional population. When consequences were later added, the author was able to increase compliance.

Individuals that develop programs should also be interested in demonstrating and maximizing transfer of behavior change from the training setting to the work setting. Several researchers used surveys in an attempt to document the effects of their training on managerial behavior in the work setting. Burnaska (1976) administered a Likert-type questionnaire to employees of trained managers. He used the questionnaire data to determine the success of the training program, yet no direct observation of the target behavior occurred in the job setting. Moses and Ritchie (1976) reported good generalization of behavior change to a novel problem situation, not an on the job application. Smith (1976) was interested in the quality of meetings supervisors conducted after training and changes made in employee opinion surveys a year later. On the basis of a meeting effectiveness survey employees rated feedback as being more effective, no objective data were taken on behaviors engaged in during the meetings. Finally, Byham (1976) also attempted to survey the employees' perceptions of their supervisors handling of interactions, but again provided no direct evidence of behavior change.

This research was concerned with the development of a program to train staff in giving performance feedback. Initially, we anticipated that the program might need all of the various components frequently used in such training programs; however, pilot research suggested that we might be able to develop an effective program based simply on written instruction. Therefore, the present research was an attempt to
assess if written instructions alone are in some instances sufficient to result in behavior change and if such behavior change can effectively transfer to situations outside of training.
EXPERIMENT I: EXPERIMENTAL VALIDATION OF WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS

Method

Subjects

Six subjects participated in the present study. They were undergraduate psychology students working as staff members in the Student Centered Education Project (SCEP), a program of personalized instruction at the university level. Their ages ranged from 19-24 years and they volunteered to become involved in the research by signing an informed-consent form. The consent form specified that there may be follow up observations in the SCEP setting, but it did not state when and under what circumstances the follow up may occur.

From a pool of eight staff members, only six of them were willing to participate in this research. We divided the six subjects into two groups, instruction and control, with three subjects per group. The instruction group gave performance reviews to their immediate supervisor in the SCEP setting. The control group was only involved in delivering performance reviews in SCEP, none of these subjects came into contact with the instructions or the role-playing test sessions.

Procedure

Baseline. The instruction group received a written description of a hypothetical performance problem (See Appendix A). They then had five minutes to review the written description and make notes about its content before playing the role of the supervisor discussing the situation with the problem employee. The researcher played the role of the
subordinate who received the feedback, testing each subject individually.

Role-playing was a part of testing, not a part of formal training. There were five role-playing test situations for each subject. Each session consisted of a different problem, although the specific written problems were kept consistent between subjects. The experiment used a multiple-baseline, across-subjects design, with the subjects differing in terms of when in the series of test session probes they received the instructions on how to give feedback. Depending upon the particular subject they would read the instructions after a various number of tests.

**Training.** Training consisted of giving subjects written instructions (See Appendix B). During training subjects had ten minutes to read these instructions which gave specific rules designed to decrease the aversiveness or improve the effectiveness of the feedback. All but the last of the instructions came from Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Listed below is a summary of the five basic rules.

1. Begin the meeting with a positive comment.
2. Ask questions instead of giving direct orders.
3. Talk about your own mistakes when criticizing someone else's mistakes.
4. Give the person a fine reputation to live up to.
5. Specify goals by giving feedback during meetings and then get an agreement on behavior change that needs to occur.

The written instructions consisted of a statement of the rule, along with approximately 100 words of detail explaining each rule. The instructions defined the rule, provided a rationale for applying the
rule, and gave an example of an application of each rule.

After receiving the written instructions during training, the subjects would engage in the remainder of their five role-playing test sessions. Again they would have five minutes to read and make notes about the example; however, now they were asked to use as many of the feedback rules as possible.

During these test sessions we never gave feedback to the subjects either in general or on their use of the feedback rules.

**Written performance problems.** All written performance problems were similar in that each contained a performance problem where previous performance was either good or adequate. Also all examples listed appropriate behaviors, inappropriate behaviors, and specific goals; however, the described settings varied (See Appendix A). Thus the descriptions were designed so that the rules could have been easily applied.

**Data collection.** Throughout all stages of data collection we measured the percentage of rules the subjects used when giving feedback. During both the role-playing test sessions and the actual performance reviews, the percentage of rules applied was the dependent variable.

In role-playing test sessions, the observer would sit to the side of the interaction and record each application of the rule as they occurred in the context of the subjects' feedback. During the performance reviews in SCEP, the observer was the recipient of the subjects' feedback; he was the person who would normally receive the performance reviews from the subjects as part of the regular SCEP activities (See Appendix C for a copy of the recording form).
A different observer collected data in each of the two settings, but both of the observers had undergone identical training procedures and had achieved similar levels of mastery. First, they were both effective at applying the rules as subjects in earlier pilot work and second, they both scored 100% on a brief quiz classifying instances and non-instances of applications of the instructions (See Appendix D for a copy of the quiz).

**Transfer of training.** Performance reviews in SCEP constituted the generalization tests. During performance reviews, subjects would give their immediate supervisor feedback concerning his performance in fulfilling duties expected of him. These performance reviews were regularly scheduled activities in SCEP, although at the time of data collection all subjects were new staff and had no prior history with performance reviews. The supervisor would also give the subjects performance reviews based on how they were doing, but these reviews occurred later on as we did not want the supervisor to be providing a model on how to give a performance review.

Two weeks prior to baseline with the role-playing test sessions, we recorded the performance of the subjects in the instruction group as they gave feedback to their supervisor in a performance review. The instruction group's second scheduled review occurred approximately two weeks after they finished the role-playing test sessions. At about the same time the three control subjects did two performance reviews with the same supervisor in SCEP, although none of them experienced the role-playing test sessions or the written instructions.

Giving feedback on written performance problems was similar to giving it during an actual performance review in SCEP. A primary
distinction between giving feedback in either of these settings was that on written problems the subjects gave feedback to a subordinate, while during performance reviews in the SCEP setting they gave feedback to their supervisor.

Reliability. Reliability checks occurred during the role-playing portion of the experiment. The smaller reported percentage of rules applied was divided by the larger reported percentage. This product was then multiplied by 100 to obtain the percent agreement reliability.

Both observers used identical response definitions and recording forms when conducting the reliability checks. Out of a total of five role-playing test sessions, reliability checks occurred on the first and the third sessions. Reliability was 100% both times for all three subjects in the instruction group.

We did not take reliability checks on the subjects' use of the instructions during performance reviews in the SCEP setting, because we did not want to cue the subjects that these performance reviews had anything to do with their participation in this research. However, the observer in the performance review setting was familiar with the definitions and could record their application accurately.
Results

The written instructions greatly increased the number of rules each subject used when delivering performance feedback. Furthermore, use of the rules transferred to the applied work setting when each subject gave performance reviews. During role-playing test sessions, on the average subjects used only one rule before instructions; but they applied all five of the rules following the instructions (See Figure 1). During the performance review prior to receiving the instructions, none of the subjects used more than two of the rules. However, in the second performance review all three subjects who had received instructions used all five rules, while the subjects who had not received instructions used an average of only two rules (See Figure 2).

We administered a social validation questionnaire after the experiment to subjects who received the written instructions. All rules were reported as falling between an importance rating of 4 and 5 on a scale of 1 to 5, with a rating of 5 being the most important. The subjects also reported that they were unaware data were collected on their application of the rules during the performance reviews. The mean rating was a 2 on a scale of 1 to 5, with a 5 indicating that they were very much aware of ongoing data collection, something we did not want the subjects to be aware of.
Figure 1: The percentage of rule use during role-playing test sessions both before and after the written instructions.
Figure 1

Percentage of rules used over testing sessions for three subjects labeled $S_1$, $S_2$, and $S_3$. The y-axis represents the percentage of rules used, ranging from 0 to 100. The x-axis represents testing sessions 1 to 5.
Figure 2: The percentage of rule use during performance reviews both before and after the written instructions.
Discussion

The significance of this research goes beyond stating that written instructions can be an effective method of training. It demonstrates that managers can get behavior change that transfers to other settings with inexpensive and easily implemented training procedures. However, this does not mean that written instructions will always be effective in changing behavior in all situations. For example, Quilitch (1975) demonstrated that written instructions in the form of a memo were ineffective. Also, Krumhus (1978) reported that written instructions did not control the behavior of staff during tutorial sessions.

Perhaps the written instructions were ineffective in the Quilitch (1975) study because of the greater response cost involved in complying with his memo. The memo required two hours of work everyday, while the responses involved in applying our rules did not require much additional effort. For example, subjects had to do performance reviews with their supervisors; they were going to give the feedback anyway, so little effort was involved in incorporating the rules while giving the performance review. Granted, the subjects in the Quilitch study had to work at the institution everyday, but they probably had an opportunity to engage in activities that were more reinforcing and less effortful than complying with his memo.

Krumhus (1978) might have found written instructions ineffective in producing desired behavior during tutorial sessions because of the lack of specificity as to when subjects should engage in giving descriptive social praise. The subjects received instructions to use descriptive
praise while tutoring, but they were not given a precise rule of exactly when to deliver the praise. All subjects could generate examples of descriptive praise after instructions, but they failed to apply the praise where appropriate in the tutorial session. The observer only recorded the use of descriptive social praise after a correct sequence of trials or after a correction trial. Maybe subjects gave praise during tutoring sessions, but not during the exact times the experimenter was doing the recording. Perhaps this was why audio-taped modeling during the next phase resulted in dramatic increases in giving descriptive social praise. The model might have provided additional information as to when the subjects should give the praise, information that the written instructions did not clearly provide.

In our study the instructions may have been more effective in producing transfer of behavior change because the behaviors were under the control of precise rules. Perhaps the subjects made statements extracted from the written instructions which specified the antecedent circumstances, the desired response, and the consequences for that particular response. In the role-playing test sessions, the subjects probably followed the rules because they received payoffs in the past for rule following, or there might have been subtle social consequences inherent in the testing situation. In the performance-review setting, rule-governed behavior might have been operative because of the subjects' history of being rewarded for following rules. In addition, there may have been built-in rewards, or at least decreased aversives for the person applying the rules during performance reviews. For example, asking questions about a particular problem as a prompt to get the recipient of the feedback to take action might have been less
aversive for the person that delivers the feedback than giving direct orders about correcting the problem. Thus the rules might have been used to the extent they reduced the aversiveness involved in giving corrective feedback. This is especially true in our study since supervisees gave supervisors feedback.

With regard to transfer of training, a certain amount of confounding might have existed between the instructional component and the role-playing test sessions. It is possible that, had the instruction group only read the instructions and not participated in the role-playing test sessions, their behavior might not have generalized as effectively. Therefore, a follow up experiment could involve two groups of subjects. One group might have role-playing test sessions, but no instructions, while the other group could receive the instructions, but would not engage in role-playing test sessions prior to giving performance reviews.
EXPERIMENT II: REPLICATION AND SOCIAL VALIDATION

When natural consequences shape the behavior we refer to the behavior as being contingency shaped. When rules are given or when artificial or mechanical consequences generate appropriate behavior we refer to the behavior as being under rule control. In discussing rule-governed behavior Skinner (1969) stated that contingency shaping gives behavior its character. Rule-governed behavior may be "cold"; it covers only the essentials, the rules may lack the subtleties of contingency shaped behavior. We believe that rule control was operating here; and since it is often cold and clumsy as Skinner would suggest, it seemed useful to examine the topography of the feedback giving responses. Experiment II allowed judges to assess the smoothness and the fluency of the subjects' verbal feedback, in addition to having them give their estimates on the effectiveness of the performances.

Whether or not the rules were functioning and facilitating changes in the subjects' verbal feedback was a separate issue from whether or not the feedback given affected behavior change on the part of the interviewee. We were simply validating the training procedure and not necessarily the rules we were teaching.
Method

Subjects

Three subjects whose ages ranged from 18-20 years participated in this study. They were staff members in the SCEP program and all engaged in role-playing test sessions.

Another group comprised of ten individuals served as judges. The judges were students in an introductory psychology course. Both groups volunteered by signing an informed-consent form.

Procedure

The procedures were identical to those initially used in Experiment I except that the subjects' interactions in the role-playing test sessions were video taped and they only engaged in two role-playing test sessions instead of five. Also, performance reviews were not used in this experiment. Again we measured the percentage of rules subjects used during the role-playing test sessions.

We used an AB design with two of the subjects while the third served as control and received no written instructions on how to give feedback. We recorded baseline data for all three subjects during their first role-playing test. Then prior to engaging in their second role-playing test the first two subjects received the written instructions, while the control subject did not. Thus a total of six role-playing sessions were taped with each subject performing twice.

Social validation. Prior to judging the content of the tapes, the judges received a copy of the evaluation form and a careful
explanation of each item (See Appendix E for the evaluation form). Basically, the evaluation form asked judges to rate the subjects' feedback as being positive, aversive, more likely to get behavior change, in addition to rating the smoothness and the fluency of the feedback. They then received descriptions of the written performance problems used in the role-playing test session, so that they knew the context of the role-playing tests.

After these preliminary procedures all the judges viewed the video tapes at the same time. They saw each pair of role-playing video tapes for each of the three subjects, with the sequence of two role-playing test sessions being counter balanced between the two instructed subjects. For each subject, the judges independently evaluated their performance along the dimensions specified on the evaluation form.
Results and Discussion

As in Experiment I, the written instructions were again effective in training subjects to increase the number of rules used when delivering performance feedback. The trained subjects applied a mean of 30% of the rules before receiving the instructions and 100% after instruction. The control subject applied 60% of the rules during the first role-playing test session, and only 40% during the second test session (See Table 1).

The judges rated the post-instruction performance of the trained subjects superior; however, there was no clear improvement for the control subject from the first to the second role-playing test session (See Table 2). For the two trained subjects, the judges reported that the feedback during the post-instruction role-playing session was more positive, less aversive, more likely to get behavior change, and they found the vocal delivery more smooth and fluent. They found no such consistent improvement for the control subject. Rule control is believed to be more clumsy and mechanical than contingency shaped behavior, yet judges rated the subjects' performance as being more fluent when they applied the rules.

This research is also a demonstration of the validation of a lean programming approach to training by using a minimal amount of instruction to get the desired effect. Our training program included the rules, a specific definition of each rule, an example of applying the rule, and rationales of why the rules should be applied. Although it may have been possible to have used an even leaner instructional
Table 1: Percentages of instructional rule application during Experiment II.
Table 1

Percentages of Instructional Rule Application During Experiment II.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
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<th>2nd Test (Training)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Table 2: Percentage of judges' ratings during Experiment II.
Table 2
Percentage of Judges' Ratings During Experiment II.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st Test</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>2nd Test</th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S₁</td>
<td>S₂</td>
<td>S₃</td>
<td>After</td>
<td>S₁</td>
<td>S₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(BL₁)</td>
<td>(BL₁)</td>
<td>(BL₁)</td>
<td>(Inst.)</td>
<td>(Inst.)</td>
<td>(BL₂)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Positive</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Aversive</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Likely to</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Smooth and</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluent</td>
<td></td>
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*When comparing the performances within subjects from the first to the second test session, if the two reported percentages do not total 100%, the remainder of the judges rated the performances as being equal.*

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program, this program is much more concise than the majority of instructional training programs typifying the present state of the art.

This research also points to several other areas for future work. As Andrasik (1979) suggests researchers and trainers should place more emphasis on demonstrating the effectiveness of each component. In this way we can eliminate costly components that may not significantly contribute to the effects that we obtained. Research should also look for direct evidence of behavior change in the work setting, and not rely so extensively on surveys. Finally, the research should address the issue of when and under what conditions rule control works best and when is contingency shaping preferred.
Reference Notes

References


Appendix A

Written Performance Problems
You are a supervisor in charge of a subordinate's research. Your job is to meet weekly with this individual at a standard time. At these meetings, you monitor research-related tasks completed by the researcher. At the end of the term, the researcher gets a grade for his percentage of task completion. These tasks are assigned weekly. The specified research responsibilities are fairly straightforward. They are written down, and both you and the researcher have a record of what is required for the next meeting.

Now imagine that this person was completing nine out of ten tasks per week, for two consecutive months. This means that the researcher was completing approximately 90% of his assigned tasks. Also, the person has missed a meeting during this time period and was late for another meeting, though attendance had been perfect up to that point.

You have decided that you would like to give the person some feedback before the problem gets much worse. In ten minutes you will have a meeting with this person. You may use whatever notes you wish to prepare yourself.
You are the manager of a shoe store at a local shopping mall. The store where you work is fairly large, so that during the hours that you are open there are always seven employees on the sales floor. You are responsible for managing a total of 25 employees. Since the goal of any shoe store is to make sales to the public, the amount of sales made by each employee becomes very important. As manager, your goal is to try to keep these sales as high as possible.

You are having difficulty with one of your sales personnel. During the past several months, this person had always been among your top three sales persons. In addition, this person has excellent social skills; but there is one small problem. During the last month this person's sales did not amount to much. In fact, this person is now among the bottom three sales persons. So it is not the case that everyone's sales are down, but rather just this person's sales.

You decided that you would like to give some feedback before the problem gets worse. In ten minutes, you will have a meeting with this person. You may use whatever notes you wish to prepare yourself.
You are an executive for an advertising firm. You are responsible for a dozen or so large accounts. You also have a personal secretary who assists you in developing contracts and typing memos. The secretary is very qualified and efficient. He/she can type 75 words a minute, take shorthand, and is very good at editing material in a grammatically correct fashion.

There is one small problem. The secretary has a tendency to make negative remarks in the office (i.e., "The typewriter is not working, why do we buy such cheap equipment?" or "This stupid telephone keeps ringing off the hook!"). It would not be so bad if you were the only one around to hear the remarks, but you have clients coming in and out of the office.

You feel that this is not professional behavior, and you thought that it would be appropriate to give the secretary feedback about this. In ten minutes you will be having a meeting with this person. You may use whatever notes you wish to prepare yourself.
You are the manager of an expanding office supply firm. In the past few years business has gotten so good that you now have 30 employees that you supervise. To help you do a more effective job of managing, you hired an assistant. The assistant graduated Summa Cum Laude in Business Administration, and came highly recommended. The first day the assistant started work, he/she developed a management by objectives package for the firm. Since that time, business has picked up another 20%.

There is one problem that has been developing. The assistant is becoming aggressive and bossy in your meetings to the point where he/she is telling you what your responsibilities are. You don't want to fire the person because he/she is a real asset to the company. On the other hand, you do not want to be told what to do by a subordinate.

You feel that this is not professional behavior, and you thought it would be appropriate to give the assistant feedback about this. You may use whatever notes you wish to prepare yourself, because in ten minutes you will be having a meeting with this person.
Being the owner of a small printing company it is important for you to manage the few personnel that you have as effectively as possible. Your only employees are a secretary/bookkeeper, a type setter, two people to cut and box the printed paper products, and a part-time janitor.

You know all your employees personally and have a very good working relationship with them, but lately you have been having some problems with the janitor. The janitor is a semi-retired gentleman who is seeking supplemental income. He had excellent references from his old job as a janitor. In addition, he always did an immaculate job of cleaning up. Recently, you have noticed that the waste paper baskets are not being dumped and the floors are a little messy. To top it off, you came in the other evening to do some office work and you caught him sleeping on the job.

Now you do not want to fire him, you just want to get the work you are paying for. You decided that you would like to give some feedback before the problem gets worse. In ten minutes, you will have a meeting with this person. You may use whatever notes you wish.
Appendix B

Instructional Training Program
Rules

1. Definition: Begin the meeting with a positive.

At the beginning of the meeting, prior to giving any corrective feedback, the supervisor will verbally make a comment of descriptive social praise regarding a specific behavior that was performed by the subordinate (i.e. "I really like how you came in early this week" or "I was quite impressed on how prompt you were at turning in the proposal for your research").

The rationale for this rule is that if you wish to win people over to your way of thinking then you must first let them know that you are sincerely a friend, and if you start the meeting with social praise the subordinate might be more receptive to other things you have to say throughout the course of the meeting.

2. Definition: Ask questions instead of giving orders.

During the meeting, if an issue that is a potential problem needs to be addressed, then the supervisor will verbally ask the subordinate how he/she would approach the problem (i.e. "What do you think about the problem of employees leaving early?" instead of saying "I would like you to deal with the problem of employees leaving early").

The rationale for this rule is that if the supervisor lets the subordinate think that it was his/her idea to select the way to work on the problem, perhaps the subordinate will be more interested and willing to make the necessary changes, as opposed to you just ordering him/her to work on the problem. Also, this technique avoids having the supervisor presenting themselves as an aversive stimulus (delivering problems to work on), it calls attention to problematic issues indirectly.

3. Definition: Talk about your own mistakes when criticizing someone else's mistakes.

The supervisor will verbally state errors that he/she has made under similar circumstances when pointing to mistakes that the subordinate might be making (i.e. "When I first moved to the suburbs, I had some difficulty getting to work on time. This is the reason why I can appreciate some of the problems you are having getting here on time, particularly since you are driving from the country, but nevertheless, this problem cannot make you exempt from arriving to work on time."). This technique should be used when you find it necessary to point out a problem with a particular individual's behavior, although it need not be restricted to problems with individuals.

The rationale for this rule is that if the supervisor lets the subordinate know that he/she too has made mistakes and is willing to admit them, perhaps the subordinate would not be so critical of the supervisor, when the supervisor is discussing mistakes of subordinates.
4. Definition: Give the person a fine reputation to live up to.

The supervisor will make a few comments of descriptive verbal social praise to the subordinate. These comments will be phrased in such a way that they will refer to some aspect of the subordinate's performance. The intention of the statements is to keep the employee tied into his/her duties on the job (i.e. "Tom, I know that you are one of my most productive employees as reflected by your production rate. It seems that you are always looking out for the company's best interests.")

The rationale for this rule is that if the supervisor shows confidence in the individual's performance and intentions, then perhaps the subordinate would be influenced to stay more on task, and live up to his/her supervisor's expectations.

5. Definition: Specify goals by giving feedback during meetings, and then get agreement on behavior change that needs to occur.

Before the meeting, the supervisor will decide the goals he/she wishes to accomplish and decide what specifically can be done that will aid the subordinate in reaching the goal. During the meeting, the supervisor will get the subordinate's agreement on what behaviors they will have to engage in to insure some degree of success. For example, after obtaining an affirmative response that arriving late to work is a problem, get an agreement that the person will leave his/her home a few minutes earlier in the morning. One way to get this agreement might be to ask the individual if they can see how arriving late to work can present a problem for the company. Other such prompts may have to be used.

The rationale for this rule is that if the supervisor sets goals before the meeting, then the meeting might be more productive. And if the supervisor gets agreement from the subordinate on what behaviors are needed to change, the probability of the behavior change occurring might be higher if all parties concerned agreed.
Appendix C

Observational Recording Form
Corrective Feedback Recording Form

Subject #1: _______________

Subject #2: _______________

Subject #3: _______________

Recorder: _______________

Date: __ / __ / __

Time: __ : __

Tally Frequencies

(1) Ask questions instead of giving orders.

(2) Talk about your own mistakes when criticizing someone else's mistakes.

(3) Give the person a fine reputation to live up to.

(4) Begin with a positive.

(5) Specify goals by giving feedback during meetings, and then getting an agreement on the behavior change that needs to occur.

Comments:

40
Appendix D

Observer Training Quiz
Sample of Feedback Items

Please identify the following items according to the scoring code listed below:

1. Begin with a positive. 2. Ask questions instead of giving direct orders. 3. Talk about your own mistakes before criticizing someone else's mistakes. 4. Give the other person a fine reputation to live up to. 5. Get agreement on the behavior change that needs to occur. 6. The item doesn't apply to the rules.

1. ____ What do you think about the large amounts of money that are lost as a result of employee theft?
2. ____ Hello there Tom, it is really good to see you.
3. ____ Yes, I really used to have a problem with fitting in all my required activities into a weekly schedule, until I began to use the spaces on my daily calendar more effectively. Perhaps by you using yours more consistently might help to bring your performance level up.
4. ____ Look at that, you are here five minutes before our scheduled meeting. I appreciate your promptness.
5. ____ Please give the secretaries feedback on the length of their coffee breaks.
6. ____ You are not performing at the level that we feel management material should be.
7. ____ Now that we have a general consensus that it is appropriate to have weekly meetings with all of your subordinates, maybe at our next meeting you can report on how many meetings that you have had. Does this sound acceptable? The employee says "yes".
8. ____ I am really impressed with your sales performance. You have just about the highest total sales of any of our sales personnel. I'm sure you realize it, but it is very apparent to us that you are a valuable asset to our organization.
9. ____ .... By the way, I think you are very productive.
10. ____ I am not all that pleased with the negative feedback that you give in public about the company's pension plan. I would appreciate it if you will refrain from doing so in the future.
Appendix E

Judges Evaluation Form
Video Taped Role-play Evaluation Form

1. Which feedback presentation (1 or 2) did you find to emphasize things in the most positive terms?

   (Check) 1 _____ 2 _____ equally positive ____

   If you checked 1 over 2 or vise versa, in your estimation how much more positive was it over the other?

   (Circle) 5 4 3 2 1 a lot not much

2. Which presentation (1 or 2) did you find the feedback delivered in a more aversive manner?

   (Check) 1 _____ 2 _____ equally aversive ____

   If you checked 1 over 2 or vise versa, in your estimation how much more aversive was it over the other?

   (Circle) 5 4 3 2 1 a lot not much

3. Which feedback presentation (1 or 2) did you believe to be more likely to get the respondent to take action and to correct the situation?

   (Check) 1 _____ 2 _____ equally effective ____

   If you checked 1 over 2 or vise versa, in your estimation how much more likely do you believe that the respondent will take action?

   (Circle) 5 4 3 2 1 a lot not much

4. Which feedback presentation (1 or 2) did you find the vocal delivery involved in giving the feedback more smooth and fluent?

   (Check) 1 _____ 2 _____ equally fluent ____

   If you checked 1 over 2 or vise versa, in your estimation how much more fluent was it over the other?

   (Circle) 5 4 3 2 1 a lot not much