

Student name: _____ Date: _____

MODULE 20

Distinguish between positive and negative feedback; define and give examples of constructive criticism.

Objectives:

- A. Define feedback.**
- B. List examples of positive and negative feedback you could receive at work.**
- C. Define constructive criticism and list steps in responding to criticism in a constructive manner.**

MODULE 20: INFORMATION SHEET

TO THE STUDENT: Read and study this information sheet and then complete the student activities at the end of the module.

What is feedback?

Feedback is information given to a person to evaluate behaviors. People can give you feedback on things you do or say. Feedback is important to you because it will tell you how you are doing and if you are doing what is expected of you.

Feedback can be either positive or negative. If you are doing a job or an assignment correctly, you will receive positive feedback and you will know that you should continue that behavior. Positive feedback tells you that everything is going well.

Negative feedback, on the other hand, tells you that you are not doing as you are expected. It tells you that you must in some way alter your behavior so that you will be doing things right.

Who gives feedback?

Everyone gives feedback! You are constantly giving feedback to your friends, parents, teachers and the people with whom you work. Through your words or actions, you are letting people know how you feel in response to things that they are saying or doing.

All your life, you have been receiving feedback from your friends, parents, and teachers. Your report card from school has been a form of feedback. If you received an A, you knew that you were doing well in that subject and that you should continue doing whatever you were doing in terms of reading, studying, and listening in class. If you received an F, this told you that you were going to have to make some changes in order to pass the course.

Feedback on the job

Now that you are working, you will be receiving feedback from your employer and from the other employees at work. If your employer is pleased with your performance on the job, he/she will give you positive feedback by telling you that you are doing well. You may be given increased hours or you may even have received a pay raise to show you that you are doing well. If you are not doing well, your employer may tell you about the mistakes you are making or he/she might start decreasing your hours. Usually if your work does not improve, the employer will terminate your employment.

Dealing with positive and negative feedback

It is usually very easy to deal with positive feedback. Everyone likes to hear good things about themselves and the work they are doing.

If your employer says, "You did a nice job with that project you just completed," or "We have decided to offer you a full-time job and an increase in pay because you are doing so well," you will feel good. You will probably continue to do your job as you have been or you might even try to do more because you know that would please your employer.

However, if your employer says, "I think you are having some problems getting along with the other employees," or "I am not pleased with the number of errors I have found in your work," you should realize that this is negative feedback and that it is a sign that you must change your behavior at work or possibly lose that job.

Some people have a very difficult time dealing with negative feedback. When they hear people say bad things about them, they tend to get defensive. They may try to shift the blame to another person by saying "I didn't do that--it was _____," or they may try to deny that there is a problem at all.

It is important for you to realize that your employer has been doing this job much longer than you have and that he/she probably knows best. You must also realize that as long as you work for that person, you must do whatever is necessary to please the employer. The business you work for has policies and procedures you must follow and has set standards for the work they expect from you. You must be willing to alter your behavior and make the expected changes if you wish to be successful on the job.

When you display a positive reaction to negative feedback, it shows your employer that you are trying to improve. By asking for help or by showing that you are making an honest attempt to improve your work, you will show your employer that you want to keep your job and that you are cooperating.

When your employer evaluates your work, you should study carefully comments he/she makes and the way you have been rated. In areas where your employer rates you well, you know that you should continue to do whatever you have been doing. Any area in which your employer evaluates you with a low grade must be improved. If you do not understand why you have been evaluated the way you were, ask your employer to explain it to you. Then show that you are planning to make a serious attempt to improve.

Constructive criticism

It is important for you to realize that negative feedback is often seen as criticism and most people do not react well to criticism. It is true that sometimes criticism that is given is destructive and meant to hurt another person. For example, if a co-worker said to you, "That mistake you made was really stupid," it would be destructive criticism meant to hurt you.

On the other hand, your employer may offer negative feedback or criticism meant to help you improve on the job. This should be construed as constructive criticism and you should accept it as such. You must learn to react to criticism in a constructive manner and use it to help improve your performance on the job.

Reacting to constructive criticism

Try to follow these rules in dealing with constructive criticism from your employers.

1. You should listen carefully to your employer and try to understand the criticism. Take it seriously and thank the employer for helping you to understand.
2. Try not to act defensively. Be willing to admit that you made a mistake or that you know you could be doing a better job.
3. Do not lose your temper or argue with your employer. Do not become angry with your employer.
4. Work to improve on your weaknesses. Let your employer know that you are serious about trying to improve.

MODULE 20: STUDENT ACTIVITIES

TO THE STUDENT: After you have read and studied the information sheet, answer the following questions.

1. Define feedback.
2. Describe three examples of positive feedback you have received from your employer.

3. Give three examples of times when you received negative feedback from someone at work. Then tell what you did to improve or correct the problem.

What was the negative feedback?

What did you do?

4. Write a paragraph contrasting the differences between destructive and constructive criticism. (Use additional sheets for your paragraph.)
5. Think of a time when someone at work offered you some constructive criticism. Write an essay (of three paragraphs or more) describing how you reacted. Using the rules for dealing with constructive criticism, include how you should have reacted. (Use additional sheets for your essay.)

MODULE 20: STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS MODULE
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Pennsylvania's Academic Standards for Career Education and Work**13.3.11. Career Retention (Keeping a Job)****B. Evaluate conflict resolution skills:**

- Constructive criticism
- Group dynamics
- Managing
- Mediation
- Negotiation
- Problem solving

Pennsylvania's Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (RWSL)**1.1.11. Learning to Read Independently**

- E. Establish a reading vocabulary by identifying and correctly using new words acquired through the study of their relationships to other words. Use a dictionary or related reference.

1.4.11. Types of Writing

- B. Write complex informational pieces (e.g. research papers, analyses, evaluations, essays).
- Include a variety of methods to develop the main idea.
 - Use precise language and specific detail.
 - Include cause and effect.
 - Use relevant graphics (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, tables).
 - Use primary and secondary sources.
- C. Write persuasive pieces.
- Include a clearly stated position or opinion.
 - Include convincing, elaborated and properly cited evidence.
 - Develop reader interest.
 - Anticipate and counter reader concerns and arguments.
 - Include a variety of methods to advance the argument or position.

1.5.11. Quality of Writing

- A. Write with a sharp, distinct focus.
 - Identify topic, task and audience.
 - Establish and maintain a single point of view.
- B. Write using well-developed content appropriate for the topic.
 - Gather, determine validity and reliability of, analyze and organize information.
 - Employ the most effective format for purpose and audience.
 - Write fully developed paragraphs that have details and information specific to the topic and relevant to the focus.
- F. Edit writing using the conventions of language.
 - Spell all words correctly.
 - Use capital letters correctly.
 - Punctuate correctly (periods, exclamation points, question marks, commas, quotation marks, apostrophes, colons, semicolons, parentheses, hyphens, brackets, ellipses).
 - Use nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions and interjections properly.
 - Use complete sentences (simple, compound, complex, declarative, interrogative, exclamatory and imperative).

Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)**PERSONAL QUALITIES**

Self-Esteem: Believes in own self-worth and maintains a positive view.