

What Is Effective Performance Feedback Within a Work College? Comparing Open Feedback to
Computer-Mediated Communication.

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Researchers in the field of Organizational Communication have examined the intricacies of giving and receiving Performance Feedback, both in and out of the workplace. The purpose of this study is to compare two common feedback channels, email and Face to Face (FtF), and how they are perceived in a Work College setting. This study seeks to fill a gap in research by concentrating on what aspects of a communication channel helps facilitate bottom-up feedback more than others. The results of this project found that supervisors of student laborers should be mindful of established communication norms and student preferences for communication channels, and should create positive feedback environments in order to promote positively giving and receiving both positive and negative feedback between students and supervisors.

Key Words: Organizational Communication, Media Richness Theory, Work Colleges, Student Laborers, Performance Feedback, Bottom-Up Feedback, Face to Face Communication, Computer Mediated Communication

A Work-Study college provides students with financial aid by having students work in a college sanctioned position, operating on campus as a student laborer or off campus with a partnered organization or nonprofit. When pursuing an education through a Work-Study program, students take on both the role of worker and student, each bringing their own stresses and responsibilities. Typically, students are asked at the end of each semester to take part in an electronic evaluation of their professors, the course, and provide any feedback that might be necessary to improve the next set of classes. Often times a semesterly evaluation is also asked of student laborers in regards to the success or shortcomings of their supervisors. This is the case for Berea College, based in Kentucky, US. However, what is the likelihood of student workers taking the time for both evaluations? One might suspect that the role of student would take precedence and therefore necessitate more engagement. This easily leaves the supervisors of labor positions practically without consequences or guidance as to the effectiveness of their supervision. Similarly, by coupling this scenario with the expectation that students give their supervisors feedback – i.e., bottom-up feedback - it becomes increasingly clear that there are very few avenues to hold managers accountable in terms of how well they are serving in their positions.

As mentioned, supervisors at Work-Study Colleges might be evaluated via an electronic survey at the end of each semester, but the question remains of how effective are those evaluations in garnering student feedback. What if the only feedback they have is negative? Despite knowing the benefits of including some amount negative feedback within evaluations, it's also well known that more folks than not are uncomfortable with giving *and receiving* negative feedback (Audia & Locke, 2003; Bond & Anderson, 1987; Brown et al., 2016; Chawla et al., 2016; Sheer, 2018). Previous research also suggests that managers are seen as more

effective overall when allowing their laborers some level of ownership in terms of the communication channel chosen to give feedback, and when managers are considerate of demographic variables such as age, gender, or culture (Chawla et al., 2016, and Dahling and O'Malley, 2012). This study aims to compare two common communication channels, email and Face to Face (FtF) for how effective they are perceived in conveying Performance Feedback by Labor Students within a Work College setting.

Literature Review

Researchers in the field of Organizational Communication have examined the intricacies of giving and receiving Performance Feedback, both in and out of the workplace. Numerous studies have examined the relationship between feedback orientation – meaning "receptivity to job performance feedback" (Steelman & Wolfeld, 2018, p 43) – and post-feedback outcomes (such as employee satisfaction, efficiency, complaints, etc.) . Current feedback-centered research provides an extensive overview of important characteristics which effect post-feedback outcomes, yet the focus of research typically runs top-down (supervisors to subordinates) (see; Sheer, 2012, and Bradley & Campbell (2016). There is notably less research concerning bottom-up feedback (employee to supervisors) and how it is best facilitated. This study aims to bridge that gap by addressing what aspects of a communication channel more so helps facilitate bottom-up feedback than others.

Previous research identified several concepts which guide this study, including Organizational Justice, Satisfaction, Managerial Accountability, and Stress and Comfort. This paper first explores each concept individually, then applies them to each potential feedback communication channel. Doing this builds on prior studies prior studies and creates the fullest

picture of how Labor Students evaluate effective communication in order to provide feedback to their supervisors.

Stress and Comfort

When people are faced with giving Performance Feedback, especially negative feedback, they often feel somewhat, if not incredibly, ill-at-ease. Often this is due to giving feedback being related to a high possibility of losing face (Gibb, 1961; Goffman, 1967). Reactions to this type of stress, whether they be face-saving behaviors, avoidance tactics, or immediate FtF conversations, can be impactful primarily to the reception of whatever feedback is being given (Bond & Anderson, 1987; Sheer, 2012). Researchers agree that giving positive feedback causes little to no stress to the giver, though depending on the orientation of the receiver, they may feel stress even when faced with positive feedback (Bond & Anderson, 1987; Brown et al., 2016; Chawla et al., 2016; Dahling et al., 2012; Sheer, 2012).

Despite the inherent discomfort that comes specifically from giving negative feedback, numerous studies have shown multiple benefits that come from receiving effective negative feedback, such as, enhanced employees' psychological safety (Carpentier & Mageau, 2013), stronger rapport between students and superiors (Audia & Locke, 2003), and the proactive engagement of employees by their supervisors (Buckland et al. 2017). Part of this study's evaluation of effectiveness will be in analyzing each feedback channel's capacity for delivering negative feedback in a way that results in the best possible reception. The importance of including the analysis of the stress and comfort garnered by both communication channels is due to these variable's indication of actionability – or how likely the channel is to be used. Therefore, if one of the proposed channels is seen as effective in all other variables listed in this review but

cause a high amount of stress and a low amount of comfort, it is incredibly likely that this channel will not be used to deliver any type of feedback, thus failing in being effective.

Based on the gathered information, this research is being framed as a case study specifically examining Face to Face and email as effective feedback modes within the labor environment of Berea College, based in Berea, KY. This college utilizes Work-Study as a road to achieving secondary education. Thus, it provides an opportunity to examine the unique intersection of work and academics and the possible benefits from learning how student laborers best give and receive Performance Feedback. By focusing on perceptions of Organizational Justice, Satisfaction, Accountability, and Stress and Comfort, this study will fulfill holes in this field of research while being as encompassing of previous research as possible. In this way, any data found through this project can more effectively add to its field because of the thoroughly built foundation.

Organizational Justice

Organizational Justice is the outcome of employees immediately evaluating given information as fair or unfair (Chory & Westerman, 2009; Gibb, 1961; Westerman et al., 2014). Positive Organizational Justice is observed through employees continually evaluating information being given to them as fair. Multiple communicational factors influence perceived justice. Westerman et al. (2014) found that the channel influenced perceptions of fairness. For example, when receiving negative feedback, phone calls were perceived as "more just" while emails were seen as "less just" (p 15, 2014). From this result, the researchers theorized that feedback delivery norms had been established within the organization, and the use of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) for giving negative feedback violated those expectations in some way. Setting norms for the current study are also expected to influence how fairly negative feedback is

perceived - though less so due to the participants of this study being in the position of both student and laborer and the role of a student requiring more frequent interactions with negative Performance Feedback via CMC (Balsor & Weatherbee, 2010; King & King, 2020; Mandouit, 2018).

Chory and Westerman (2009) looked at the relationship specifically between perceived justice and negative feedback. They built off the dimensions of negative feedback identified by Geddes and Linnehan (1996) to construct four evaluative factors for how receivers perceive the fairness of given feedback. Chory and Westerman found that all four dimensions were predictors for employee perceptions of organizational justice in terms of receiving negative feedback, however, two among the four stood out. Consistency and constructiveness seemed to hold the highest value of Justice for workers. If the feedback given was clearly stated and obviously well within the established standards of the organization, it was received as consistent. Constructiveness was perceived when negative feedback was given in a caring and respectful manner, one that is sensitive to the worker and the situation. This knowledge will be helpful to the present study as an indicative factor for how fairness is evaluated by student laborers and for guidance as to value assigning when it is time to analyze data.

Accountability

For the purposes of this study, Accountability refers to the answerability (having to justify ones work performance), as well as accessibility (being available to give, receive and act on feedback), and reliability (the perceived credibility and trustworthiness of one's feedback) of a manager's feedback style and use. Each of these variables has been used together and on their own in previous studies, however here they are combined under the umbrella of Accountability in order to succinctly showcase the distinctive level of self-awareness effective managers require

(Audia & Locke, 2003; Baker et al., 2013; Chawla et al., 2016; Dahling & O'Malley, 2011; Dahling et al., 2012; Sheer, 2012). Vivian Sheer (2012) perfectly captures the ability to categorize Accountability in such a way, noting, "The interconnected supervisor-subordinate dyad commands a unique relational accountability: The success of one ultimately depends on the successful performance of the other" (p 222), thus, pinpointing the significant value in high Accountability from supervisors.

When considered in this light, the suggestions made by Chawla and colleagues (2016) also speak to the importance of Accountability on behalf of supervisors. Looking at how managers can influence the feedback environment at their organization with Accountability, Chawla et al. (2016) propose that managers make themselves more accessible for informal conversations, as the informality allows supervisors to subvert any rigidity found during formal feedback interactions that might restrict their ability to give feedback in a way workers find most compelling. The researchers also suggest highlighting a supervisors Accountability by encouraging their subordinates to seek out feedback, setting a standard for this action to be received and responded to positively. This proposal again speaks to the impact made by an organization's feedback environment when it is positively inclined. This is beneficial for the study at hand as it further shows the complexities and wide range of oversight that makes up effective management.

Satisfaction

Employee Satisfaction is noted as the approval of or contentment with one's job; this includes the feedback given, the performance of the manager, and the environment in which they work. Satisfied employees have little reason to leave their positions or feel and act negatively in response to an organization's regulations or conduct. Specifically looking at an employee's

Satisfaction with Performance Feedback is often used as a tool to gauge and limit negative outbursts from workers (Bradley & Campbell, 2016; Brown et al., 2016; Chawla et al., 2016; Steelman & Wolfeld, 2018). Steelman and Wolfeld (2018) recognized a budding theme in managerial tactics, known as the manager-as-coach (MAC) form of leadership (Beattie et al. 2014; Gregory & Levy, 2010), The researchers sought to study any possible relationships between MAC-type supervising and employee feedback orientation, as they had previously noted a part of feedback orientation strongly indicating how satisfied workers were with their job.

For Steelman and Wolfeld's (2018) study, environment played a much more significant role than had been expected. Feedback environments encompass the context in which feedback is given. Favorable feedback environments are usually seen as fair and considerate, with supervisors encouraging the act of seeking out feedback, and also making a point to gather feedback themselves. Feedback must be given frequently and be precise – and this applies to both positive and negative feedback (Lonsdale, 2016). Steelman and Wolfeld found that managers with a positive feedback orientation were generally rated as having better coaching abilities and promoting solid relationships when they created a favorable feedback environment (p 48). Interestingly, however, in answering their second hypothesis – which proposed that coaching behaviors and relationships, coupled with the feedback environment would mediate the relationship between manager and subordinate feedback orientation (Steelman & Wolfeld, 2018) – the researchers found that only feedback environment had any lasting effect on worker's feedback orientation. This meant that whether or not managers implemented coaching behaviors into their managing styles, and/or cultivated a positive coaching relationship with an employee, the feedback environment itself had more to do with an employee's personal orientation towards feedback.

Seemingly, the best thing for managers with positive feedback orientations to do in hopes of increasing worker satisfaction through the worker's feedback orientation was to create a favorable feedback environment within the workplace. Steelman and Wolfeld (2018), suggest that a manager with their own positive understanding of feedback and its benefits in the workplace would see the equally beneficial aspects of encouraging workers to develop their own positive feedback orientation (2018, p 49). In this same vein, it stands to reason that any managerial abilities in coaching behaviors and interpersonal skills become relatively futile in the face of a working environment that puts no value in feedback. Steelman and Wolfeld's (2018) work contribute to the current study by highlighting both the necessity of expecting the environment to play a considerable part in feedback perceptions and knowing the limitations of manager-worker relationships and their ability to overcome aspects of an organization's environment.

However, for Chawla et al. (2016) and their review of existing feedback-centered research, their focus lied within the very same manager-worker relationship shortcoming Steelman and Wolfeld (2018) identified. Chawla et al. compiled current data on giving effective feedback for the purposes of manipulating the feedback orientation of workers through environmental and behavior changes. The review concluded with strategies the researchers suggest "can drive employee engagement and performance while also removing the surprise, discomfort, and ineffectiveness that sours managers and subordinates on performance management," i.e., ways in which managers can effectively and comfortably give feedback to employees (Chawla et al., 2016, p 261).

The strategy suggested by Chawla and colleagues that is most relevant to this study was attending to "individual differences that shape feedback receptivity" (p 263), in which they

highlight the need to acknowledge demographic differences, such as age and race. These types of variables within an organizational team can significantly impact the effectiveness of feedback and easily be conduits for misunderstandings (see also, Wang et al., 2015). This strategy from Chawla et al. encourages a worker's high feedback orientation through the utilization of personal preferences. Work based communications can be influenced by cultural expectations as well as personal, meaning workers of differing generations and cultural backgrounds might enter an organization with preset notions regarding manager-worker communication. Due to this possibility, the researchers emphasize using clear and specific feedback, which often resonates more with a wider range of ages and cultures, therefore encompassing more of those that might respond less favorably with Performance Feedback. This strategies not only support Steelman and Wolfeld's (2018) research surrounding MAC styles of leadership, but also elucidates upon the benefits of favorable feedback environments and the overwhelming necessity for strong interpersonal communication skills on behalf of the managers, as both studies relied heavily, if not solely, on effective one-on-one communication.

Theoretical Perspective

Media Richness Theory (MRT), introduced by Richard Daft and Robert Lenegel in 1986, was constructed out of a necessity to alleviate organizations of uncertainty and equivocation in their information processing communication. This theory ranks Informational Richness, which describes how much overall data can be transmitted by a given communication channel, and was noted by Daft and Lenegel to be positively linked to reducing both uncertainty and equivocation. Uncertainty denotes a lack of data-based information, something a quick computer search could remedy. Equivocation implies the need for further conversation and agreement between managers and/or workers; often, getting to such an agreement relies on experience-based

knowledge from an established employee (1986). When linking these concepts with Informational Richness, for information to be Rich, it is required to have the “ability to change understanding within a time interval” (1986, p 590). This means that for Media to be Rich, the information it carries must be able to clarify any ambiguity among differing contexts within a time period where the results will still be useful. The goal of this study was to identify the best channel of communication in relationship to the information processing necessities per labor position, and reducing equivocality and uncertainty between student laborers and their supervisors. Media Richness Theory perfectly aligns with this goal by creating a standard through which to evaluate the communication used on the Berea College campus.

Channels and Richness

From their first study, Daft and Lenegel found that different communication channels offered different levels of Richness, with Face to Face offering the Richest form of communication, and numerical documents, such as spreadsheets and analyses, providing the least (1986). This was due to FtF allowing for both verbal and visual information. By providing the receiver with a much larger amount of data to create a solution from, it makes FtF excellent in reducing both uncertainty and equivocation. Adversely, numerical documents provide a far less robust pool of information to garner any answers out of and are mainly successful in relieving uncertainty, but lack some of the nuances to handle equivocation. This study recommended the use of FtF communication when a task could not be solved with more information, and instead required timely, and possibly detail-heavy, solutions. The researchers also suggested that managers choose their communication channels based around their channel rankings.

Theoretical Additions

Later, Daft et al., (1990), furthered MRT by adding media symbolism to the conditions by which managers should assess channel compatibility. This study suggested that some communications channels have pre-established connotations within an organization that will conflict with the channels effectiveness, whether or not it would technically be considered the Richer channel. In this same decade, another group of researchers built upon the idea of Media Richness by examining it through the lens of culture. Sitkin et al., (1992) proposed cultural symbolisms attached to communication channels as being influential to manager's medium choices. Carlson and Zmud (1999) then contributed data that suggested an individual's personal experiences with a channel also effects which mediums they choose to utilize, which was later confirmed by Ishii's 2005 study involving email within university administration.

Interestingly for the implications of the current study, in 2004, researchers Sheer and Chen studied the relationship between Media Richness and valence and found that individuals followed the channel suggestions provided by the original theory when the message was positive. However, when communicating negative messages, anxiety overrules standard organizational behaviors and individuals instead follow face saving procedures. Similarly, this theory has also been used recently to examine new forms of technological communication. Researchers have found positive sharing experiences of Rich information through Lean mediums (i.e., Balaji and Chakrabarti's (2010) findings surrounding online forum use in Face to Face classroom studies, as well as Gastil, and Richards's (2015) study on online civic education that garnered data suggesting multi-channel approaches - mediums of varying Richness - aided in teaching audiences with differing levels of topic knowledge).

Implications for the Current Study

The inclusion of Media Richness Theory to the present study will help guide the researcher in how effectiveness is defined when comparing communication channels. The theory's ability to traverse communication landscapes and adapt to new and improving technologies positively indicates its usefulness in exploring and comparing the capacities of communication channels in a Work College setting, which utilizes numerous forms of technology and simultaneously inhabits the dual spaces of education and workplace. The researcher of the current study tentatively expects CMC, the lean channel being compared, to be more favorable only in scenarios involving negative feedback, but otherwise seen as less effective to student laborers vs Face to Face communication.

Methods

Participants

The purpose of this research is to determine the preferred feedback channels for students working at a southern work college. After analyzing the results, the researcher had 86 responses (51 female/ 24 male/ 10 Nonbinary). The majority of respondents had female supervisors for their labor positions ($n = 53$) (figures 1a and 1b). It was also noted that over 50% of respondents identified their ethnicity as White/non-Hispanic ($n = 54$) (figure 2). When looking at the duration of work in their current labor positions, respondents were mostly representative of students with 1-6 months, or 2-3 years (see figure 3). As of the Fall semester of 2021, 1,432 students were enrolled at Berea College. This survey only received 86 recorded responses, making the response rate .06%.

Respondent's Gender

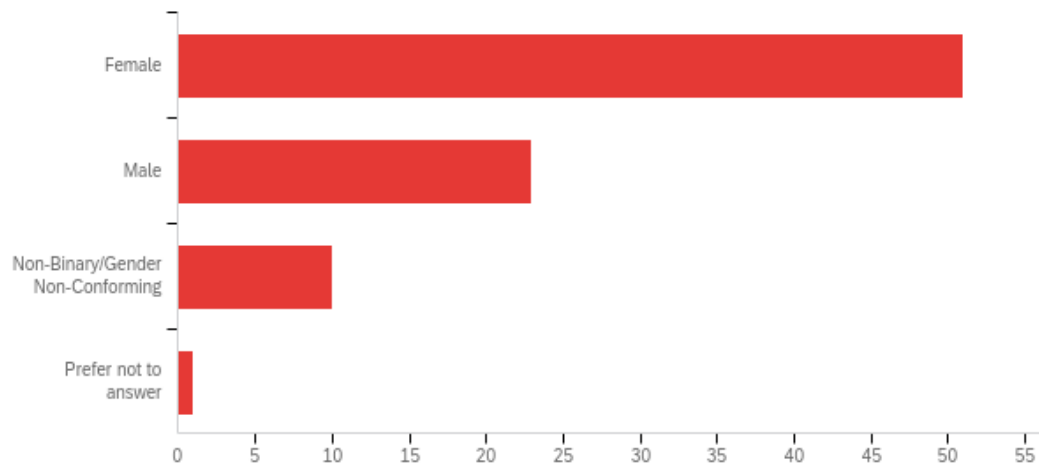


Figure 1a. Respondent's gender.

Supervisor's Gender

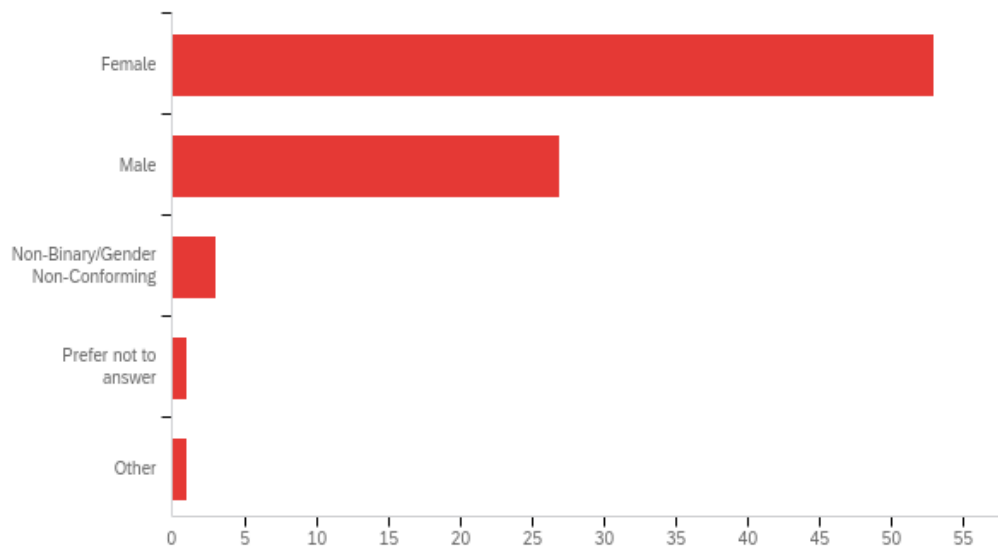


Figure 1b. Gender of the supervisor to the respondent.

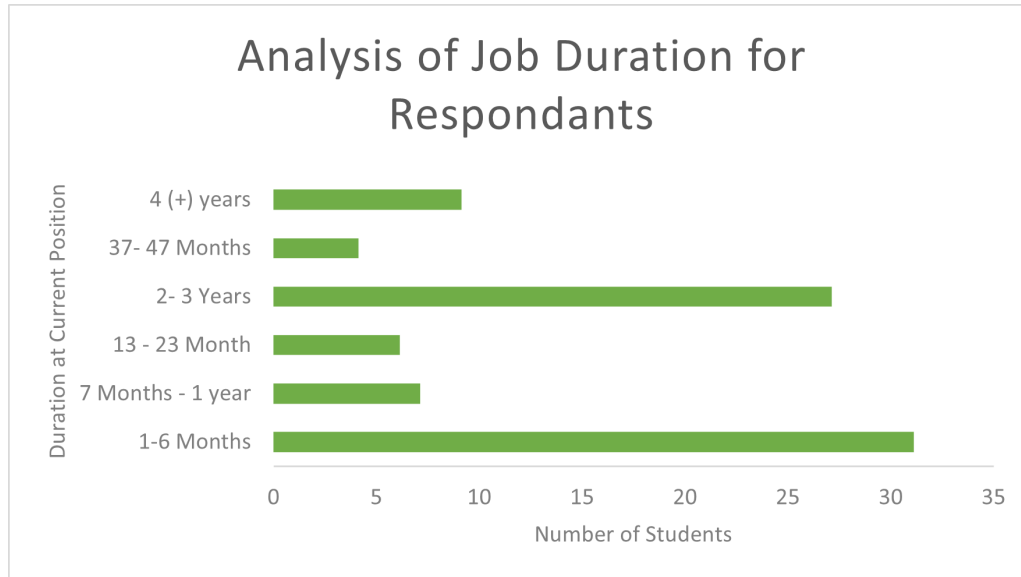


Figure 2. Table of job duration for respondents.

Survey Design and Rationale

In order to establish which feedback channel would best suit the campus environment, the researcher created a survey for current Berean students to provide information on their opinions, preferences, and feedback habits. This survey was comprised of a mixture of multiple choice, open-ended, and Likert questions. These questions ascertained student's attitudes on the feedback they receive from their supervisor, how comfortable they feel giving/receiving negative/positive feedback, and if they feel more comfortable giving/receiving negative/positive feedback using either email or FtF.

The choice to use a survey to collect the data for this project came from the need for both qualitative and quantitative data, as well student convenience and time restraints. Because this project researched opinions and comfort levels, these two responses required options for open-ended answers that asked respondents to elaborate on their answers. However, by also utilizing the Likert questions, quantitative numerical data was still able to be gathered through

percentages of comfort frequency or the regularity of responding to the supervisor evaluations.

A mixed-methods formatting was chosen for this survey for its optimization of the noted strengths of each type of question. By being able to provide information where one type of questioning struggles to adequately do so, this method provides a more concrete evidence of student satisfaction and communication effectiveness after analysis (Greene et al., 1989).

Surveys were also chosen to collect data due to the large number of labor departments/positions on campus, as well as its convenience and lack of time restraints meaning participants can start and stop the survey as they need.

Dissemination and Analysis Method

The survey used was disseminated through convenience sampling. The researcher shared an anonymous link for the survey to classmates and coworkers. The survey and a note from the researcher were also shared by the Labor Department to Berea supervisors asking them to have their student laborers participate. The channels through which the survey was disseminated, as well as the researcher's positioning as a current student might have had some effect on the response rate.

Before beginning the analysis process, responses that could not be categorized were removed (i.e., one respondent replied with "all my time at Berea" when asked how long they had been working in their current position. Because this question cannot be categorized into a length of time, it was removed as a counted response), as well as any responses that were not fully completed (i.e., surveys that were started but never finished). Quantitative analysis of data after collection was done through SPSS software and 2x2 chi square testing, while the qualitative data was analyzed via thematic analysis. Thematic Analysis was selected because of the nature of the data collected, as a way to fully engage with the content of the qualitative responses (Tracy,

2019). By utilizing a thematic analysis, the researcher was able to note primary codes, such as honor and awkwardness, and develop them into secondary themes, like Maximum Understanding and Emotional Privacy, thereby giving greater understanding and meaning to student responses within the context of the analysis.

Analysis

The main goal of this study was to compare the effectiveness of conveying Performance Feedback for Face to Face communication vs Email, specifically when being used by Labor Students enrolled in a Work College addressing their supervisors. The secondary goal was to determine any relationship between perceptions of communication effectiveness and a) gender, b) race, and c) nationality. The primary themes found in the open-ended responses were Authenticity, Relationship Demands, Emotional Privacy, and Maximum Understanding. The four primary themes were present throughout every open-ended response, with the majority of Authenticity and Relationship Demands correlating to positive feedback, and Emotional Privacy and Maximum Understanding being largely related to negative feedback.

When giving/receiving positive Performance Feedback, students were generally very receptive, with an average comfortability rate of 85%. The majority of students chose Face to Face as their preferred communication channel for giving and receiving positive feedback, although the difference between FtF and Email in this case was slim (shown in figures 5 and 6). When giving/receiving negative Performance Feedback, the majority of students were quite uncomfortable dealing with it, with an average of 49%, a 36% decrease in comfort from positive feedback. Furthermore, identification as an international student was the only variable from the secondary research question to have any significant relationship with supervisor communication

Satisfaction and evaluation engagement.

Comfort with Positive Feedback

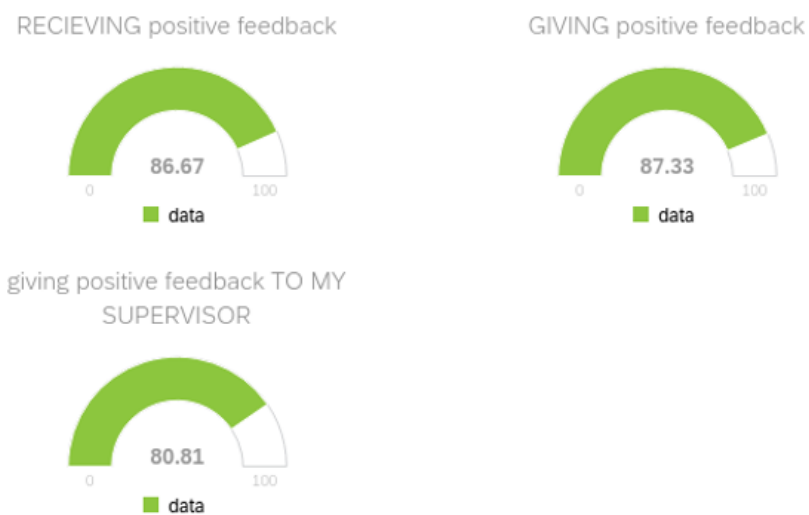


Figure 5. Respondent Comfort with Positive Feedback. These three percentages encompass student's comfort levels when dealing with positive Performance Feedback in different scenarios.

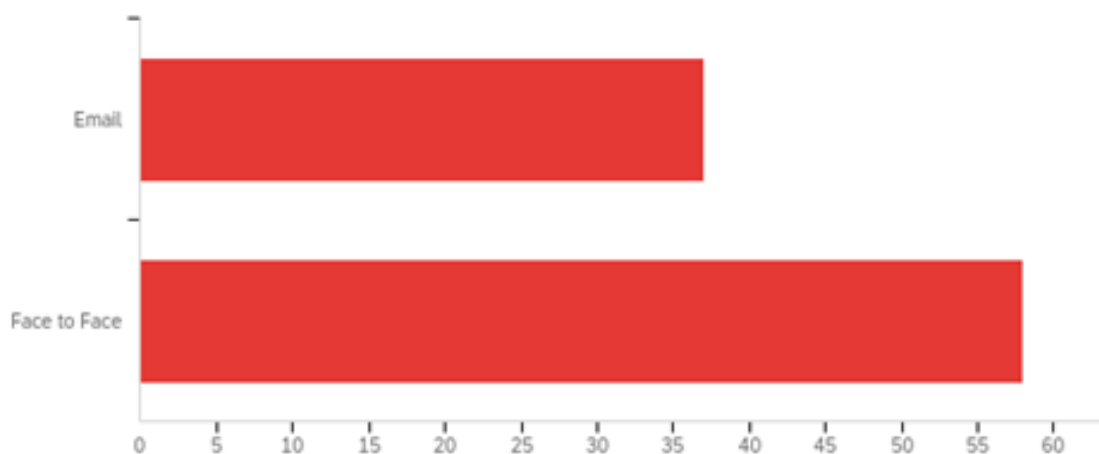


Figure 6. Channel Preference for Positive Feedback. This graph illustrates student's majority preference for Face to Face communication when dealing with positive Performance Feedback.

Qualitative Analysis

Due to this project utilizing mixed methods, analysis was done in two distinct styles, and dealt with the quantitative data gathered for the secondary research question, and the qualitative data provided by open-ended questions separately. The following section will address the findings from the qualitative data, and will be preceded by the findings of the quantitative data analysis.

Stress and Comfort

To better understand how feedback travels between laborers and supervisors, it was important to understand how comfortable students were with feedback. For each channel preference question, students were asked to explain their choice of communication channel. Authenticity encompassed student's wanting to gauge what was interpreted as the truthfulness and trustworthiness of the feedback being received. This theme was consistently seen via responses noting the Face to Face channel's ability to translate more visual and tonal information versus Email. The general consensus surrounding Face to Face communication as Authentic are succinctly captured in two respondent's explanations - "I [choose] face to face just because I can show how genuine my compliments are and they are more meaningful than an email," and "In a Face to Face scenario, being able to see and hear the one giving me feedback is a lot more helpful." These responses are in line with Daft and Lengel's (1986) positioning of FtF as the richest medium through which to communicate. They note that "Face to Face. . . provides immediate feedback so that interpretation can be checked," highlighting the availability of "cues via body language and tone of voice" as factors bolstering the richness of FtF communication (p 560). This statement is validated by the data of this study.

The theme of Relationship Demands came from repeatedly noting students expressing a preference for a communication channel based on a sort of “honor” for the relationship between them and their supervisor. In this way, it seemed students saw one channel as more degrading to said relationship than the other. This was present throughout the open-ended questions, with a number of respondents reporting FtF as the medium already in use between them and their supervisors – “I am comfortable with my labor supervisor and we already provide face to face positive feedback;” “[the supervisor] is an older man who excels in Face to Face interactions;” “Because of the nature of work. . . doing things via a screen just doesn't feel right.” Through these comments we see the existence of the previously mentioned setting norms influencing the chosen medium through which to communicate which was identified in later iterations of the Media Richness Theory (i.e., “because of the nature of work”). We can also note what Steelman and Wolfeld (2018) recognize to be the influential ability of positive relationships between supervisor and laborer (i.e., “I am comfortable with my supervisor and we already provide positive feedback”). Clearly students are receptive to more interpersonal forms of communication and feedback, even more so if the relationship between communicating parties is already positively linked to a particular channel.

When dealing with negative Performance Feedback, this set of open-ended answers held the largest amount of responses with the theme of Emotional Privacy. This theme stemmed from the numerous comments from students expressing the possibility of crying or feeling overwhelmed (“less eye contact, no one to see me cry,” “I also cry easily so negative feedback is easier to deal with when I can process my emotions alone,” and, “. . . [depending] on the negative feedback I receive, I might want to cry”), and therefore preferred to deal with feedback in a setting that these possibilities would not hinder any work relationships. With this in mind, it

was unsurprising to find email as the preferred channel for negative feedback (See figure 8), given that CMC allows for parties to feel and express any emotions garnered from giving or receiving information, alone, and therefore feel unburdened by societal/professional expectations and norms.

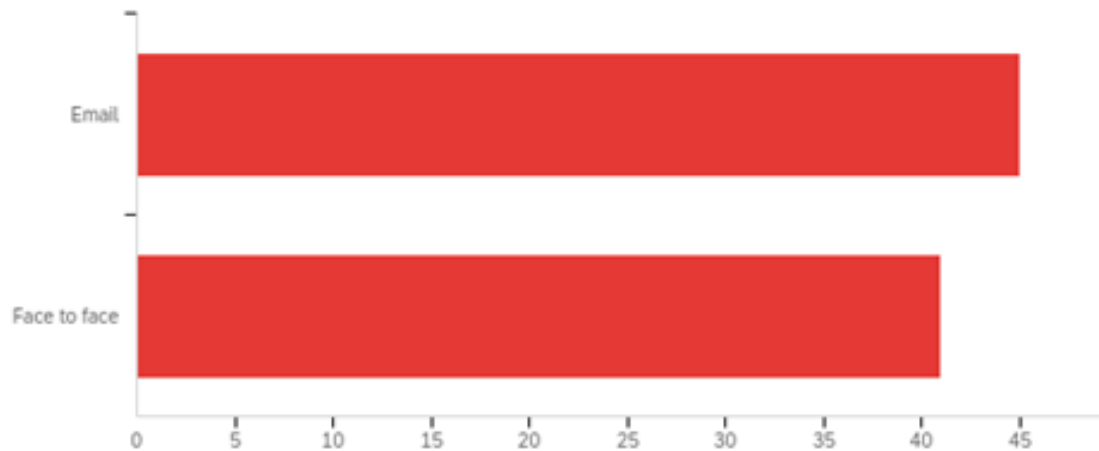


Figure 8. Channel Preference for Negative Feedback. This bar graph highlights student's slight preference for Email over Face to Face communication in congruence with negative Performance Feedback.

Students were particularly uncomfortable giving negative feedback (43.95%), especially to their supervisor (40.3 %) (figure 7). For some, this resistance came from a hesitation to give feedback to those who've "been doing my job for more than 10 years" as one student put it. Other students also expressed feeling as though any critical feedback was simply, "not my place." Many of the students who chose Email, however, were motivated to do so by what was interpreted as the theme of Maximum Understanding. There was some amount of caution that was noted as being felt as needed by students when communicating what might be considered 'harsh' or 'pessimistic' comments in the name of feedback. In order to counter act any misunderstandings, Email was seen as the optimal channel because of the sender's ability to "be more certain and conscious of [their] wording," and having the time to "walk away and process"

whenever the student may feel is needed.

Comfort With Negative Feedback

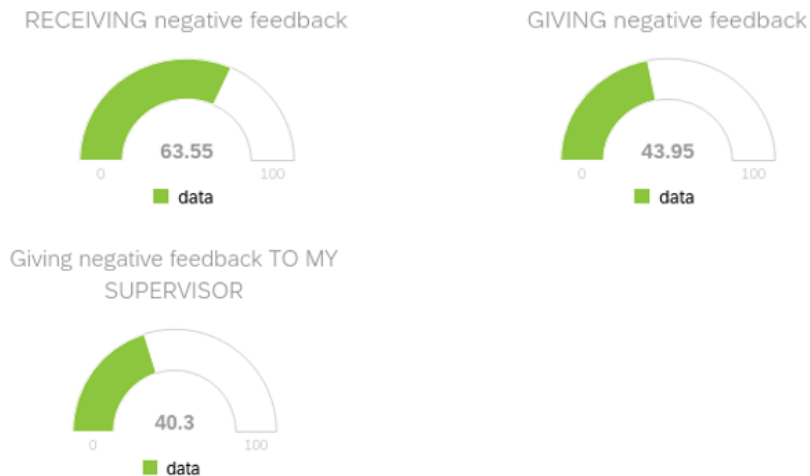


Figure 7. Respondent Comfort with Negative Feedback. These three percentages encompass student's comfort levels when dealing with negative Performance Feedback in different scenarios.

These responses to the scenario of giving negative feedback to one's supervisor raise the question of how constructive feedback is being addressed within campus departments. They also spark the question of how well the supervisors of Berea College's Work Labor program are preparing their student laborers for future instances possibly uncomfortable conversation.

Organizational Justice, Accountability, and Behavior Change

Organizational Justice and managerial Accountability are integral to the success of employees and organizations alike. Organizational Justice measures how fair or unfair employees find feedback, while Accountability denotes how available, knowledgeable, and responsive supervisors are. To determine the perceptions of these two variables in terms of Performance

Feedback, respondents were asked how often they felt they could a) easily implement the feedback into their daily work, b) that their supervisors were knowledgeable of their job enough to give helpful feedback, and c) trust the feedback being given. For question b, 71% of respondents felt that their supervisor was Always knowledgeable enough of their job (n = 61). Interestingly, for questions a and c, the number of students that chose Most of the time (question a, n = 34, question c, n = 23) vs Always (question a, n = 45, question c, n = 56) was closer to equal, especially for question a, implementing the feedback (see figure 4).

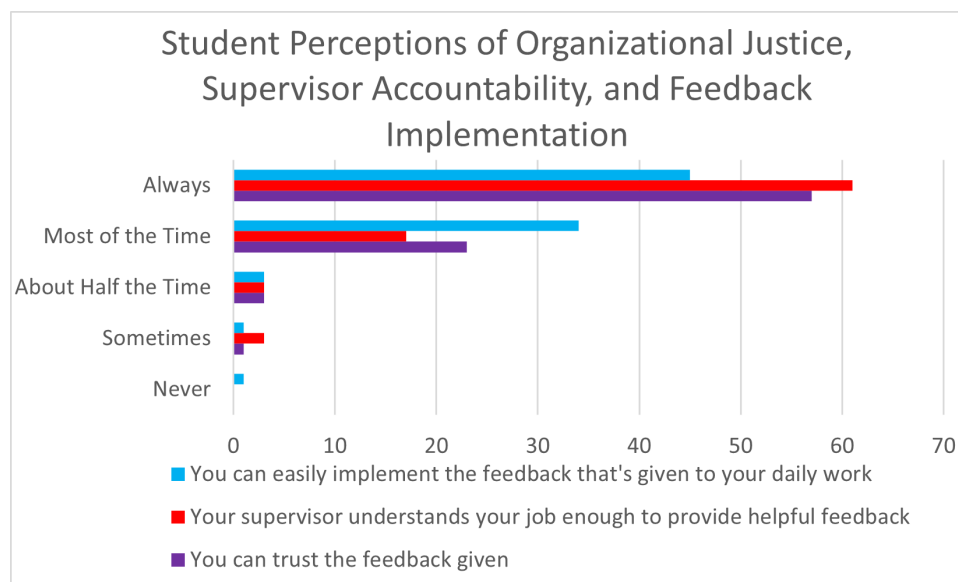


Figure 4. Student Perceptions of Organizational Justice, Supervisor Accountability, and Feedback Implementation. This bar graph illuminates how fair, trustworthy, and actionable student laborers feel their supervisor's feedback tends to be.

This indicates that there's an amount of time where a number of students feel that their supervisors are *knowledgeable enough to provide good feedback*, but are also leaving their labor students *cautious and/or unable to interact with it*. This roadblock in communication is generally consistent with the communication themes discussed under Stress and Comfort, and suggest, based on Daft and Lengel's (2018) definition of Rich Media as "enabl[ing] debate, clarification,

and enactment,” that there are a number of supervisors on campus who are ineffectively utilizing their mode(s) of communication and preventing clarification and enactment for their student laborers (p. 596).

Satisfaction

The communication that is happening between student laborers and their supervisors needs to be one that not only instills trust, but also one that encourages conversation and critical thinking. Out of the 86 completed surveys, 23% of respondents ($n = 20$) reported being unsatisfied with the communication between them and their supervisors. These students were asked an additional question to determine if this lack of satisfaction was a source of stress in their lives. For those that answered ‘Yes’ to this question (60%), the reasoning for the stress was due to unclear expectations or a lack of communication from their supervisor (i.e., uncertainty and equivocality). Although 23% might seem somewhat insignificant, when projecting that number onto the student body as a whole, this percentage encompasses a considerable number of students receiving subpar feedback and instructions from their supervisors on a regular basis. Some of the comments from students who responded ‘Yes’ to this question include, “I feel like I don't know what I'm doing,” “Sometimes I am given very vague instructions. . . this is stressful as then I may do it wrong,” and “My supervisor does not communicate any information with me.” This is the clearest indication from the data received via this study that there is a need for some type of re-evaluation, re-training, or overarching guidelines for supervisors on how they communicate to their labor students.

Satisfaction was also observed through the number of students who regularly do not give feedback in the semesterly evaluations for supervisors. Respondents were asked to explain their

reasoning behind how often they choose to participate in this way, and a majority of responses expressed no need to give feedback, as there were no issues that needed to be brought to attention. While this is notable as a positive indication for effective communication between students and supervisors, this finding also denotes a lacking in any acceptance for constructive feedback surrounding positive actions that could improve. Whether this restriction is self-imposed by the students or implied in some way by supervisors, it is important for both parties to recognize that an understanding of authority should not result in a misunderstanding of who can and cannot benefit from feedback.

When considering the minority of students who did indicate a current communication issue with their supervisor, it was identified that almost half (45%) noted little to no interactions with the semesterly evaluations in terms of giving feedback. Many explained, as was stated previously, that this was due to feeling like giving feedback was “not my place,” as well as feeling like their feedback would “not be heard,” and result in no changes. They also expressed a need for anonymity to give feedback, and explained that often, feedback is not asked for, “and because of that it is never given.” As noted above with the majority of respondents, there is no room for constructive feedback in the minds of these students.

Part of Rich Media is being that which can “enable debate,” and “pertains to the learning capacity of a communication [channel]” (Daft & Lengel, 1986). Particularly in the setting of a Work College, especially one with the goals and values such as Berea College, supervisors are meant to provide more than what one might expect from a regular 9-5 job. According to two of Berea College’s Great Commitments, enrollment as a students is meant to “offer a high-quality liberal arts education *that engages students* as they pursue their *personal, academic, and*

professional goals,” and “to *promote learning* and serving in community through the student Labor Program, honoring the *dignity and utility of all work, mental and manual,”* (emphasis added). Student Laborers are intended to be a part of the greater department in which their position lies in a way that requires deeper communication than some students are currently receiving.

Quantitative Analysis

When analyzing the received data via SPSS and chi-square configurations, it was noted that only one significant relationship was discovered when investigating the secondary goal. The significance was among the variable for nationality, specifically between International students and expressing poor communication with their supervisor as a source of stress, $X^2 (1, N = 86) = .230, p = .033$, (figure 12). The implications of this might suggest cultural differences in employee behavior/opinion norms that differ from US norms. These differences highlight the validity in Chawla et al.'s suggestion for supervisors to be mindful of demographic variations amongst laborers.

Are you an International student? * Would you say poor communication between you and your supervisor is a source of stress for you? Crosstabulation					
			Would you say poor communication between you and your supervisor is a source of stress for you?		
			Yes	No	Total
Are you an International student?	Yes	Count	5	5	10
		Expected Count	2.3	7.7	10.0
		% within Would you say poor communication between you and your supervisor is a source of stress for you?	25.0%	7.6%	11.6%
		% of Total	5.8%	5.8%	11.6%
	No	Count	15	61	76
		Expected Count	17.7	58.3	76.0
		% within Would you say poor communication between you and your supervisor is a source of stress for you?	75.0%	92.4%	88.4%
		% of Total	17.4%	70.9%	88.4%
Total	Count	20	66	86	
	Expected Count	20.0	66.0	86.0	
	% within Would you say poor communication between you and your supervisor is a source of stress for you?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	23.3%	76.7%	100.0%	

Figure 12. Crosstabulation of International students and communication with supervisors as a source of stress.

Based on the survey results, it seems that between Open Feedback and CMC on a Work Labor campus, there is no one channel that can be described as “better” than the other for giving Performance Feedback bottom-up from student laborers to supervisors. Students prefer both channels for various reasons. This data suggests that supervisors can improve their communication with Student Laborers not only by following their preferences for feedback mediums and being mindful of any demographic variables that might cause misunderstandings, but mainly by focusing on specifying instructions and working towards creating a positive feedback environment.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate Face to Face vs. email communication for translating useful and engaging feedback of any valance. For the students at Berea College campus, however, there is no singular communication channel that can encompass the nuances of each labor position as well as provide both positive and negative feedback in a fully meaningful manner. Email is seen to be more helpful in terms of allowing for more thought to go into responses and lessens anxieties that stem from publicly emoting beyond societal norms, as well as a way to ensure the most understanding from supervisors. On the other hand, Face to Face communication was regularly noted as allowing for more immediate feedback and stronger levels of clarity when there is the possibility for miscommunication. Student reasoning for preferring FtF to Email when dealing with positive feedback heavily correlated with Daft and Lengel’s (1986) description of FtF as the Richest media due to participant’s ability to immediately interpret both visual and verbal cues. Some reasoning for this preference might stem from Berea College’s environment and specifically personalized style of teaching. In a similar

vein to student's preferring Face to Face communication because of Relationship Demands, students may also be recognizing the "demand" from staff and faculty to use the communication channel that best follows Berea College's standards.

In terms of optimizing student willingness to give negative feedback, data suggests that supervisors would do best creating an environment that is friendly to negative feedback, and portrays the giving and receiving of negative Performance Feedback as a benefit to the success of both the laborer and organization. It is important for supervisors to set a standard of positively receiving positive feedback, and equally positively receiving negative feedback from their laborers. Encouraging meaningful feedback from laborers while continuing to respectfully giving them meaningful feedback is the key to creating a positive feedback environment. Additionally, allowing students to express their preferences for communication channels positively corresponds with positive feedback environments and supervisor relationships. By being cognizant of which communication channels students are most accepting of, supervisors greatly increase the overall likelihood of students using the chosen channel to express (positive or negative) feedback.

Baker et al., (2013) concisely stresses, "It is imperative that senior leaders view dialogue as a strategic action and promote it *as much* as other strategic goals" (emphasis added, p. 264). In this way, supervisors need to begin to shift their own mindsets regarding the conversations between themselves and their student laborers. Due to the diversity and spread of faculty and background that take on a supervisory role, a final suggestion is the consideration of some type of interpersonal communication training for all supervisors. This ensures that every person who wants to assume the responsibility of being a supervisor starts with equal, basic communication

skills. Furthermore, by recognizing the significant impact effective communication (and within that, effectively giving feedback) can have on the overall success of an organization (or department) supervisors have the ability to completely overhaul their departments in terms of efficiency and satisfaction. The easiest, and most approachable way to achieve such a thing is by starting the process of creating a positive feedback environment. This environment, coupled with an equally positive relationship, and perhaps interpersonal/feedback communications training, will allow for the free flowing of both positive and negative feedback.

Beyond Berea, the results of this study can easily lend themselves to both education and occupational settings. Anyone in a leadership role can benefit from adopting effective feedback practices. The data of this project also bridges gaps in how Communication studies addresses student workers by furthering the conversation with a case study that deals with both roles within the same setting. The limitations that this study faced were that of time, both the time in which the study could take place, and the time in which students were available to participate. This limitation further constricted the possibility of gathering data outside of Berea College campus, and therefore convenience played a role in this study. However, future research would benefit from extending the period through which data can be gathered, allowing for a greater number of respondents. Further studies could also examine the findings of this particular Work-Study college against the communication preferences of other Work-Study colleges in the US.

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Appendix A – Transcripts (As displayed in survey)

QID1 - Please answer the following questions through the lens of your current primary labor position (your primary labor position as of Fall 2021) What depart do you work in?

Please answer the following questions through the lens of your current primary labor position (your primary labor position as of Fall 2021) What depart do you work in?

The farm

farm

Celts

IS&S Event Production

Campus Christian Center

CTL

Biology

Biology Department

Biology

Broomcraft

Student Life

Public safety

Writing Resources

Hutchins Library Circulation Desk

Business/Econkmics

Continuous Improvement

The Loyal Jones Appalachian Center

Student Life Trainer alumni building

Draper Administrative Office

Student Life

President's Office

Draper Office

Campus Life

Draper Office
Office of Individual and Planned Philanthropy
Individual and Planned Philanthropy
Student Life
Student Life
Carter G Woodson Center
I work in the Carter G. Woodson Center
HHP
Communication
Library Circulation
Admissions
HHP
Yahng Discovery Center
Athletics
Career Development Office
Berea College News and Radio (Communication department)
Art/Art History
IRA
Art department
Music
Annual Giving Student Manager
GSTR
Berea College Farm
Hutchins Library
Internship and Career Development Office
Carter G Woodson Center
ta/pl
Purchasing and Visual Merchandising for Visitor Center and Log House

Computer Science

Art

Child and Family Studies Department as a TA.

Campus Christian Center

Theatre

Facilities/Housekeeping

CS TA

Asian Studies

Art Department

Math

Art department

WGS

Campus Recreation, Outdoor Adventures

Student Life

Biology TA

IS&S

DAS Office

Health and Human Performance

Sociology Department

IS&S

Wellness

Agriculture

Film & Theatre

CDL kitchen

Dining

Internships and Career Development

Special collections and archives

Theatre

Communications and marketing

Office of Student Success and Transition

CFS

Hutchins Library

Campus Life

Communication

Art History

Q20 - Please explain [if poor communication between you and your manager is a source of stress]

No. I haven't had any poor communication but if it happened it would stress me out

Sometimes I am given very vague instructions for grading or setting up a lab, this is stressful as then I may do it wrong

When my supervisor doesn't express clear expectations, it can be stressful to know if I'm doing well enough at my position. It's also stressful when my supervisor assumes I know something I don't, and I have to awkwardly let them know that they never communicated how I should complete that task.

My supervisor does not communicate any information with me.

If there is a lack of communication and it makes me complete a task incorrectly, I get stressed about my lack of good performance.

Just stressful in general

I feel that I don't receive enough feedback to know that I am performing my job satisfactorily--this causes me great stress because it makes feel lost in my own workplace and like the opportunity for growth is missing.

Too busy to pay attention and too busy to assign meaningful tasks

It never happened, but if it would be the case that my supervisor and I will have poor communication, that would affect me

I feel like I don't know what I'm doing when I am not communicating openly with them.

It's not often that communication is poor, but when it is, it's stressful. I'm a student supervisor, and oftentimes my Labor Supervisor will contact me outside of my work hours for work related things, and that's stressful. Or she will forward me an email or document and not give instructions and I'm left to kind of figure it out on my own or ask for further clarification.

There are times of tension due to us having skewed conversations.

When communication with my supervisor is unsatisfactory, it causes me a lot of anxiety

In effective communication can create issue of misunderstanding, confusion, and ineffective task completion.

I just had a baby so sometimes going to work is hard and I feel that I don't always communicate effectively but neither has my supervisor with her expectations of me

I feel like all these new people have come in and no one is keeping with the standards we had precovid there only two of us on the floor who were there pre covid . No one has asked us how things were on the student side. I am not told anything of my performance just blaming me for things not getting done and things breaking

Q8 - Which feedback channel would make you feel more comfortable getting/giving positive feedback?

Please explain your choice - Text

text

email for giving, face to face for receiving

Teams is good too. Any channel is completely fine.

Both email and face to face communication work well for my supervisor and I as we have an overall positive relationship with one another.

I think it'd provide more opportunity to give well thought of feedback and understand it better.

Giving feedback in person is key to me because if anything is taken out of context it can easily be cleared up.

In a Face to Face scenario, being able to see and hear the one giving me feedback is a lot more helpful.

Email is less direct but face to face you can understand the tone easier

I think that email makes things less awkward, and it is easier to express myself without any awkwardness.

More flexible and gives time to think

It's more authentic face to face

I'm pretty comfortable overall, and I do like receiving positive feedback, I just have no way of fielding what I view as compliments; they make me uncomfortable for some reason.

I think face to face just because I can show how genuine my compliments are and they are more meaningful than an email

I get lost in trying to phrase feedback in text, whereas in person feels more natural and less of an /event/.

Bob (my supervisor) is an older man who excels in Face to Face interactions. Because of the nature of work at the farm, doing things via a screen just doesn't feel right. As an introvert this was difficult at first but I now feel comfortable speaking to Bob Face to Face for any interaction, because of the time and care he invests in each of his workers.

I get easily flustered when receiving praise face to face. Email takes that awkward edge off

I have no problem sharing my feedback either through email or in person

I feel awkward receiving positive feedback face to face; I'm not the best at receiving compliments/praise/etc.

I am comfortable with my labor supervisor and we already provide face to face positive feedback.

I like to be in person

I get very anxious when talking to authority figures directly

Either works fine with me

Through handwritten notes

I don't have to react a certain way

You can see their facial expressions and tell how genuine they are being.

Either is fine. I'm indifferent towards how I receive positive feedback.

Text, phone

I value Face to Face interaction and my supervisor speaking to me directly is much more effective than an email

I am autistic so for me messages prove a struggle when it comes to understanding tone so in person I can better understand and ask/answer any questions

My supervisor and I have a close but professional relationship so feedback feels welcome both ways.

Less eye contact

Q10 - Which feedback channel would make you feel more comfortable getting/giving negative feedback?

Please explain your choice - Text

text phone call

labor evaluations

is easier to talk about the negative feedback through email for me

This minimizes their ability to dismiss my feedback. And if anything in the future happens due to them ignoring my feedback, I have documented proof that the issue was made aware to necessary parties.

Teams is fine for this too. I trust that we have a good work relationship with good communication. So if I did have an issue I'm sure we could work everything out with no issues.

Less eye contact, no one to see me cry

It's easier to have open honest clear communication in person

It might be more honest to give it through email as well as receive it.

It is easier to read the tone of the conversation

Ironically, I would feel more comfortable *giving* negative feedback through text because I can be more certain and conscious of my wording--I also feel that receiving negative feedback through text allows a certain aspect of privacy and non-confrontational etiquette, which may soften the blow.

I'm indifferent between these two outlets.

I would still like to receive negative feedback in person as it builds my perseverance, though it may stress me out.

I would not be able to give negative feedback in person, I feel like personal feelings would get in the way and people would end up hurt. I would be walking on eggshells.

I would never give my supervisor negative feedback. She's been doing my job for more than 10 years

I would rather say it to their face so they can see my body language and hear my tone of voice.

I just prefer face to face especially with negative feedback so I don't misread or misunderstand the tone of negative feedback if in an email

I have trouble giving negative feedback at all, so I would struggle even more to give it to my supervisor

I have a positive relationship with my labor supervisor and we both feel comfortable to discuss room for improvement.

I find the idea of giving or receiving negative feedback Face to Face deeply terrifying. I'm afraid of hurting other people's feelings, I'm mildly afraid of all authority figures and deeping on the negative feedback I receive, I might want to cry.

I feel like for negative feedback I wouldnt want anything to be misconstrued and I could easily clear things up if anything were.

I can walk away/process

I am not very comfortable with confrontation or negativity face to face and prefer to do it any other way.

I also cry easily so negative feedback is easier to deal with when I can process my emotions alone

Even though it would be more uncomfortable and I certainly wouldn't look forward to it, I would still want to give any negative feedback to Bob face to face, for the reasons I stated prior. Doing it over email just wouldn't be honorable.

Email is just a much worse form of communication overall, theres nothing tactile about it

Either works fine with me

Easier to say things face to face because miscommunication can easily be cleared up.

Depends on the feedback but being told you are doing a bad job in person can feel very dowing

Authenticity as well, also I like to be able to get my questions answered in a timely manner.

Q12 - Please explain your response to the previous question [how frequently do you participate in the semesterly supervisor evaluations?]

Please explain your response to the previous question

I try to be as honest as possible on feedback forms, especially anonymous ones.

I feel like there is a power dynamic that they know what they are doing more than I do so I do not make comments.

i give when asked

Though I would say that I have no qualms with providing negative feedback through these evaluations, I simply have not had an underperforming supervisor during either of my labor positions.

My supervisors is great

I don't feel as if there needs to be a change.

I don't really have any issues to bring to his attention.

I don't feel the need to suggest a change.

Never because I have not seen an issue with my supervisor's behavior.

I haven't done an evaluation yet, but if it was necessary, I'd be ok doing so.

I am able to give feedback to my supervisor whether good or bad because we have a good relationship and we check in with each other frequently.

I don't really feel the need to give any feedback to them.

I haven't had an evaluation yet

I have yet to receive an evaluation

My work doesn't really require much feedback.

I never do because my boss is amazing and does not need any

I haven't had a reason to, but I don't think I would if I did need to. It would make me uncomfortable to critique my supervisor, and I can just deal with it.

At times no chance for conversation and evaluation

I have never had an issue with my current labor supervisor

I did not know such a thing existed where we could evaluate our supervisors.

I've never really had any ideas for improvement, my supervisors have been awesome for a lack of a better word

Have not participated yet

I think everyone always has areas to improve so I generally give minor feedback to behavior change such as maybe being more involved with student workers because typically at the end of semester labor supervisors seems burned out

I try to give feedback every time, but sometimes I'm too late to give feedback--the deadline is passed.

I always try to provide my supervisor helpful and insightful feedback, positive or negative.

There's no point in giving feedback if nothing will ever change. It's more efficient to keep my feedback to myself

I do not always need to give feedback to my supervisor for she doesn't really do anything I disagree with.

I like the way Bob does things. Sometimes on a day-to-day basis I might correct him about something he gets incorrect, but even if there were a medium for me to suggest behavioral changes, I would not have anything to say.

My supervisor does a great job and we communicate well so I don't need to save things for the evaluation

not often, but sometimes it happens

I haven't needed to give feedback for behavioral changes.

feedback always recieved well

If I feel there is something they can do better, I say it, but I have had good supervisors who know what they are doing for the past three years and therefore have had few/no suggestions.

I don't think it is my place and I don't want to put myself in a position where I burn a bridge that I might cross later. I prefer to endure.

If I can think of something that can be done to improve the workspace, I'll bring it up. But if not, I won't

If I see room for improvement I always provide my suggestions, just as I hope they would do for me.

I hardly ever guve feedback to my boss.

I always am honest in my supervisor evaluations, even if that means it can be negative.

I only give feedback if it can be anonymous

Dr. Jan has always been 100 percent real with me and listens to any feedback I have positive or constructive.

It depends if students bring up an issue (s), then I would bring it up to the professor.

I try to give a good description on their strengths and what areas need improvement.

It's usually not necessary since my supervisor is pretty good to begin with

i don't pay attention to it

I think I am intimidated to do so and feel as if they will not listen.

Feedback for my supervisor is never asked for, and because of that it is never given.

I doubt he would look at them or change

I have had good experiences with most of my supervisors.

In my previous evaluations I gave strong feedback due to some of the conditions we were put in.

I don't feel like anything is negative enough to report on

He's always open to talk, but I don't have anything to complain about

Not necessarily in my current labor position, but in my previous jobs I did talk to my supervisors about potential changes.

I have no issues with my supervisor and find myself in a healthy work environment

I tried to give feedback as I can think of it, but oftentimes I cannot think of anything during the survey.

i never correct my boss as they know more about it than i do

I am the kind of person that I will tell a person immediately if I do not like their behaviour. So I don't feel the need to correct him twice if we have already addressed it and he fixed it.

I did not know this was a thing but I also work in a small team so it would be clear who gave the feedback

I haven't had the opportunity to participate in the feedback for supervisors.

I thoroughly enjoy working for my supervisor and feel like she does a great job.

I have only done it twice with my previous work. I thought it would help the department out as a whole to give honest feedback.

Haven't needed to

I give detailed feedback to professors who I genuinely feel would appreciate/acknowledge feedback. Others, I do not bother--the faith is low.

Q14 - What, if anything, might increase the likelihood of you putting negative feedback on supervisor evaluations? (this could include: having a better relationship with your supervisor; having a different way to give the feedback; feeling like your feedback would be heard; etc...)

Feeling like my feedback will cause something to get better

Possibly feeling more on the same level

being anonymous

I would probably be more likely to provide negative feedback (if applicable) if I knew it were to be presented to the supervisor in a respectful, growth-focused manner. Overall, I want it to be less reprimanding the supervisor and more allowing them a chance to improve.

If I felt disrespected

If there was an issue, I would put negative feedback. But there hasn't been any reason to put negative feedback.

Make it anonymous if it isn't already

I don't necessarily have an issue to bring to my supervisor's attention or issue with him.

It all depends on effective communication.

Feeling like my feedback would be heard/addressed.

N/A

Feeling like my feedback would be heard.

I am comfortable giving negative feedback to them if it is necessary- we have a good relationship.

Nothing, I don't think I have any negative feedback

Feeling like my feedback would not cause hard feelings

Bad communication or not being understanding to different circumstances

I already feel comfortable, I just never had a reason to

Having a way to give anonymous feedback to my supervisor would make this a lot easier- but like I said, that isn't a problem I have.

Different way to give feedback by making suggestions

My supervisor being a terrible person or not communicating. My advisor is a good man and a great communicator

If there could be better communication between both parties, however, I currently do not find an issue with the communication between my supervisor and myself.

My supervisor being worse at her job

Increasing the likelihood of giving negative feedback is if I have a weaker relationship I find it harder to give more constructive criticism if it's someone I know more and have a stronger relationship with

Having a supervisor who seems genuinely concerned with their students' labor experience, or acknowledges their own mistakes in front of students, or plainly states that they are open to feedback, or demonstrates that they are willing to adapt to feedback and work with their students by being flexible and attentive would help me feel more comfortable.

Closer relationship with supervisor, less divide in power dynamic, etc.

Not sure

I don't know

Perhaps if this was made into a structured and regular thing, like the professor evaluations at the end of every semester. I still just don't see it as being something of importance to me though.

If I needed to get feedback across to my supervisor but wasn't able to do it without the eval

If I will feel the need to include negative feedback about my supervisor, I would first talk to her and then depending on the outcome of the conversation, I would either choose to include it or not

Feeling like my feedback would be heard.

n/a

I am more likely to put negative feedback on an evaluation if I do not like my supervisor or have had moments with them that made me uncomfortable or unhappy with them. Otherwise my feedback tends towards neutral or positive suggestions.

If my supervisor is someone who actively asks for my feedback in order to improve I would def do it. But if they want feedback for the sake of feedback I withhold because it just creates a bad vibe for nothing.

Anonymous feedback that I know wouldn't be seen directly by my supervisor. I feel like if I had negative feedback and she read my comments as they were, she'd be able to distinguish who wrote it and would end up hurt.

Nothing would increase this as It is already established between my labor supervisor and I.

I feel like my feedback wouldn't be heard

I feel as if my feedback is not always heard, and I am more likely to give feedback if it will be heard.

Anonymity, feeling like it would actually change anything

Feeling like my feedback would be implemented (which most of the time it is)

If a majority of students in the class collectively have the same issue.

I would be more likely to give negative feedback if my supervisor would take the suggestions.

There's not often a need for negative feedback for my supervisor. I feel like we have a two-way relationship of trust. I can go to her if I need something and I feel like she is able to depend on me as well. If there is a need for negative feedback, I feel like I could communicate the issue with her, again only if necessary.

if the feedback would be heard

Feeling like my feedback would be heard and meaningful

Having a better relationship with supervisor.

I would want to think they cared about our feedback

If they had an internal department that is in charge of gathering negative feedback and presenting it to the supervisor. This is a bit different because we would need a person from said department to facilitate a conversation to gather that feedback instead of filling out some anonymous survey online.

In the evaluations I am pretty comfortable saying any feedback.

Good relationship with my supervisor, communicating effectively

She would have to do something more negative

Remaining anonymous

My previous labor position, one of my supervisors was never really present so it was hard to talk to him.

I would like to be asked what's my opinion. There are few people who make my workplace toxic and I would like our student voices to be heard about them

I don't really feel that I have negative feedback that I need to give.

nothing really, they're pretty laid back and well to work with

If he ignored our discomfort or never listened to us then I would leave negative reviews.

If I feel like there is a large thing that must change

Feeling like my feedback would be heard and that I was comfortable doing so.

Nothing

Having a strong relationship with my supervisor would make me feel more comfortable giving negative feedback. I'm a very non-confrontational person, so it makes it a little bit easier if I know they are safe to talk to.

If something really bad happens, then I'd give bad feedback. Haven't had the need yet

I feel having open communication during the semesters would vastly improve end-of-semester feedback; generally, when I get the vibe that feedback is not desired, I do not bother.

Additionally, when an uncommunicative tone is set--I feel that feedback, or even pleasant surface-level communication, is not desired.

Appendix B – Code Book

First Level Codes	Second Level Codes	Description	Example
Honor	Relationship Demands	This code describes students preferring a specific channel because of their relationship with their	“(my supervisor) is an older man who excels in Face to Face interactions. Because of the nature of work

		supervisor requiring or already using a specific channel.	at the farm, doing things via a screen just doesn't feel right.”
Genuine	Authenticity	Authenticity encompassed student’s desire to be able to read the truthfulness and trustworthiness of feedback.	“I think face to face just because I can show how genuine my compliments are and they are more meaningful than an email”
Authentic			
Can’t be misread	Maximum Understanding	This code came from students expressing concerns of being misunderstood and wanting to be able to immediately remedy this possibility.	“I think it'd provide more opportunity to give well thought of feedback and understand it better.”
Visual Cues			
General Struggle	Emotional Privacy	Emotional Privacy was coded for students describing a	“I also cry easily so negative feedback is easier to deal with

		general discomfort with feedback (both positive and negative), and expressing some level of emotional response to feedback, and therefore this response dictated their channel preference.	when I can process my emotions alone”
Awkwardness			
Emotional			