

Reflect on your experience of giving and receiving feedback to identify what makes for effective communication, and review examples where feedback has led to improved outcomes

The following assignment is an anecdotal review of my personal experience of receiving feedback and my response to this. My work as a community archaeologist involves meeting a lot of non-professional archaeologists in many different contexts, such as on-site during fieldwork, in schools, in the office during finds cleaning, at community centres etc. The first thing I must do in these situations is introduce myself. Unless the volunteers/participants are returning members this will be their first impression of me, and will set the tone for the day. Here is an area in which I have received feedback about my behaviours.

In the past I have downplayed my experience and knowledge during this initial introduction, which was noticed by my manager. They pulled me aside at the end of the day to tell me I was doing myself a disservice by not playing up my strengths during this introduction. This experience represented good communication for several key reasons.

- The feedback was actionable. Feedback should be given to achieve a purpose. If the feedback is not clearly defined or actionable by the receiver the communication fails this purpose (Henderson et al. 2019; Indeed Editorial Team 2022). I was given examples of ideal behaviours to help guide these improvements and enhance actionability.
- The feedback focused on building my skills instead of criticising weaknesses. Effective communication relies on the receiver being in the right state of mind to receive it. By focusing on positives, the feedback disarmed natural defensive reactions and increased the chances of being actioned (Indeed Editorial Team 2022).
- It outlined consequences of not making changes to my behaviour. By highlighting the potential positive impacts of following the advice, the feedback provided an incentive to follow it, aligning the goals of the feedback giver and receiver (Jug et al. 2019).
- My manager timed giving the feedback to the end of the day when work was quieter so I could focus solely on receiving the feedback. Because the feedback was delivered on the same day as the behaviour was noticed, it allowed me to put in place a change in behaviour immediately moving forward (Indeed Editorial Team 2022).

While receiving feedback on behavioural as opposed to technical aspects of my work can be harder to hear, it is feedback that is difficult to do introspectively and is often best observed by someone else. The value of communication is enhanced where it provides insight that cannot be generated internally (Indeed Editorial Team 2022). Knowing where one has a tendency to come across as curt, less knowledgeable, or unapproachable can be highly beneficial as one can then make an active effort to put in place behaviours to counteract these misconceived impressions. For example, I now take closer note of the way I introduce myself and aim to learn from those who are able to highlight their expertise while still coming across as approachable. By observing others and monitoring people's responses to my own introductions I have since tweaked my approach for introducing myself. This is also an area I have sought further feedback since, this has further helped me grow and change over time (Burkus 2021). I have found that especially in field schools this has resulted in an increased trust between participants and myself, which in turn has improved overall outcomes.

Word Count – 547

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