

The Role of Accuracy and Type of Evaluation in Feedback Delivery

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Western Michigan University

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Association for Behavior Analysis International 41st Annual Convention, San Antonio, TX

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Slide 1



Slide 2



- Performance feedback, both in isolation and in combination with other intervention components, has long remained one of the most commonly studied and implemented variables
- It is a popular intervention used both in the organizational behavior management literature and in other fields of study

Slide 3



1. How feedback impacts behavior
2. The seeking of feedback

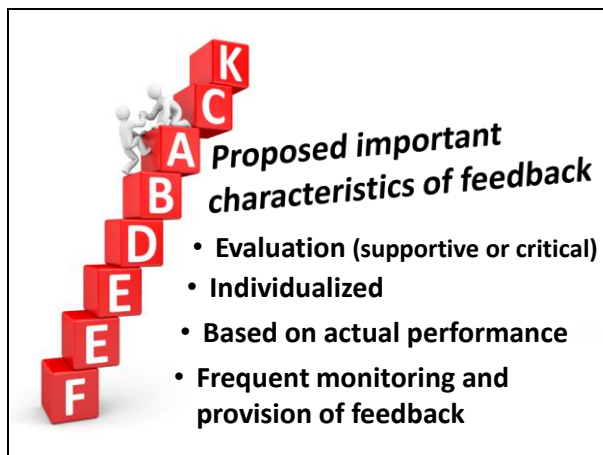
- Narrow focus in research questions:
 - How feedback impacts behavior
 - The seeking of feedback

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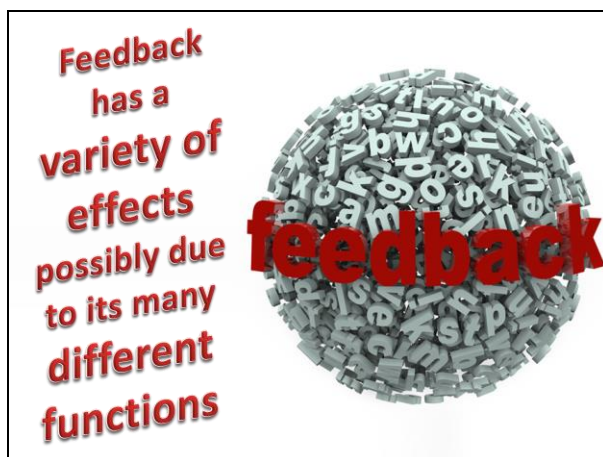
- Feedback can be implemented in a variety of different ways
- Due to this lack of precision, the effects of this broad intervention are not uniform and this is where the gap exists in the current literature
- Honing in on the specific elements for effective feedback would help to fill the current gap in the literature

Slide 5



- Proposed important characteristics of feedback:
 - Evaluation (supportive or critical statements)
 - Individualized
 - Based on actual performance
 - Frequent monitoring and provision of feedback

Slide 6



- Feedback has a variety of effects possibly due to its many different functions
- Feedback has many different forms and functions bundled within a single broad term
- Example: Praise can function as a reinforcer while constructive criticism can function as a punisher. One can see how this could lead to entirely different behaviors and therefore different results

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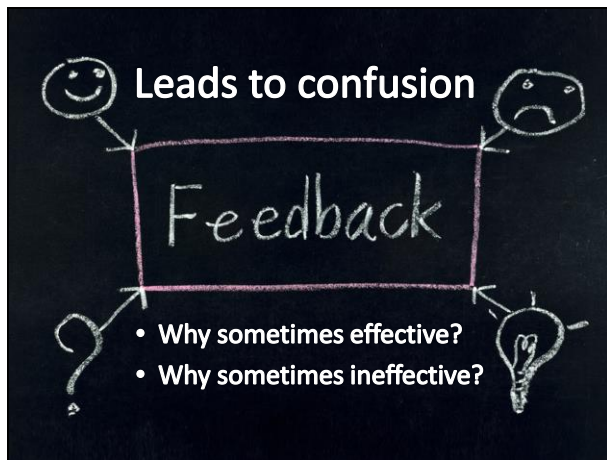
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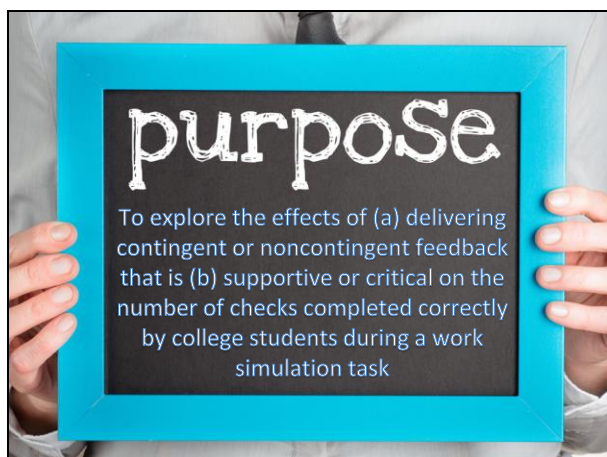
- Breadth of the term can lead to confusion:
 - Why sometimes effective?
 - Why sometimes ineffective?

Slide 8



- Cooking analogy: Feedback, like many interventions can be thought of as a recipe. Much like changing one simple ingredient can lead to an entirely different tasting dish, changing one piece of an intervention can lead to completely different results. Accuracy of the feedback, frequency of provision, whether it is individualized, etc. can all be thought of ingredients in our recipe for feedback

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- Purpose of present study:
- To explore the effects of
- (a) delivering contingent or noncontingent feedback that is
- (b) supportive or critical on the number of checks completed correctly by college students during a work simulation task.

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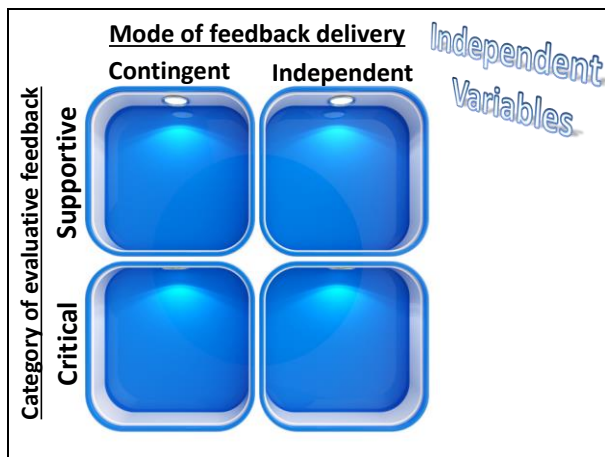
Participants and Setting

- 118 undergraduate students
- A computerized data entry task



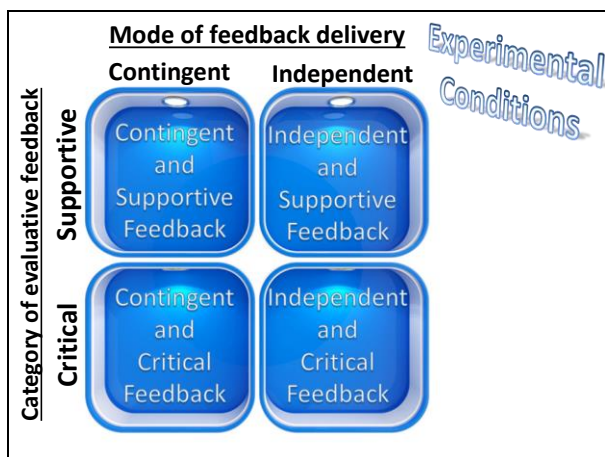
- 118 undergraduate students
- Experimental Task
 - A computerized data entry task involving the entry of dollar amounts that appeared on simulated bank checks
 - At the end of the task the number of checks correctly entered was displayed

Slide 11



1. Mode of feedback delivery
 - a. Contingent delivery
 - b. Independent delivery
2. Category of evaluative feedback
 - a. Supportive
 - b. Critical

Slide 12



- Participants were randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions:
 - Contingent and Supportive feedback
 - Contingent and Critical feedback,
 - Independent and Supportive feedback,
 - Independent and Critical feedback

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Slide 13

The diagram for Slide 13 features two columns of rounded rectangular boxes. The left column contains a dark blue box labeled 'Contingent and Supportive Feedback' and a light blue box labeled 'Independent and Supportive Feedback'. Below these boxes are two bullet points: 'If improvement from previous best:' followed by 'Experimenter read one of seven supportive statements at the beginning of the experimental session', and 'If decline or no change from previous best:' followed by 'No evaluative statements at the beginning of the experimental session were read'.

- If improvement from previous best:
 - Experimenter read one of seven supportive statements at the beginning of the experimental session
- If decline or no change from previous best:
 - No evaluative statements at the beginning of the experimental session were read

- If improvement from previous best:
 - Experimenter read one of seven supportive statements at the beginning of the experimental session
- If decline or no change from previous best:
 - No evaluative statements at the beginning of the experimental session were read
- Example supportive statement: "Regarding your performance during last session, that was an impressive improvement. Keep up the great work!"

Slide 14

The diagram for Slide 14 features two columns of rounded rectangular boxes. The left column contains a dark blue box labeled 'Contingent and Critical Feedback' and a light blue box labeled 'Independent and Critical Feedback'. Below these boxes are two bullet points: 'If decline as compared to previous best:' followed by 'Experimenter read one of seven critical statements at the beginning of the experimental session', and 'If improvement or no change from previous best:' followed by 'No evaluative statements at the beginning of the experimental session were read'.

- If decline as compared to previous best:
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- If decline as compared to previous best:
 - Experimenter read one of seven critical statements at the beginning of the experimental session
- If improvement or no change from previous best:
 - No evaluative statements at the beginning of the experimental session were read
- Example critical statement: "Regarding your performance during last session, that wasn't an impressive performance. Let's see if you could improve today"

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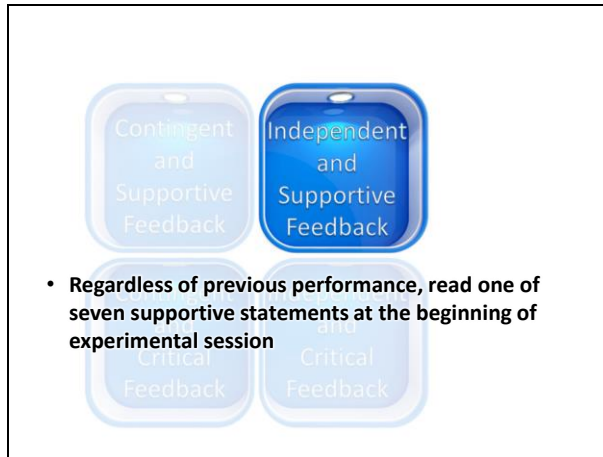
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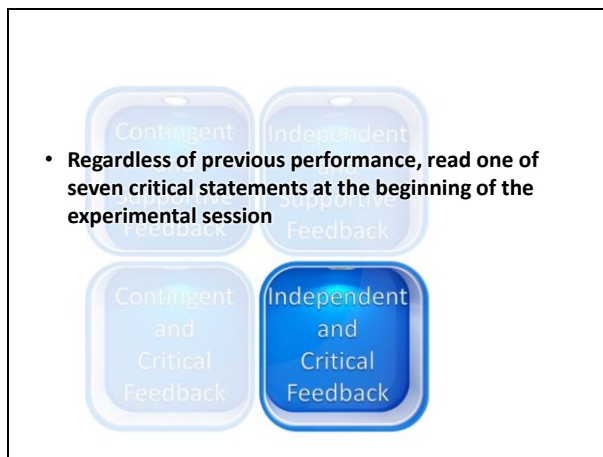
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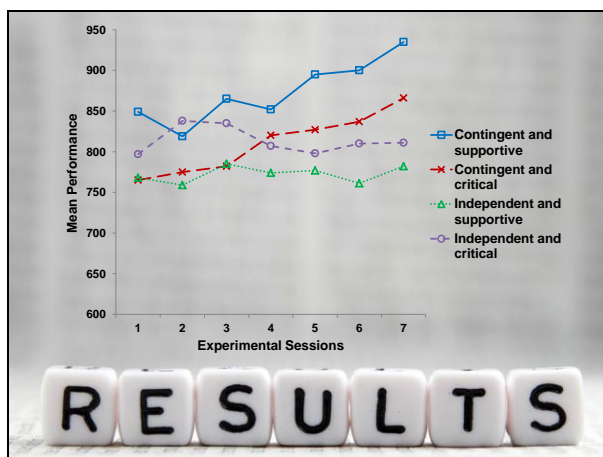
- Independent and supportive feedback
 - Regardless of previous performance, read one of seven supportive statements at the beginning of experimental session

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- Independent and critical feedback
 - Regardless of previous performance, read one of seven critical statements at the beginning of the experimental session

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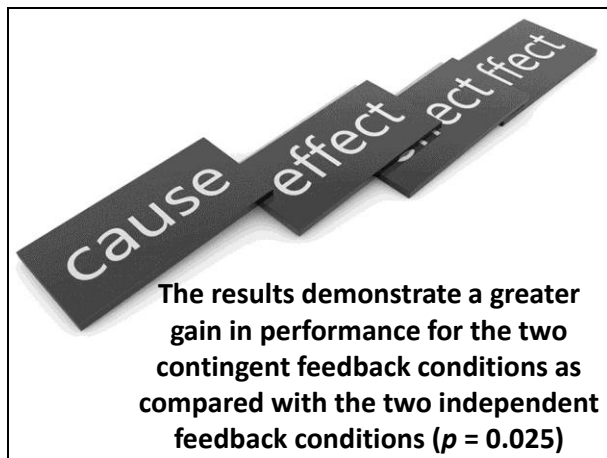
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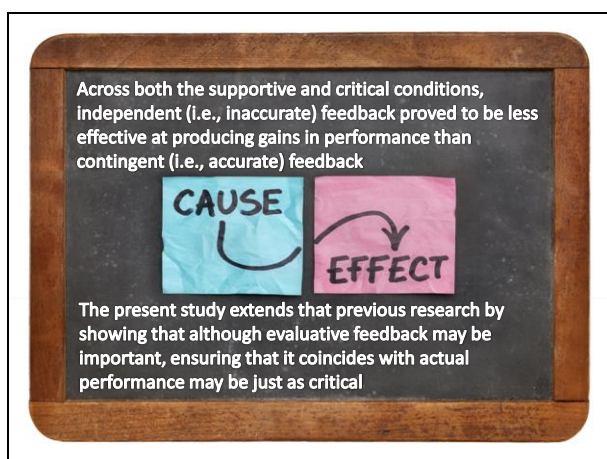
- The results demonstrate a greater gain in performance for the two contingent feedback conditions as compared with the two independent feedback conditions.

Slide 19



- No differences in productivity found in regard to evaluation categories
 - Supportive
 - Critical
- However, other possible side effects should also be considered
 - Issues related to job satisfaction, turnover, etc.

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- Across both the supportive and critical conditions, independent feedback proved to be less effective at producing gains in performance than contingent feedback
- The present study extends that previous research by showing that although evaluative feedback may be important, ensuring that it coincides with actual performance may be just as critical
- Accuracy is an important ingredient in our recipe for effective feedback

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- Practical implications:
 - Primary message: Supervisors need to take the required steps to ensure that feedback is closely tied to actual performance
 - This strategy is likely to reap even greater improvements in performance than what could be expected when evaluations of performance are blindly delivered



- Practical implications:
 - Primary message: Supervisors need to take the required steps to ensure that feedback is closely tied to actual performance
 - This strategy is likely to reap even greater improvements in performance than what could be expected when evaluations of performance that are blindly delivered

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THANK YOU!

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