This edition:
The Talent Development team is pleased to offer relevant and meaningful learning opportunities to Virginia Tech. For this edition of On Topic, we’ve chosen the topic of Feedback.

Feedback done well motivates and inspires; it can energize us, build trust, and help us feel good about ourselves and our work. On the other hand, feedback done poorly can create frustration and resentment; it can damage relationships and sink even the mightiest of ships. This is why providing effective feedback in a positive way has become critical to the success of institutions and their employees.

In this edition, we have provided resources with the goal of broadening understanding, building skills and knowledge, and addressing and resolving issues that may come with the topic of Feedback.

Feedback

If you ask anyone what their favorite part of working is, 9 times out of 10, they’ll probably tell you it’s getting feedback. Who doesn’t love being told why their project failed to meet expectations, or what they did wrong in their presentation, or how they forgot the cover sheet on the TPS reports?

In all seriousness, feedback has earned its terrible reputation. For years we’ve given or received terrible feedback, and it’s not even because it was ill-intentioned. In fact, most of the time, feedback is given with the best of intentions, to help the receiver do things differently, with the goal of helping the organization do better.

But there’s a lot of good news in the world of feedback, new ways of looking at it and giving it. There’s even something called feedforward and it may be just the thing you or your employees need to re-energize the team, build trust, and raise the bar. Just keep in mind when trying new ideas that feedback is very personal and what works for one, doesn’t always work for all. Have those conversations with your team and those around you, find out what works best for them and for you.

The Feedback Fallacy - There are better ways to help employees thrive and excel than praise and constructive criticism.

Feedback, ‘Feedforward’ and Frequency - Three F’s needed to power 21st century performance management.

Feedforward: Coaching For Behavioral Change - How to use feedforward to focus on the possibilities of the future and not the mistakes of the past.

LIL Feedback microlearning collection - A collection of short LinkedIn Learning videos on the topic of Feedback, specially curated for this On Topic.

See what is available HERE!

https://www.hr.vt.edu/talent-development.html
Deliberate Practice

Like any skill, feedback needs to be practiced and honed. By using techniques like deliberate practice, a mindful and highly structured form of learning by doing, we can achieve mastery and eventually full automaticity of a specific skill more quickly.

Communication

Does your team talk about effective communication? While this sounds like a joke, it’s not. On a scale of 1 to 10, the importance of effective communication usually comes in around 13 or 14, or right around these dogs. (select the link if you like dogs)

Essential, vital, crucial, critical, key, the list of words that have been used to describe the importance of communication could probably replace all the text in this On Topic, that’s how important effective communication really is. So it begs a repeat of the question, do you and your team ever talk about communication? Do you have a strategy for bringing up something sensitive? How do you celebrate and acknowledge the hard work of those around you in ways they appreciate and enjoy? Not everyone likes being put in front of the room and clapped at, even if it is to show appreciation.

We hope you find these resources as food-for-thought when it comes to how you and your team communicate. Remember, there’s always room for improvement, even on the best teams (go TD!)

- How to Address Poor Communication in the Workplace - Learn how to identify and address poor communication and establish successful strategies.
- Managing Organizational Communication - Discover how to build an effective communication strategy for your organization and measure results.
- It's Not Manipulation, It's Strategic Communication - Keisha Brewer shares how effective communications can be used by all women (and all genders) to excel in everyday life.

LIL Communication Microlearning collection - A collection of short LinkedIn Learning videos on the topic of Communication, specially curated for this On Topic.

Constructive feedback welcome! We work hard to bring you interesting and relevant content, and we’re always listening. So let us know what you’d like to see in future editions.
Conflict

It’s time to take a deep breath and answer the following question as honestly as you possibly can, “Do you like conflict?” Be honest, your knee-jerk reaction is probably an emphatic “No, of course I don’t like conflict. Life would be so much easier without it!” But take a moment to stop and think, then ask yourself “where would we be without conflict?”

Pretty much every single story, great movie or epic tale is centered around conflict. Would Romeo and Juliet have been a great love story if their families liked each other and were supportive of their love? Would anyone have watched or read about Harry and Voldemort calmly discussing their differences over tea and crumpets? What if Frodo had just flown an eagle to Mount Doom from the start?

The truth is, we like conflict, and in a lot of ways we need it, too. Conflict can add excitement and challenge us to grow, and change our ways of thinking and looking at the world. Conflict can be a positive force when it’s productive; when it’s destructive it can build barriers, destroy relationships and pull teams apart. The resources below can help you find strategies to limit or resolve negative conflict while utilizing and harnessing positive conflict.

- **How to Resolve Workplace Conflicts** - Conflict in the workplace is not always a bad thing. But ignoring it can be.
- **The 5 ‘Cs’ Approach to Conflict Resolution in the Workplace** - Five C’s that can help improve a company’s cohesion.
- **Finding Confidence in Conflict** - Director of the American Negotiation Institute, and business lawyer, Kwame Christian teaches us about an alternative way to resolve conflict.
- **LIL Conflict Microlearning collection** - A collection of short LinkedIn Learning videos on the topic of Conflict, specially curated for this On Topic.

LinkedIn Learning

LinkedIn Learning is an on-demand learning solution designed to help users gain new skills and knowledge. Access is free to current Virginia Tech students, employees, and recent graduates.

If you have never accessed a LinkedIn Learning course previously, please use this link to activate your Virginia Tech account.

Yammer

Yammer is a collaboration tool that helps you connect and engage across the organization. Join the Talent Development community on Yammer for professional development resources and conversations.

Yammer is included in Office365 and can be accessed via the web or Microsoft Teams with your VT login.

On Topic Fall 2022: Teams

Keep an eye out for the Fall edition of On Topic as we explore the theme of Teams and provide resources that will help build trust, understanding, and cohesion.