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Activity 2

Digital toolkit for innovative curriculum and methodological development

Module 2 – Communication enhancement

Method 5 – Constructive feedback workshops

Case study

Module 2 – Communication Enhancement

Case study - Turning Criticism into Growth: Building Confidence through Constructive Feedback

Related Method - Constructive Feedback Workshops

Context and Background

Organisation: A regional training centre in Western Europe that supports adult learners through employability and lifelong learning programmes.

Target Group: Adults aged 23–50, mixed gender, including unemployed jobseekers, employees in re-skilling programmes, and migrants entering the local workforce.

Scope: The training centre aimed to help participants strengthen workplace communication and teamwork, particularly in contexts where feedback is often given but rarely received constructively.

Problem / Challenge Presented

Participants often experienced feedback as criticism rather than support. Many reported feeling discouraged, defensive, or even anxious when evaluated by supervisors or peers. This led to avoidance of feedback situations, lower performance improvement, and frequent misunderstandings in the workplace. Educators noted that learners needed practical tools to reframe feedback as a positive, developmental process.

Actions Taken / Method Applied

The centre integrated ***Constructive Feedback Workshops*** into its communication skills curriculum.

Key methods included:

- **Feedback Role Reversal**: learners alternated between giving and receiving feedback in structured scenarios, building empathy for both roles.
- **Feedback Maze**: participants rotated through multiple workplace scenarios, practising how to give respectful, specific feedback while also learning to accept it openly.

Workshops emphasised emotional safety, small-group practice, and continuous peer support.

Outcomes and Results

Learners showed greater awareness of how to give feedback that is specific, balanced, and respectful.



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Many reported an increase in confidence when receiving constructive feedback without feeling criticised.

Participants noted that practising feedback in multiple rounds helped them refine their language and tone, making their communication more professional and empathetic.

Overall, the workshop fostered a more supportive group environment where learners encouraged each other's growth.

Lessons Learned

Feedback is most effective when focused on behaviour, not personality.

Role-switching helps learners build empathy and understand how words and tone impact the receiver.

Learners need guided reflection to internalise strategies and overcome negative past experiences with criticism.

Key Success Factors

Clear frameworks (SBI, Sandwich) that provided structure and reduced ambiguity.

Small, supportive group settings where participants felt safe to practise.

Peer observation and feedback, which reinforced collaborative learning.

Facilitator modelling respectful feedback language and tone.

Challenges Encountered and How They Were Addressed

Some learners reacted negatively to feedback role-plays. Facilitators addressed this by beginning with positive-only feedback before introducing constructive criticism.

Migrant participants were unfamiliar with direct feedback styles. Facilitators incorporated intercultural discussions and allowed for role-play adjustments.

Larger groups limited practice opportunities; dividing learners into smaller subgroups ensured more active participation.

Applicability / Recommendations for Educators

Start with positive feedback practice to create a safe learning climate before moving to constructive criticism.

Use structured models so learners have a clear roadmap for feedback.

Encourage learners to practise both giving and receiving roles to develop balanced skills.

Integrate real-life scenarios (workplace, interviews, teamwork) to make practice transferable.

Reinforce with reflection activities (journals, group debriefs) so learners internalise lessons.