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**Lor, Mai Jousa *Determining the Gap for UW-Stout Student Supervisor Training***

**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not the addition of online training as a delivery method would be effective in assuring that newly appointed UW-Stout student employee supervisors can receive EDGE training in a timely manner. Since it is not possible to determine in advance who a new supervisor would be, or when they would become a supervisor, and what their delivery preferences are. Due to the large number of supervisors and the crucial roles a supervisor serves in the hiring and orienting of the student employees, the UW-Stout's HR department believes that it is essential to offer training sessions for all supervisor in this role.

An online survey of 12 questions was used to collect data and analyze results. The survey was administered 286 active supervisors of student employees with the response rate of 37%. Data analysis and results indicated that the participants of this study agreed with the UW-Stout Human Resources department to implement an online EDGE training session in addition to the face-to-face training during the beginning of the academic year. Furthermore, the results showed that supervisors preferred a blended (both online and in person training) method of learning.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

The University of Wisconsin-Stout (UW-Stout) is a polytechnic university located in Menomonie, Wisconsin. As of 2016, UW-Stout serves a little over 9,500 students. Each year, UW-Stout hires approximately 2,000 students to fill student positions throughout the university. There are over 200 individuals across the campus that supervise student positions (J. Johnson, personal communication, July 20, 2017). Supervisors of student employees range from university employees including full-time and part-time faculty to university staff, project and limited term employment staff. The UW-Stout Human Resources (HR) believe that it is important for these supervisors to receive proper training since they are responsible for ensuring that student employee(s) receive timely payments.

The responsibilities of a supervisor of student employees include hiring, training, and overseeing the student employees during the tenure of their employment. In the hiring process, the supervisor conducts the interview and completes the appropriate hiring paperwork. Once the hiring process is complete, the supervisor is then responsible for showing the student employee how to record time worked, determine the student's responsibilities and other topics related to the student's position. In addition, the supervisor is responsible for maintaining and approving the student employee's timesheet and ensuring that all employee paperwork is up to date. In addition, the supervisor also oversees and assure that student employees receive the proper training in order to effectively complete their duties.

Due to the large number of supervisors and the crucial roles a supervisor serves in the hiring and orienting of the student employees, the UW-Stout's HR department believes that it is essential to offer training sessions for all supervisor in this role. As a part of UW-Stout's series of the Stout Employee Development Growth and Enrichment (EDGE) program, the HR

department offers two sessions: Student Employment, which is a walk-through of the hiring process, and Payroll Tips and Tricks which is a rundown of steps to successfully complete payroll. Both EDGE sessions are available for university employees who will potentially be involved in the supervision of any student employees within their department.

The EDGE training sessions are face-to-face and generally offered once during the academic year. The Student Employment session is facilitated by the Student Employment Coordinator and Student Payroll Specialist. The session informs the attendees of the hiring process, the paperwork needed by HR in order to process a student employee into the system, and how to track payroll funding sources. The Payroll Tips and Tricks session is facilitated by the payroll and benefits director along with the payroll specialists in the HR department. This session informs the attendees on how to manage student's timesheets and approvals. In addition, the session trains supervisors on how to navigate through the different payroll modules in the Human Resources System (HRS), a program that UW System uses to process employee payroll.

There are several issues associated with the current method of implementation of the EDGE sessions. Each of the two EDGE sessions is held only once and at a different time during the academic year. This has often posed a time conflict and prevented university faculty and staff from attending the training due to their busy schedules during the time the sessions are offered. Since faculty or staff may hire student employees at any time during the academic year or may become a supervisor at any point of time in the year it should be offered more frequently. However, up until now, the in-person training session has only been offered once a year.

University employees who become a supervisor after the sessions have been offered, or who are unable to attend the sessions for any reason, are provided with a set of training documents. The documents include a Student Manager Hiring Checklist and a step-by-step



instruction document to utilize. Sometimes, these documents themselves can be an issue and difficult to use by individuals who may not have previously worked with HRS and lack an understanding how to navigate through the system. Finally, for some, the documents alone could also be insufficient and/or ineffective for individuals as a substitute for training, since they may prefer a different format of learning. The most serious issue is that supervisors who are improperly trained can cause paperwork delays which may lead to delays in the student employee's payment and/or documentation that fails to meet federal regulations.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As previously noted, while the current method of providing UW-Stout face-to-face EDGE training sessions, is believed to be meeting both the needs of most newly appointed supervisors of student employees and the budget and resources constraints of the HR department, a single approach to delivering training, there is a real concern that this approach, in some cases, and may cause delay in payment to student employees and/or may cause the university at times to not be in compliance with federal policy. What is not known is that if different approaches were used to deliver training, would this ensure that all supervisors would receive the training they need in a timely manner.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The overall purpose of this study was to determine whether or not the addition of online training as a delivery method would be effective in assuring that newly appointed UW-Stout student employee supervisors can receive EDGE training in a timely manner.

Because it is not possible to determine in advance who a new supervisor would be, or when they would become a supervisor, and what their delivery preferences are, if any, it was assumed that the past needs and preferences of current supervisors, related to the supervision of

student employees would be comparable to the needs and preferences of newly appointed supervisors. To this end the questions of the study attempted to answer was:

*Is there a preferred alternative to the current method of delivering EDGE training programs to newly appointed supervisors of UW-Stout student employees?*

The alternative method considered by HR to be the most applicable to the previously stated needs was on-line training. The following sub-questions were used to help focus the study:

1. Sub-question 1: If EDGE supervisor training was made available in an online format would supervisors of student employee use it,
2. Sub-question 2: Is there one type of online format that is preferred by types of individuals who supervise student employees.
3. Sub-question 3: Are there specific topics of the EDGE training that individuals who supervise student employee would prefer to have available as online training?

### **Assumptions of the Study**

As previously noted, while the study was interested in the needs and preferences of individuals newly appointed to supervise student workers, it is not possible to identify who those individuals would be or when they would become supervisors. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, it was assumed that, in regard to needs and preferences, that current supervisors would be representative of future supervisors and that they, in turn, could fully recall their experiences as new supervisors of student employees

In regard to the training preferences of supervisors, it was also assumed that supervisors would view some form of online training to be more desirable and effective compared to

receiving a packet of written self-instructional training materials. As a result, for the purpose of this study, only online delivery methods were considered as alternatives to classroom delivery.

## **Chapter II: Literature Review**

The intent of this study was to determine whether or not the addition of online training as a delivery method would be effective in ensuring that newly appointed supervisors of UW-Stout student employee receive EDGE training in a timely manner. First, the development of the different delivery formats of online training will provide supervisors of student employee access to the training materials throughout the year. Next, the online training will especially be helpful when supervisors are unable to attend the face-to-face training that is offered near the beginning of the academic year. The implementation of online training as a delivery method will give the supervisor the opportunity to access the training on their own time.

As technology continues to advance today's society, it is important to evaluate the methods training that is being delivered. It is important for organizations to meet the learning needs of all individuals receiving the training. This chapter reviews the literature related to the gap analysis, a procedure that can be used by organizations to determine the current state compared to the future state of the organization. Furthermore, this chapter examines the advantages and disadvantages of classroom training. This chapter will end with a review of online training and introduce some of the different online training formats including web-based training, video tutorials, Skype calls, and screen sharing.

### **Gap Analysis**

According to Brucker, Cochran, and Leppel (2012), technology in the current society is changing rapidly, therefore it is important to maintain and ensure that proper training is in place. When training materials are not meeting the needs of employees within an organization, it is important for the organization to determine the gap. Once an organization determines what the gaps are, it can allow them to improve or add to what is available to ensure that the best materials

and methods are being offered to their employees. When employees feel their needs are met, this allows employees to feel cared for, which can create a positive impact on the organization.

According to Bordley (2001), gap analysis is an evaluation process to determine what is missing from the current state of the services offered and future state where an organization wants to be. In addition, Bordley (2001) added that the gap analysis should include the user's opinion of what they see that is not working to get a bigger picture of why the current state needs to be changed. A method to conduct an effective gap analysis should consist of a chart or a list of the following:

1. Identifying the current state of what is happening now,
2. Determining the future state of the desired outcome,
3. Identifying the discrepancies between what is happening now and the desired outcome,
4. Identifying the cause of the existent of the current state,
5. Identifying solutions to resolve the gap, and
6. Determining a timeline of when the outcomes should be resolved (Chhetri, 2017).

Chou, Hsu, and Tsai (2011) stated that it is important for organizations to close the gap as soon as it has been determined because it will assist in the morale of the users within the organization. In addition, Chou et al. (2011) also stated that it is the organization's responsibility to ensure the users' needs are met. Furthermore, according to Chou et al. (2011) when the gap is closed, it allows users to be satisfied. Once the users are satisfied, they are more likely to build relationships with the people they serve.

## **Classroom Training Advantages and Disadvantages**

Classroom training has primarily been the traditional method of job training but over the last several years, online training and e-learning methods have been on the rise in most recent years because technology has allowed different methods of getting information out to people. Hunt (2013) stated that many training professionals do not believe online training will fully take over classroom learning, as many individuals still prefer classroom training. Although many organizations have shifted gears to offer more training online, some organizations are still training using the traditional classroom format.

Before an organization decides which training method to use, it is important for the organization and trainers to look at the advantages and disadvantages of the training method to ensure it fits the needs of the trainees/organization. To further determine if classroom training method is still suitable for an organization to use as a way to deliver training, it is important to recognize the advantages and disadvantages to ensure organizations are investing their training funds on a training method that could have been done in a different form (Rosetta Stone Enterprise and Education, 2013, para 1).

**Advantages.** An advantage of classroom training is that employees can be taught in a “safe, quiet, clean environment” where they can be away from their work station (Hunt, 2013, para 4). The work station can sometimes cause distractions that takes the trainee away from the actual training. Furthermore, classroom learning allows the trainee to connect on a deeper level with discussion and interaction as information is being presented. Additionally, classroom training allows attendees to learn together, which can lead to building a stronger personal and professional relationship (Kokemuller, n.d).

Classroom training consists of small or large group. When employees are trained in a group environment, employees learn “how to interact with one another in a professional, productive, cooperative way, which is something that other forms of training often don’t provide” (Hunt, 2013, para 4). In addition, classroom settings provide learners the opportunity to interact with the trainer, which allows the learner to receive direct feedback on any questions that the learner may have during the training session. Furthermore, some learners need more encouragement than others and being in a classroom setting will allow the learner to receive that reassurance from the trainer before moving forward (Paduraru, n.d.).

Lastly, classroom training is accessible for learners who do not have access to a device that can access the internet or has limited computer and technology skills. In addition, classroom training allows the learners to be on a schedule. Classroom training forces the learners to attend the training to receive the information they need to perform their duties (Paduraru, n.d.).

**Disadvantages.** A disadvantage of classroom training is the lack of flexibility. In addition, most classroom trainings are typically done during work hours. Furthermore, the learner must be present during the classroom training to receive the information or experience (Kokemuller, n.d.). Since employees are being pulled away from their work station and are off the job, this is viewed as a disadvantage because it could delay production for that employee (Hunt, 2013).

Although having training in a classroom setting allows employees to be in a quiet and safe area where learners can fully take in the learning experience, the classroom setting limits the learners from a hands-on experience, which can be difficult for adult learners (Hunt, 2013). Some learners may find that they have a challenging time absorbing learning experience,

especially if the learner's learning needs are not being displayed since classroom training offers a one-size-fits-all training (Rosetta Stone Enterprise and Education, 2013, para 2).

In a classroom setting learners are spending more time recording the notes during the learning process than trying to listen and engage in learning the new information being presented (Miza, 2012). As a result of this, learners are unable to understand the key concepts of what the learners are there to do. In addition, according to Miza (2012) during classroom learning experience, the trainers are limited to a certain amount of time. This causes some trainers to cram in as much information as possible into one session. This can be hard for some learners to absorb such an abundance of new concepts or information especially if the learners are unfamiliar with the topic presented.

Classroom learning also does not allow learners to apply what is being taught which can cause distress when the learner is performing the task since the learner had not yet mastered the concepts during the learning process. Furthermore, Miza (2012) stated, since not everyone learns at the same pace, a learner who is unable to master what they were being taught during the classroom training session may be stereotyped as a slow learner. This can affect the learner's ability to master the task in the future.

Lastly, not everyone learns the same way. Some individuals may prefer a different learning style. Individuals who may prefer a different learning style other than the classroom style may have a difficult time following what is being presented during the classroom training session. If the trainer does not present information in a learning style that is appropriate to the learner during the training, the learner may have a tough time understanding and retaining the information (Miza, 2012).



## **Online Training Formats**

Online training has become popular over the years due to the advance of technology. There are many benefits linked to online training as described by Pappas (2014). Online training courses allow the learners to access the training materials from anywhere and at any time. By providing different online trainings, learners can learn the information on the go. This allows learners to not have to spend extra time after work hours to attend a classroom training session. However, Pappas (2014) cautioned that before designing and developing an online training program it is important to consider which programs to use and determine ahead of time what kinds of information employees should see and may already have access to. This will help to prevent issues from arising after the online training is created.

Training in general can cost an organization a large amount of money, not only does it cost to provide the training, it also cost the organization to send their employees to be trained (Weatherall, 1988). That additional training cost could arise from traveling and compensating the loss of work time because employees are attending training. To reduce the cost of training, Weatherall (1988) suggested the use of technology and bring the training to people who need to be trained without having to send people to the training. In addition, other costs associated with classroom training may include handouts of documents and paper that are needed during the training. When providing online training, the materials can be reused over time which helps reduce the cost. It would also reduce the paper used for the handouts since all the handouts are in electronic form (Venkatesiash, 2015). Since handouts are available electronically, the learners can decide for themselves which documents they need and can choose whether they want to print the training documents or not.

**Web-based training.** Web-based training allows learners the flexibility to access training material on their own time and from any location. The focus of web-based training is using the method of applying what the learner learned, rather than listening to the presenter. This can be achieved immediately through the scenarios provided on the web-based training modules. According to Brown (2000), web-based training is attractive to learners who may have many responsibilities to balance such as school, work, and family. Ballew, Brennan, Brownson, Castro, Claus, and Kittur (2013) found in their study web-based training that there was a huge benefit because it reduced the amount of funds and resources used to train employees.

**Video tutorial.** The video tutorial is a self-paced program that provides a step-by-step presentation on how to complete a task. Video tutorials allow the learner to play, stop, pause, and rewind when the video as needed (Windermere, n.d.). This gives the learner an opportunity to review the video as many times as needed to retain the information. Video tutorial allows learners to see and hear what they are going to be doing, which encourages learners to follow along with the information presented (Van Der Meij & Van Der Meij, 2015).

**Skype.** According to Skype (2017), Skype is a software that can be used to facilitate a meeting with individuals when face-to-face is impossible. Since Skype is based on the internet, it allows conversation with anyone around the world. Skype can be used for a voice call, group calling, instant messaging, and shared files (Skype, 2017).

Video conferencing could cost nothing when using Skype because it is free for all to use. With Skype, it allows a true dialogue since the users are not physically with their teacher or classmates, it gives users the time to “breathe, think, reflect, and respond in their own time” (Clark, 2010, para 4). In addition, Skype allows the trainer to share its desktop to allow the user

what the trainer is doing. At the same time, this feature allows users and trainer to have a conversation and interaction with each other throughout the presented (Wood, 2014).

**Screen sharing.** Screen sharing is an application that can be used on the web. It allows trainers and users to train remotely without having to be in the same room. According to Slabin (2013), screen sharing is real time “virtual collaboration” (p. 780). Slabin (2013) found that screen sharing allows his students to experience a “collaborative learning” experience where they could communicate using voice and help solve a problem together (p, 762). Screen sharing allows both users to see each other's computer screen, so they can work together to achieve the end goal.

### **Summary**

In summary, Chapter two reviewed the literature regarding the gap analysis, a procedure that can be used by organizations to determine the current state compared to the future state of the organization. In addition, this chapter discussed the different learning styles. Learning styles is “the concept that individuals differ with regards to what mode of instruction or study is most effective for them” (Bjork et al., 2008, p. 105). Furthermore, this chapter examined the classroom training advantage and disadvantage. Lastly, this chapter introduced the new training formats, which consists of web-based training, video tutorials, Skype, and screen sharing.

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

The intended purpose of this study was to determine whether providing EDGE training in an online format would be perceived positively or not by supervisors of student employees. It was the belief of the HR department that developing the different formats of online training will provide student employee supervisors access to the training materials throughout the year, as an alternative to the face-to-face training that is offered near the beginning of the academic year.

This research explored the question:

*Is there a preferred alternative to the current method of delivering EDGE training programs to newly appointed supervisor of UW-Stout student employee?*

#### **Methodology**

This study was designed as a descriptive, observational, qualitative study using an electronic questionnaire. It was presented to all UW-Stout supervisors to gain their perceptions regarding using an online format to provide supervisor training. The collected data was analyzed using basic descriptive statistical tools.

#### **Subject Selection and Description**

At the time of the study UW-Stout had 286 active supervisors with responsibility for supervising student employee. The supervisors that participated in the study (105) included both male and female of various age, multiple race, and ethnicities ranging in age from 18 to over 65 years. However, none of these demographic characteristics were considered to be relevant factors to this study, and this information was not collected. The only demographic information that was believed to have some possible relevance to the study was the employment classification of the participant and number of years as a supervisor.

The researcher discussed the purpose the research with the Assistant Director of Payroll and Benefits of the HR department at UW-Stout and granted permission to perform the research study (See Appendix A). The study participants were identified from a spreadsheet provided by the HR Department. The spreadsheet included the supervisor's name, department, email address which this information was used in distributing the Qualtrics survey to the participants.

### **Instrumentation**

To collect the data, an online survey consisting of 12 questions was emailed to all active supervisors. The survey questions were created based on the literature review and questions requested by the HR department (See Appendix E). By design, 10 of the 12 questions were closed-ended questions and participants were given a fixed number of choices to select from as a response. The first two questions were used to collect relevant demographic information (employee classification and years of experience as a supervisor). Four questions were used to identify the participant's previous exposure and participation in EDGE training. Four questions were used to collect participant's perceptions related to online training. The final two open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide helpful suggestions for improving the current supervisor training program.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The survey was administered anonymously through electronic email, using the UW-Stout Qualtrics online survey tool. In March of 2018 an email invitation was sent to all 286 active supervisors of student employees defining the purpose of the study, along with the survey link to the Qualtrics survey. The survey included the purpose of the study, as well as the implied consent form. The researcher allowed 14 days for participants to take part in the survey. A reminder email was sent after seven days after the initial email to remind the participants to take

complete the survey. The data from the survey questions were secured in the Qualtrics software database.

### **Data Analysis**

The data gathered from each respondent was collected and combined via the Qualtrics software. The combined survey data and Qualtrics analysis was reviewed by the researcher and, because of the qualitative nature of the data, a basic descriptive statistical analysis was performed on the survey results.

## Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not the addition of online training as a delivery method would be effective in ensuring that newly appointed supervisors of UW-Stout student employee receive EDGE training in a timely manner. A Qualtrics survey of all current student employee supervisor was used to determine whether or not the addition of online training delivery method would be effective to ensure newly appointed student employee supervisor to receive training in a timely manner. This chapter will contain an analysis of 13 questions survey with detailed information about each question. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected from survey participants.

The Qualtrics survey used to collect data was emailed to 286 active student employee supervisors. The data collection period was approximately two weeks in length, starting in March 2018. Of the 286 survey invitations sent, 108 total respondents participated in the online survey. This average out to be a 38% response rate of participants. The demographics of the sample population consisted of student employee supervisors in assortment employment classes, ages, and genders.

The primary purpose of this research was to determine if adding online training as a delivery method would be effective in ensuring that newly appointed supervisors of UW-Stout student employee receive training in a timely manner. The researcher received information regarding employment classification, training history, training topics, preferred learning methods and overall impression of current training. The questions contained multiple choice, ranking, and open-ended questions, to get the most precise information as possible. A Likert scale was used with some of the questions to determine the appropriate sense from the respondents.

## Item Analysis

**Quantitative data.** The intent of the first two survey questions was to collect potentially relevant demographic data related to employment classification and years of experience as a supervisor. Table 1 displays the responses regarding the participants' classification of employment at UW-Stout and Table 2 summarizes the respondents year of supervisory experience.

Table 1

*What is the Classification of your Employment at UW-Stout?*

Answer	Number of Response (N)	Frequency %
LTE	2	2%
University Staff	54	51%
Faculty	6	6%
Academic Staff	42	40%
Other, please list:	1	1%
Total	105	100%

The majority of respondents (91%) are classified as either University staff or Academic staff. University staff employees consist of individuals in a non-academic position, such as an office manager and office associate. Academic staff consist of employees who are in an academic position, which are mostly professors and dean of the university. One respondent listed their classification as other and indicated they were a volunteer worker and not an employee of UW-Stout.



Table 2

*How Long have you Supervised Student Employees?*

Answer	Number of Response (N)	Frequency %
0-1 year	22	21%
2-3 years	20	19%
4-5 years	20	19%
6-7 years	9	9%
7+ years	34	32%
Total	105	100%

Of the 105 respondents, 32% indicated they had been supervising student employee for 7+ years, while 21%, the second largest group, indicated they had been supervising student employees for 0-1 years. Overall, the majority of the respondents had supervised student employee for more than 2 years.

Four of the survey questions were used to find out if the respondents were aware of and/or had participated in the EDGE training session. The responses to the question of awareness are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

*I am Aware of the Two EDGE Sessions (Student Employment and Payroll Tips and Tricks) Offered by the Human Resources Department Related to Student Employment?*

Answer	Number of Response (N)	Frequency %
Yes	72	69%
No	33	31%
Total	105	100%

Seventy-two of the 105 respondents (69%) indicated yes, they were aware of the EDGE training session, whereas 33 respondents (31%) indicated they were not aware. Of the 33 respondents who responded not being aware of the EDGE session, 15 of the respondents were academic staff, 11 were university staff, 4 were faculty, 2 were LTE employees, and one was a volunteer. In addition, of the 33 respondents who were not aware of the EDGE session, seven have been supervising for 7 or more years.

The third survey question asked if the respondents had: attended both, one of the EDGE session or none of the sessions. The responses are summarized in Table 4. Of the 105 respondents, 30% had attended both, 9% had attended only the student employment EDGE session, 5% had attended only the Payroll Tips and Tricks EDGE session, and 56% had not attend any of the sessions

Table 4

*I have Attended \_\_\_\_\_ of the EDGE Session Related to Student Employment at Least Once as a Supervisor*

Answer	Number of Response (N)	Frequency %
Both	32	30%
Only the student employment EDGE session	9	9%
Only the Payroll Tips and Tricks EDGE session	5	5%
None	59	56%
Total	105	100%

Those respondents indicating, they had not attended any sessions, or had only attended one of the two, (a total of 73) were asked to select a reason, or reasons, from a list of 20 possibilities, for non-attendance. Only 69 respondents elected to answer this question, and their responses are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5

*I Only Attended One or None of the EDGE Session Because? (Check all that apply to you)*

Answer	Number of Response (N)	Frequency %
Time of the day the session is offered	12	17%
The day of the week the training is offered	3	4%
I was not a supervisor at the time when training was offered	8	12%
I didn't know about the training	28	41%
Other:	18	26%
Total	69	100%

Of the 69 respondents, 17% stated it was because of time of the day the session is offered, 4% indicated it was because of the day of the week the training is offered, 12% indicate because the training was offered when the respondent was not a supervisor, and 41% stated it was because the respondent did not know about the training session. Lastly, 26% of the 69 responds indicated that there were other reasons for not attending. Of those that indicated other as a reason indicated it was because, they did not recall a reason, poor communication, trained by other co-workers, and conflict with other meetings.

The sixth survey question asked how long the respondent waited to receive EDGE training once the respondent became a supervisor. As summarized in Table 6 a total of 104 response were recorded. Of the 104 respondents, 15% attended training within 30 days of becoming a supervisor, 16% attended or received training anywhere from 31 to more than 61

days after becoming a supervisor, while 29% of respondents did not recall when they received training, and the remaining 40% (42 respondents) indicated never received training. This number is in conflict with the results of the third survey question in which 59 respondents indicated they had not attended any EDGE training sessions, so it might be assumed that some of the 30 ‘I did not recall’ responses to the fourth question refer to not recalling if they even attended training.

Table 6

*How Long had You been in a Supervisor Role Before You Received EDGE Supervisor Training?*

Answer	Number of Response (N)	Frequency %
1-30 days	16	15%
31-45 days	3	3%
46-60 days	4	4%
61+ days	9	9%
I do not recall	30	29%
Never received training	42	40%
Total	104	100%

Table 7 summarizes the findings of survey question 7, which asked which method of learning the respondent personally preferred. Of the 100 responses to this question, 16% stated that in-person training is preferred, 7% preferred all online, 71% preferred blended, both online and in person training, and a small amount of 6% preferred learning by reading.

Table 7

*Personally, which Method of Learning do you Prefer?*

Answer	Number of Response (N)	Frequency %
In person training, I don't like online training	16	16%
All online training	7	7%
Blended – both online and in person training (training I can do on my own time and some in person training on campus)	71	71%
I prefer learning by reading instructions, materials, or textbook on my own time	6	6%
Total	100	100%

Table 8 summarizes the results of the ninth survey question which asked, if training were offered online, which method of delivery would the respondents preferred. There was a total of 98 responses to this question with 42% indicating web-based training, 51% preferring an online walk-through tutorial, and only 7% stating a preference for other alternatives.

Table 8

*If a Training Were offered Online, I Would Prefer it to be Delivered as*

Answer	Number of Response (N)	Frequency %
Web-based Training (instructor lead video/broadcast)	41	42%
Online walk through tutorial (online video walk- through)	50	51%
Training using Skype (listen and discussion)	1	1%
Training using the screen sharing feature	6	6%
Total	98	100%

Table 9 summarizes the responses to the eighth survey question which asked, if online training was available in addition to the on-campus classroom training, would it be utilized? There was a total of 101 responses with 34% strongly agreeing that they would utilize the additional online training if it was available. In addition, 63% agreed, 4% disagreed and none of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 9

*I Would Utilize the Online Training if it was Available, In Additional to the On-Campus EDGE Session*

Answer	Number of Response (N)	Frequency %
Strongly Agree	34	34%
Agree	63	62%
Disagree	4	4%
Strong Disagree	0	0%
Total	101	100%

Table 10 summarizes the responses to the tenth survey question which asked respondents to rank what they considered to be, from most and to least important. The training topic was related to supervising student employees, and if they would like to see it made available as an online training. Respondents were given five specific topics and the option to identify as another topic of their choosing. Of the 93 respondents, 33 of them indicated that the process of how to complete hiring paper was most important, and 29 respondents felt the student employee supervisor manual would be the most important topic, and 90 respondents selected Other as the least important topic.



Table 10

*Please Rank the Following Topics from #1 Being the Most Important and #6 is the Least Important Related to Supervising Student Employees that You Would Like to See Made Available as Online Training*

Topic	Most important					Least important
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
How to complete hiring paperwork	33 = 35%	18 = 19%	23 = 25%	14 = 15%	4 = 4%	1 = 1%
How to edit student employee's timesheet	12 = 13%	24 = 26%	30 = 32%	21 = 23%	6 = 6%	0 = 0%
How to approve student employee's timesheet	9 = 10%	13 = 14%	21 = 23%	28 = 30%	21 = 23%	1 = 1%
Student Employee Supervisor Manual	29 = 31%	10 = 11%	12 = 13%	20 = 21%	21 = 23%	1 = 1%
How to retrieve student work authorization	8 = 9%	28 = 30%	7 = 8%	9 = 10%	41 = 44%	0 = 0%
Other, please list	2 = 2%	0 = 0%	0 = 0%	1 = 1%	0 = 0%	90 = 97%
Total	93	93	93	93	93	93

**Qualitative data.** The final two survey questions, specifically requested by the HR department, allowed respondents to provide feedback and suggestions on how to improve EDGE training and how to make implementation of online training successful. Twenty-one of the survey participants responded to the first question and twenty-two responded to the second

question. Since the data collected to these two questions were not considered relevant to the overall research question, a summary of the results was not included in this report.

## Chapter V: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

The overall purpose of this study was to determine whether or not the addition of online training as a delivery method would be effective in assuring that newly appointed UW-Stout student employee supervisors will receive EDGE training in a timely manner.

It is not possible to determine in advance who would become a new supervisor, or when they would become a supervisor, and therefore what their delivery preferences, if any, would be for the EDGE training. Therefore, it was assumed that the past needs and preferences of current supervisors, related to the supervision of student employees would be comparable to the needs and preferences of newly appointed supervisors. To this end the question of the study attempted to answer was:

*Is there a preferred alternative to the current method of delivering EDGE training programs to newly appointed supervisors of UW-Stout student employees?*

The alternative method considered by HR to be the most applicable to the previously stated needs was on-line training. The following sub-questions were used to help focus the study:

1. Sub-question 1: If EDGE supervisor training was made available in an online format would supervisors of student employee use it,
2. Sub-question 2: Is there one type of online format that is preferred by types of individuals who supervise student employees.
3. Sub-question 3: Are there specific topics of the EDGE training that individuals who supervise student employee would prefer to have available as online training?

## **Results**

The results of this study showed that many of the respondents either agreed (62%) or strongly agreed (34%) that if EDGE supervisor training was made available as an online format the respondents would use it. Thus, only a small number (4%) disagreed, and none (0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Based on the survey findings the preferred online format was an online walk-through tutorial (online video walk-through). A little over 50% of the respondents preferred this as a delivery method. Web-based training (instructor lead video/broadcast) came in as the second choice at 41%.

Of all the respondents, 35% identified that providing an online training course on how to complete hiring paperwork was the most important topic. Twenty-five percent agreed that the Student Employee Supervisor Manual was also an important topic. About 13% revealed that the topic of how to edit student employee's timesheet would be important as well.

Overall, as shown in the results of the survey, many of the respondents agreed that an online format of the EDGE training session would be utilized. Many supervisors (71%) preferred a blended learning method, meaning a portion of the EDGE training that supervisors can do on their own time (online) and training that is available on campus (classroom). As many as 50% of the respondents indicated that if online training format was available, it should consist of an online walk-through tutorial.

## **Conclusions, Limitation, and Recommendation**

This study has provided UW-Stout HR department with some key information for the future development of the EDGE supervisor training program. The HR department has recognized the need for new supervisors to receive EDGE training in a timely manner and can be

concluded from this study that offering supervisor training online will satisfy the training needs of the newly appointed supervisor who is hired after the face-to-face EDGE session has been offered. It can also be concluded that the online training format will be the most effective for new supervisor of the student employees at UW-Stout. Additionally, it can be concluded from the research findings that while supervisors like the classroom delivery method of EDGE training they would also like the option of online training. They also have a desire to be able to review the training materials at their own time, year around.

### **Limitations**

The researcher recognizes three limitations to this study that have the potential to influence the findings and results of the study. First, at the time the data was collected for the study UW-Stout had 286 active supervisors responsible for supervising student employees. Only 105 voluntarily participated in the study indicating (representing a 37% response rate). Because the sample was not randomized, there is no way to establish that the sample is a true representation of all UW-Stout supervisors.

Second, the study has assumed that the needs and preferences regarding training of current supervisors will be a realistic representation of the needs and preferences of those individuals promoted/hired into supervisory positions. In this study 41% of the respondents reported that they had 5 or more years of supervisory experience (as compared to 21% with 1 year or less, or the 'new' supervisors). It is possible that the needs and preferences, regarding training, of very experienced supervisors do not actually mirror those of individuals just becoming supervisors.

Finally, the study did not consider the age of the supervisor to be a factor in identifying training preferences, which could possibly influence learning styles and preferences for different training delivery methods due to generational differences.

### **Recommendations**

Based upon the findings and results of the study, it appears that the UW-Stout HR department should develop and implement an alternative online training for the EDGE supervisor training program for both newly appointed and current supervisors of student employees. The EDGE training should be offered in a blended format, combining both classroom and online delivery methods. Furthermore, the online training should be designed as a walk-through tutorial.

The findings of the study also indicated that at the time they became supervisors 41% of the respondents were not aware that training even existed. In addition to offering an online delivery method, it is recommended that the HR department evaluate how training is being offered and communicated to supervisors of employees.

Based upon the noted limitations of the study, a recommendation for future research is for the HR department to repeat this study with only the newly appointed supervisors (supervisors with less than one year of experience) to acquire a current perspective. In addition, another recommendation for future study is to conduct a focus group that consists of the supervisors of student employees with 1-2 years of experience to get a deeper understanding of EDGE training from the new supervisor's perspective.

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## Appendix A: Permission to Conduct the Study

### Thesis



Johnson, Jo

Tue 7/18, 11:45 AM

Lor, Joua ↕

👍 ↻ Reply all ▾

Hi Joua,

Per our conversation, you have my approval to base your thesis on the HRS Student Payroll training gaps.

***Thanks!***

***Jo***



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## Appendix B: Informed Consent

**Title:** Determining the Gap for UW-Stout Student Supervisor Training

**Research Sponsor:** Dr. Richard Herling  
(715) 232 – 5423  
Operations & Management

**Investigator:** Mai Joua Lor  
(715) 803 – 0408  
LORJ@UWSTOUT.EDU

### **Description:**

The purpose of this study was to review whether or not providing online training would be efficient way for UW-Stout student employee supervisors to gain access to training materials throughout the academic year. The face-to-face training is held near the beginning of the new academic year, which can be difficult for employees to attend or cause an issue for any employees who become a supervisor after the face-to-face training is offered. Therefore, offering online training options may satisfy the needs of all student employee supervisors, new or current at UW-Stout. Being able to offer easy to use and easy to access online training may improve the satisfaction of the supervisors and their employees.

### **Risks and Benefits:**

Risk is minimal. The survey is anonymous, and the data will be aggregated so there are no identifiers.

### **Special Populations:**

The population are members of the organization.

### **Time Commitment and Payment:**

There will be no compensation or incentive involved in this research study. This survey should take no more than ten minutes of the participant's time. Participants can complete this survey during their leisure or spare time

### **Confidentiality:**

Your name will not be included on any documents or anytime during the survey. We do not believe that you can be identified from any of this information.

### **Right to Withdraw:**

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate without any adverse consequences to you. You have the right to stop the survey at any time. However, should you choose to participate and later wish to withdraw from the study, there is no way to identify your anonymous document after it has been turned into the investigator. If you are participating in an anonymous online survey, once you submit your response, the data cannot be linked to you and cannot be withdrawn.

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**Advisor:** Dr. Richard Herling  
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Operation and Management

### **Appendix C: Invitation to Complete Survey**

Dear UW-Stout Student Supervisors,

My name is Mai Joun Lor, and I am a graduate student in the Training and Human Resources Development Program. I am collaborating with the Human Resource Department (HR) of UW-Stout to evaluate and implement online training for UW-Stout Student Employee Supervisors.

You are respectfully invited to participate in my research study titled, Determining the Gap for UW-Stout Student Supervisor Training. The purpose of this research project is review whether or not providing online training would be efficient way for UW-Stout student employee supervisors to gain access to training materials throughout the academic year. The data collection of the surveys is to assist the researcher to have a better understanding what should be included when implementing online training for student employee supervisors.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. This survey is anonymous and your confidentially will be protected at all time. You may choose not to participate without any adverse consequences to you. You have the right to stop the survey at any time. However, should you choose to participate and later wish to withdraw from the study, there is no way to identify your anonymous document after it has been turned into the investigator. Once you submit your response, the data cannot be linked to you and cannot be withdrawn. The survey may take on average 15 minutes to complete. Survey time may vary depending on individuals so please allow yourself sufficient time to complete.

Thank you very much for your participation.

This project has been approved in accordance with the Institutional Review Board guidelines of UW-Stout.

Mai

### **Appendix D: Reminder Email to Complete Survey**

Dear UW-Stout Student Supervisors,

On March 20, 2018, you received an email inviting you to participate in the research study "Determining the Gap for UW-Stout Student Supervisor Training"

I am sending out this reminder in case you have not had a chance to complete the survey. If you have already completed this survey, please disregard this email. Your participation is voluntary, and the results of this study will help improve the Human Resource Department of UW-Stout to evaluate and implement online training for UW-Stout Student Employee Supervisors.

This short online survey should take no more than 15 minutes of your time.

Thank you for your time!

Mai

## Appendix E: Determining the Gap for UW-Stout Student Supervisor Training Survey

Thank you for your participation in this survey. Your participation will help improve the UW-Stout's Human Resources Department in implementing an on-line training that will be effective (learn more/better/faster) and convenient for UW-Stout student employee supervisors.

By completing this survey, you are consenting to participate in my research study.

1. What is the classification of your employment at UW-Stout?
  - a. LTE
  - b. University Staff
  - c. Faculty
  - d. Academic Staff
  - e. Other – please list: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. How long have you supervised student employees?
  - a. 0-1 year
  - b. 2-3 years
  - c. 4-5 years
  - d. 6-7 years
  - e. 7 + years
  
3. I am aware of the two EDGE sessions (Student Employment and Payroll Tips and Tricks) offered by the Human Resources department related to student employment?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
4. I have attended \_\_\_\_\_ of the EDGE session related to student employment at least once as a supervisor.
  - a. Both – Skip to Question 6
  - b. Only the student employment EDGE session – Skip to Question 5
  - c. Only the Payroll Tips and Tricks EDGE session – Skip to Question 5
  - d. None – Skip to Question 5
  
5. I only attended one or none of the EDGE session because? (Check all that apply to you)
  - a. \_\_\_ Time of the day the session is offered
  - b. \_\_\_ The day of the week the training is offered
  - c. \_\_\_ I was not a supervisor at the time when the training was offered
  - d. \_\_\_ I didn't know about the training sessions
  - e. \_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. How long had you been in a supervisor role before you received EDGE supervisor training?
  - a. 1-30 days
  - b. 31-45 days
  - c. 46-60 days
  - d. 61+ days
  - e. I do not recall
  - f. Never received training
  
7. Personally, which method of learning do you prefer?
  - a. In person training, I don't like online training
  - b. All online training
  - c. Blended – both online and in person training (training I can do on my own time and some in person training on campus)
  - d. I prefer learning by reading instructions, material, or textbook on my own time
  
8. If online training were offered, I would prefer it to be delivered as?
  - a. Web-based training
  - b. Online walk through tutorial
  - c. Training using Skype
  - d. Training using the screen sharing feature
  - e. Other, please list \_\_\_\_\_
  
9. I would unitize the online training if it was available online, in additional to the EDGE sessions?
  - a. Strongly Agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strong Disagree
  
10. Please rank the following topics from #1 being the most important and #5 is the least important related to supervising student employees that you would like to see made available as online training.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ How to complete hiring paperwork
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ How to edit student employee timesheet
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ How to approve student employee's timesheet
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_ Student Employee Supervisor Manual
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_ How to retrieve student work authorization
  
11. Please provide any suggestion that might be helpful to successfully implement online student supervisor training.  

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12. Please provide any suggestions that might be helpful to improve training for student employee supervisors.

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