

CHAPTER 2

PERSONALITY AND LEARNING

CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Chapter 2 students should be able to do the following:

- LO2.1. Define personality and discuss its general role in influencing organizational behaviour.
- LO2.2. Describe the dispositional, situational, and interactionist approaches to organizational behaviour and trait activation theory.
- LO2.3. Discuss the Five-Factor Model of personality.
- LO2.4. Describe and discuss the consequences of locus of control, self-monitoring, and self-esteem.
- LO2.5. Discuss positive and negative affectivity, proactive personality, general self efficacy, and core self-evaluations and their consequences.
- LO2.6. Define learning and describe what is learned in organizations.
- LO2.7. Explain operant learning theory and differentiate between positive and negative reinforcements.
- LO2.8. Explain when to use immediate versus delayed reinforcement and when to use continuous versus partial reinforcement.
- LO2.9. Distinguish between extinction and punishment and explain how to punish effectively.
- LO2.10. Explain social cognitive theory and discuss observational learning, self-efficacy beliefs, and self-regulation.
- LO2.11. Discuss the following organizational learning practices: organizational behaviour modification, employee recognition programs, training and development programs, and career development.

CHAPTER OUTLINE AND TEACHING NOTES

What Is Personality?

Personality refers to the relatively stable set of psychological characteristics that influences the way individuals interact with their environment. It is reflected in the distinctive way that individual's react to people, situations, and problems.

Personality consists of a number of dimensions and traits that are determined in a complex way by generic predisposition and by one's long-term learning history. As well, people have a variety of personality characteristics. There is no one best personality.

Personality and Organizational Behaviour

Personality has a rather long and rocky history in organizational behaviour that is demonstrated by the “person-situation” debate and the dispositional, situational, and interactionist approaches. According to the dispositional approach, individuals possess stable traits or characteristics that influence their attitudes and behaviours. According to the situational approach, characteristics of the organizational setting such as rewards and punishment influence people’s feelings, attitudes, and behaviour. According to the interactionist approach, organizational behaviour is a function of both dispositions and the situation. The interactionist approach is the most widely accepted perspective within organizational behaviour.

A good example of the interactionist approach is the role of personality in strong and weak situations. The role of personality in organizational settings is strongest in “weak” situations where there are loosely defined roles and few rules. In strong situations which have more defined roles, rules, and contingencies, personality tends to have less impact. Thus, the extent to which personality influences people’s attitudes and behaviours depends on the situation.

An important implication of the interactionist approach is that some personality characteristics are useful in certain situations. According to *trait activation theory*, traits lead to certain behaviours when the situation makes the need for that trait salient. Thus, personality characteristics influence people’s behaviour when the situation calls for a particular personality characteristic.

As a result, managers need to appreciate the value of diversity and concentrate on achieving the right “fit” between people and positions, and exposing different employees to different management styles.

The Five-Factor Model of Personality

The “Big Five” dimensions of the Five-Factor model of personality and examples of traits are introduced as well as the kind of jobs where each trait is likely to be relevant:

- Extraversion. Sociable, talkative vs. withdrawn, shy. It is especially important for jobs that require a lot of interpersonal interaction, such as sales and management, where being sociable, assertive, energetic, and ambitious is important for success.
- Emotional Stability/Neuroticism. Stable, confident vs. depressed, anxious. For most jobs the performance of persons with low emotional stability is likely to suffer. Persons who score high on emotional stability are likely to have more effective interactions with co-workers and customers because they tend to be more calm and secure.
- Agreeableness. Tolerant, cooperative vs. cold, rude. Agreeableness is most likely to contribute to job performance in jobs that require interaction and involve helping, cooperating, and nurturing others, as well as in jobs that involve teamwork and cooperation.

- **Conscientiousness.** Dependable, responsible vs. careless, impulsive. Persons who are high on conscientiousness are likely to perform well on most jobs given their tendency toward hard work and achievement.
- **Openness to Experience.** Curious, original vs. dull, unimaginative. People who are high on openness to experience are likely to do well in jobs that involve learning and creativity given that they tend to be intellectual, curious, and imaginative and have broad interests.

These dimensions are relatively independent and hold up well cross-culturally. There is also evidence for a genetic basis to them. Research has linked the Big Five to organizational behaviour. There is evidence that each of the “Big Five” dimensions is related to job performance and organizational citizenship behaviours. High conscientiousness is related to performance for all jobs across occupations and is the strongest predictor of overall job performance of all of the “Big Five” dimensions. The “Big Five” have also been found to be related to other work outcomes such as work motivation, job satisfaction, and job search and career success.

The Big Five personality dimensions are basic and general while those that follow are more specific.

Locus of Control

Locus of control is introduced using the examples of Laurie, a hard-working, driven individual who believes that she controls her destiny, and Stan who believes that luck is what provides advancement opportunities. These two examples are used to show the differences between an external locus of control (Stan) and an internal locus of control (Laurie).

Locus of control is a set of beliefs about whether one’s behaviour is controlled mainly by internal or external forces. High “externals” see their behaviours controlled by factors like fate, luck and powerful people. High “internals” see stronger effects on their behaviour as a consequence of self-initiative, personal actions and free will.

Locus of control influences organizational behaviour in a variety of occupations. Internals are more satisfied with their jobs, more committed to their organizations, earn more money, and achieve higher organizational positions. In addition, they seem to perceive less stress, to cope with stress better, experience less burnout, and to engage in more careful career planning. They are also less likely to be absent from work and to be more satisfied with their lives.

Self-Monitoring

Self-monitoring is the extent to which people observe and regulate how they appear and behave in social settings and relationships. Individuals low in self-monitoring are said to “wear their hearts on their sleeves.” They act like they feel and say what they think

without regard to the situation. Individuals high on self-monitoring behave somewhat like actors, taking great care to observe and control the images that they project. In particular, they tend to show concern for socially appropriate emotions and behaviours, tune in to social and interpersonal cues, and respond accordingly.

Self-monitoring is related to organizational behaviour. High self-monitors tend to gravitate toward jobs that require a degree of role-playing such as sales, law, public relations, and politics. They perform particularly well in occupations that call for flexibility and adaptiveness in dealings with diverse constituencies.

In terms of work-related outcomes, high self-monitors tend to be more involved in their jobs, to perform at a higher level, and more likely to emerge as leaders. They also experience more role stress and show less commitment to their organization. They have also been found to receive more promotions than low-self-monitors. However, high self-monitors are unlikely to feel comfortable in ambiguous social settings in which it is hard to determine exactly what behaviours are socially appropriate. Dealing with unfamiliar cultures (national or corporate) might provoke stress.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is the degree to which a person has a positive self-evaluation. People with high self-esteem have favourable self-images. People with low self-esteem tend to be more susceptible to external and social influences than those who have high self-esteem, that is, they are more plastic. This is known as *behavioural plasticity theory*.

People with low self-esteem tend to react badly to negative feedback – it lowers their subsequent performance and they do not react well to ambiguous and stressful situations.

Despite a possible downside to excessive esteem, organizations will generally benefit from a workforce with high self-esteem. Such people tend to make more fulfilling career decisions, they exhibit higher job satisfaction and job performance, and they are generally more resilient to the strains of everyday work life. Organizations can bolster self-esteem by providing opportunities for participation, autonomy, and interesting work which have been found to be positively related to self-esteem.

New Developments in Personality and Organizational Behaviour

Five more recent personality variables that are important for organizational behaviour are positive affectivity, negative affectivity, proactive personality, general self-efficacy, and core self-evaluations.

Positive and Negative Affectivity. People who are high on *positive affectivity* have a propensity to view the world, including oneself and other people, in a positive light. People who are high on *negative affectivity* have a propensity to view the world, including oneself and other people, in a negative light. Positive and negative affectivity are emotional dispositions that predict people's general emotional tendencies. PA and NA are not opposite ends of a continuum; they are independent dimensions. People who have high positive affectivity report higher job satisfaction while those with high negative affectivity report lower job satisfaction. High PA has also been found to be related to job

performance, organizational citizenship behaviours, and creativity at work. People with high negative affectivity tend to experience more stressful conditions at work and report higher levels of workplace stress and strain. NA has also been found to be associated with more counterproductive work behaviours (e.g., harassment, physical aggression), withdrawal behaviours (e.g., absenteeism, turnover), and occupational injury. PA has also been found to be a key factor that links happiness to success in life and at work.

Proactive Personality. *Proactive behaviour* involves taking initiative to improve one's current circumstances or creating new ones. It involves challenging the status quo. *Proactive personality* is a stable disposition that reflects a tendency to take personal initiative across a range of activities and situations to effect positive change in one's environment. Individuals with a proactive personality are relatively unconstrained by situational forces and act to change and influence their environment. Proactive personality is related to a number of work outcomes including job performance, organizational citizenship behaviours, tolerance for stress in demanding jobs, leadership effectiveness, participation in organizational initiatives, work team performance, and entrepreneurship. Persons with a proactive personality have also been found to be more successful when searching for employment and to have greater career success in terms of higher salaries, more frequent promotions, and more satisfying careers.

General Self-Efficacy. *General self-efficacy* (GSE) is a general trait that refers to an individual's belief in his or her ability to perform successfully in a variety of challenging situations. It is considered to be a motivational trait rather than an affective trait because it reflects an individual's belief that he or she can succeed at a variety of tasks rather than how an individual feels about him or herself. Individuals with high GSE are better able to adapt to novel, uncertain, and adverse situations. Employees with higher GSE have higher job satisfaction and job performance.

Core Self-Evaluations. *Core self-evaluations* refer to a broad personality concept that consists of more specific traits that reflect the evaluations people hold about themselves and their self-worth. The four specific traits that make up a person's core self-evaluations are self-esteem, general self-efficacy, locus of control, and neuroticism (emotional stability). Core self-evaluations are positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance as well as life satisfaction and career satisfaction. Individuals with higher core self-evaluations perceive fewer stressors at work and experience less stress and conflict at work. People with higher core self-evaluations perceive their jobs as more intrinsically satisfying and have higher perceptions of fairness and support. They are also more likely to perceive and pay attention to the positive aspects of their environments.

What Is Learning?

Learning occurs when practice or experience leads to a relatively permanent change in behaviour potential. Practice or experience prompts learning which stems from an environment that gives feedback concerning the consequences of behaviour.

What do Employees Learning?

In organizations, employees learn four general types of content: practical, intrapersonal, and interpersonal skills, and cultural awareness. *Practical skills* refer to job-specific skills, knowledge, and technical competence required to perform one's job. *Intrapersonal skills* refer to skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, and risk-taking. *Interpersonal skills* refer to interactive skills such as communication and teamwork. *Cultural awareness* refers to the cultural norms and expectations that exist in an organization.

Operant Learning Theory

Operant learning occurs when the subject learns to operate on the environment to achieve certain consequences. Operantly learned behaviour is controlled by the consequences that follow it. These consequences are usually contingent on the behaviour, and this connection is what is learned. Operant learning can be used to increase the probability of desired behaviours and to reduce or eliminate the probability of undesirable behaviours.

Increasing the Probability of Behaviour

There are two ways to increase the probability of behaviour, both based on the concept of reinforcement. *Reinforcement* is the process by which stimuli strengthen behaviours. A reinforcer is a stimulus that follows some behaviour and increases or maintains the probability of that behaviour. Positive reinforcers work by their application to a situation, while negative reinforcers work by their removal from a situation.

Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement increases or maintains the probability of some behaviour by the application or addition of a stimulus to the situation in question. The stimulus is called a positive reinforcer. Whether or not something is a positive reinforcer depends on whether it increases or maintains the occurrence of some behaviour by its application.

Negative Reinforcement

Negative reinforcement increases or maintains the probability of some behaviour by the removal of a stimulus from the situation in question. It also occurs when a response prevents some event or stimulus from occurring. The removed or prevented stimulus is called a negative reinforcer.

Although negative reinforcers tend to be unpleasant things, it is important to note that stimuli are not inherently positive or negative; they become so only if they increase or maintain the probability of some behaviour by their application (a positive reinforcer) or by their removal or prevention (a negative reinforcer).

Organizational Errors Involving Reinforcement

Managers sometimes make errors in trying to use reinforcement. The most common errors are confusing rewards with reinforcers, neglecting diversity in preferences for reinforcers, and neglecting important sources of reinforcement.

Confusing Rewards with Reinforcers. Rewards can fail to serve as reinforcers when they are not made contingent on specific behaviours that are of interest to the organization. Rewards that are not contingent on specific behaviours which an organization wishes to encourage may fail to serve as reinforcers.

Neglecting Diversity in Preferences for Reinforcers. Organizations tend to neglect diversity and individual differences in preferences for reinforcers. Thus, even rewards that are made contingent on behaviour may fail to have a reinforcing effect. Managers need to consider the possible range of stimuli under their control for their applicability as reinforcers for particular employees.

Neglecting Important Sources of Reinforcement. While concentrating on potential reinforcers of a formal nature, such as pay or promotions, managers often neglect those which are administered by co-workers or intrinsic to the jobs being performed. Two important sources of reinforcement that managers often ignore are performance feedback and social recognition.

Performance feedback involves providing quantitative or qualitative information on past performance for the purpose of changing or maintaining performance in specific ways. Performance feedback is most effective when it is a) conveyed in a positive manner, b) delivered immediately after the performance is observed, c) represented visually, such as in graph or chart form, and d) specific to the behaviour that is being targeted for feedback.

Social recognition involves informal acknowledgement, attention, praise, approval, or genuine appreciation for work well done from one individual or group to another. When social recognition is made contingent on employee behaviour it can be an effective means for performance.

Reinforcement Strategies

Immediate reinforcement entails reinforcing the behaviour of interest without delay after its occurrence. Delayed reinforcement entails reinforcing the behaviour of interest after some time period has elapsed since its enactment. Continuous reinforcement entails reinforcing the behaviour of interest every time it occurs. Partial reinforcement entails reinforcing the behaviour of interest only a portion of the time it occurs.

Fast acquisition of some response occurs through continuous, immediate reinforcement, while persistent learning occurs through delayed, partial reinforcement. Note that a reinforcement strategy should match the requirements of a situation. Thus, managers have to tailor reinforcement strategies to the needs of the situation and must alter strategies over time to achieve effective learning and maintenance of behaviour.

Reducing the Probability of Behaviour

Two strategies to reduce the probability of learned behaviour are extinction and punishment.

Extinction

Extinction refers to the gradual dissipation of behaviour following the termination of reinforcement. It is the process of doing away with a reinforcer that is maintaining some unwanted behaviour. Behaviours that are not reinforced will gradually dissipate. Note that extinction works best when coupled with reinforcement of some desired substitute behaviour. Also, behaviours learned under delayed or partial reinforcement schedules are more difficult to extinguish than those learned under continuous, immediate reinforcement.

Punishment

Punishment involves the application of an aversive stimulus following some behaviour designed to decrease the probability of that behaviour. It decreases the probability of some unwanted behaviour by the application or addition of a negative stimulus to the situation in question.

Using Punishment Effectively

Punishment has some unique characteristics that limit its effectiveness in stopping unwanted behaviour. While it provides a clear signal as to which activities are inappropriate, it does not by itself demonstrate which activities should *replace* the punished response. Positive and negative reinforcers specify which behaviours are appropriate. Punishment indicates only what is not appropriate and only temporarily suppresses the unwanted response. Thus, it is important to provide an acceptable alternative for the punished response. Another difficulty is that punishment has a tendency to provide a strong emotional reaction on the part of the punished individual. Thus, managers must be sure that their emotions are under control before punishing and should avoid punishment in front of observers.

In addition to providing correct alternative responses and limiting the emotions involved in punishment, the following principles should be considered for increasing the effectiveness of punishment:

- Make sure the chosen punishment is truly aversive.
- Punish immediately.
- Do not reward unwanted behaviours before or after punishment.
- Do not inadvertently punish desirable behaviour.

Punishment can be an effective means of stopping undesirable behaviour when it is applied very carefully and deliberately. In general, reinforcing correct behaviours and extinguishing unwanted responses are safer strategies for managers than the frequent use of punishment.

Social Cognitive Theory

Learning and behaviour often occurs without the conscious control of positive and negative reinforcers by managers. People have the cognitive capacity to regulate and control their own thoughts, feelings, motivation, and actions. Human behaviour is not simply due to environmental influences. Social cognitive theory emphasizes the role of *cognitive processes* in regulating people's behaviour. According to social cognitive theory, human behaviour can best be explained through a system of *triadic reciprocal causation* in which personal factors and environmental factors work together and interact to influence people's behaviour. In addition, people's behaviour also influences personal factors and the environment.

According to Albert Bandura, social cognitive theory involves three components: observational learning, self-efficacy beliefs, and self-regulation

Observational Learning

Observational learning is the process of imitating the behaviour of others. It is a form of learning that occurs by observing or imagining the behaviour of others rather than by direct personal experience. With observational learning, *self-reinforcement* often shapes the behaviour of the learner. The best models for observing are attractive, credible, competent, and of high status. Vivid, memorable behaviour is most often imitated. The extent of observational learning as a means of learning in organizations suggests that managers should pay more attention to the process.

Self-Efficacy Beliefs

Self-efficacy beliefs refer to beliefs people have about their ability to successfully perform a specific task. It is a cognitive belief that is task specific and is the result of four sources of information: experience and success performing the task; observation of others performing the task; verbal persuasion and encouragement; and one's physiological or emotional state. Self-efficacy influences the activities people choose to perform, the amount of effort and persistence devoted to a task, affective and stress reactions, and job performance.

Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is the process in which people use learning principles to regulate their own behaviour. Self-regulation involves collecting self-observation data, observing models, setting behavioural goals, rehearsing the desired behaviour, and applying self-reinforcement. A key part of the process is people's pursuit of self-set goals that guide their behaviour. When there exists a discrepancy between one's goals and performance, individuals are motivated to modify their behaviour in the pursuit of goal attainment (a process known as *discrepancy reduction*). When individuals attain their goals, they are likely to set even higher and more challenging goals, a process known as *discrepancy production*. In this way, people continually engage in a process of setting goals in the pursuit of ever higher levels of performance. Thus, discrepancy reduction and discrepancy production lie at the heart of the self-regulatory process.

Specific self-regulation techniques include: collect self-observation data, observe models, set goals, rehearse, and reinforce oneself.

Research has found that self-regulation can improve learning and result in a change in behaviour. One study found that it reduced absenteeism and in another study it improved the sales performance of a sample of insurance salespeople. Self-regulation programs have been successful in positively changing a variety of work behaviours and are an effective method of training and learning.

Organizational Learning Practices

Organizations employ a number of practices to enhance employee learning. These practices include organizational behaviour modification, employee recognition programs, training and development programs, and career development.

Organizational Behaviour Modification

Organizational behavior modification (O.B. Mod) involves the systematic use of learning principles to influence organizational behaviour. The example in the text describes a program to improve safe working practices. Research supports the effectiveness of organizational behaviour modification. O.B. Mod programs have also been used to improve work attendance and task performance. The effects on task performance tend to be stronger in manufacturing than in service organizations. Although money has been found to have stronger effects on performance than social recognition and performance feedback, the use of all three together has the strongest effect on task performance.

Employee Recognition Programs

Employee recognition programs are formal organizational programs that publicly recognize and reward employees for specific behaviours. To be effective, a formal employee recognition program must specify (a) how a person will be recognized, (b) the type of behaviour being encouraged, (c) the manner of the public acknowledgement, and (d) a token or icon of the event for the recipient. A key part of an employee recognition program is public acknowledgement.

Peer recognition programs are formal programs in which employees can publicly acknowledge, recognize, and reward their co-workers for exceptional work and performance.

Employee recognition programs have been found to be related to a number of individual and organizational outcomes, including job satisfaction, performance and productivity, and lower turnover. They have also been shown to be effective for improving work attendance.

Training and Development Programs

Training and development is one of the most common and important types of formal learning in organizations. Training refers to planned organizational activities that are designed to facilitate knowledge and skill acquisition to change behaviour and improve performance in one's current job; development focuses on future job responsibilities. One

of the most widely used and effective methods of training is *behaviour modelling training* (BMT), which is based on the observational learning component of social cognitive theory and involves the following steps:

- Describe to trainees a set of well-defined behaviours (skills) to be learned.
- Provide a model or models displaying the effective use of those behaviours.
- Provide opportunities for trainees to practise using those behaviours.
- Provide feedback and social reinforcement to trainees following practice.
- Take steps to maximize the transfer of those behaviours to the job.

Research on behavioural modelling training has found that it has a positive effect on learning, skills, and job behaviour and the effects have been found to be greatest when trainees are instructed to set goals and when rewards and sanctions are used in the trainees' work environment.

Career Development

Career development is an ongoing process in which individuals progress through a series of stages that consist of a unique set of issues, themes, and tasks. This usually involves a *career planning* and *career management* component. Career planning involves the assessment of an individual's interests, skills, and abilities in order to develop goals and career plans. Career management involves taking the necessary steps that are required to achieve an individual's goals and career plans and often involves special assignments and activities that are designed to assist employees in their career development.

SAMPLE ANSWERS TO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Consider the relevance of the dispositional, situational, and interactionist approaches to your own behaviour. Describe examples of your behaviour in a school or work situation that demonstrates each perspective of organizational behaviour.*

This is a good question to get students thinking about how each approach is relevant to their own behaviour in various situations. Students should be able to think of situations in which they behaved in a certain way because of their personality and dispositions. If you need to provide an example, ask students what happens when they must work on a group project and the group meets for the first time. How do they behave and how do the other members of their group behave? This is a good example of a weak situation where there are no rules or contingencies. As a result, personality is likely to have a strong effect on how people behave. For example, students who are extraverted and have high self-esteem are more likely to begin a group discussion and provide some direction. Students should also be able to provide examples of situations in which they behaved a certain way because of the situation. For example, ask students how they and other new employees behave when they first begin a new job. They will probably tell you that they try to figure

out what they are supposed to do and then conform. In other words, everybody who is new basically follows what others are doing in order to stay in line. The situation is strong in terms of rules and reward and punishment contingencies and so the situation will have a strong influence on behaviour. When students provide their examples it might be a good idea to ask them to think about whether the situation was “weak” or “strong” and how that determined whether personality or the situation was the main factor for their behaviour. Students might have a more difficult time thinking of examples of the interactionist approach. You might be able to assist them by asking them about situations in which not everybody behaved or reacted the same way. For example, if an instructor suddenly announces that there is going to be a test at the end of the class, some people will experience a great deal of anxiety and stress while others will not be too concerned. This is a good example of how people vary in their reactions to stressors. People with low self-esteem or high negative affectivity might be more likely to experience a stress reaction in response to the instructor’s announcement.

2. *Suppose that you are the manager of two employees, one who has an internal locus of control and another who has an external locus control. Describe the leadership tactics that you would use with each employee. Contrast the management styles that you would employ for employees with high versus low self-esteem.*

Internals are not necessarily better workers than externals. Since internals do better on more innovative and creative jobs, and externals do better in jobs that are more routine, you should place the workers in the environment where they can most excel. For instance, if you were managing the marketing department and had to produce and place a television advertisement for your company’s product, the internal locus of control individual could be placed in charge of managing the copywriting and design of advertising, while the external locus of control individual could track production schedules, cost, and procuring airtime from television stations. In terms of self-esteem, you should tend to use negative feedback sparingly with a low self-esteem worker. Low self-esteem workers also react less well to stressful and ambiguous work situations, so you should provide clear direction and minimize stress. Since most organizations and work settings will benefit from workers with high self-esteem, you should avoid petty work rules that signal that the employees are untrustworthy.

3. *Consider some examples of behaviour that you repeat fairly regularly (such as studying or going to work every morning). What are the positive and negative reinforcers that maintain this behaviour?*

Studying: Positive reinforcers that might maintain studying behaviour include receiving good grades, feeling confident about mastery of subject matter, or receiving compliments from a professor. Negative reinforcers include the threat of losing a scholarship or the fear of being embarrassed in class.

Going to work: Positive reinforcers that might maintain work attendance include any rewards that the job provides, such as pay and interesting work. Negative reinforcers include the threat that superiors, co-workers, and family members will react negatively toward poor attendance.

4. *We pointed out that managers frequently resort to punishing ineffective behaviour. What are some of the practical demands of the typical manager's job that lead to this state of affairs?*

Many managers (especially those at lower organizational levels) command few tangible positive reinforcers to control employee behaviour. That is, they may have little real control over pay raises, promotions, and so forth. In addition, they may lack the social skills to use praise and compliments as positive reinforcers. In this case, they may perceive that punishment (for example, reprimands, docking pay) is the only available means to control employee behaviour. In addition, many managers are exceedingly busy and have many employees to supervise. They may concentrate only on poor performance or deviant behaviour. "Exceptions" are noted and punished, while routine, acceptable role performance is ignored due to time constraints.

5. *Discuss a situation that you have observed in which the use of punishment was ineffective in terminating some unwanted behaviour. Why was punishment ineffective in this case? What would have made it more effective?*

Punishment is most effective when it is swift, intense, and administered in a consistent, fair, and unemotional manner. In addition, it is essential that the unwanted behaviour be *replaced* with a desirable behaviour that can be reinforced. For an example of ineffective punishment, consider the employee who has been turning in reports that are technically accurate but poorly written and messily presented. The boss ignores the negative aspects of the reports for several weeks, and then gets angry and "cracks down," screaming at the employee that the reports are "totally unacceptable." The boss committed several errors: (1) He delayed the punishment; (2) He punished with anger; (3) He didn't explain exactly what was wrong with the reports. In this case, it is likely that the employee will become hostile, and he has little notion of how to improve the reports. Punishment would have been more effective if the boss had punished the employee immediately, made sure his emotions were under control, and explained to the employee what was wrong with his reports and what is considered to be acceptable. The manager might then reinforce the employees' reports when they are better written and presented.

6. *Describe a situation in which you think an employer could use organizational behaviour modification and an employee recognition program to improve or correct employee behaviour. Can you anticipate any dangers in using these approaches?*

A sales manager of office equipment was concerned that her employees were not keeping up on trends in the marketplace and trends in the competitors' products. She sent around a memo stating that these issues would be discussed at the next sales meeting and asked salespersons to bring any information they had on these subjects for discussion. One brought in a relevant article from *Business Week* and another brought in a sales brochure on a new competing product. She publicly praised these persons before their materials were discussed. The following week more materials were brought in, and she continued to praise the people who brought them. Gradually, the discussion of new trends and products became an established practice due to her strategy of positive reinforcement. As long as OB Mod is confined to the use of positive reinforcement, it involves few problems. However, some might object that it makes workers highly dependent on the source of reinforcement. (In such a case, self-regulation should be

initiated.) An employee recognition program could also be used to recognize and reward employees who bring in the most interesting new information and ideas. At the end of the year, an award ceremony can take place in which those employees who have made the greatest contribution in keeping up with trends in the marketplace (perhaps determined by peer vote) are recognized for their efforts. The key to making it an effective employee recognition program is to specify (a) how a person will be recognized, (b) the type of behaviour being encouraged, (c) the manner of the public acknowledgement, and (d) a token or icon of the event for the recipient. As long as the program is fair and employees appreciate the recognition, there should not be any dangers. Doing this on a monthly basis, however, might eventually lose its appeal and begin to lose its impact after a few events.

7. *A supervisor in a textile factory observes that one of her employees is violating a safety rule that could result in severe injury. What combination of reinforcement, punishment, and extinction could she use to correct this behaviour? What does social cognitive theory suggest that she do to correct the behaviour?*

A combination of punishment and positive reinforcement is advisable. Noting the violation, the supervisor should reprimand the employee immediately at the workstation but out of the earshot of other employees. The goal is to punish the violation firmly but not to provoke strong negative emotions. Then, the supervisor should model the safe work practice and have the employee imitate her behaviour. Correct imitation should be reinforced with praise. In following days, the supervisor should monitor the employee's behaviour and praise safe work practices frequently. In addition to the use of observational learning, social cognitive theory also suggests strengthening the employee's self-efficacy beliefs and self-regulation. Positive feedback, praise, and encouragement can be used when the employee exhibits safe working practices which should help to strengthen self-efficacy beliefs. The employee should also be shown how to use self-regulation for learning safe working practices by collecting self-observation data, observing other employees' safe working practices, setting goals for safe working behaviour, rehearse the practices, and then reinforce oneself for meeting one's goals and for engaging in safe working practices.

8. *Describe a job in which you think an employee recognition program might be an effective means for changing and improving employee behaviour. Explain how you would design the program and how you might use principles from operant learning theory and social cognitive theory.*

An employee recognition program could be used to reinforce any behaviour that is important for an organization including employee attendance, safe working practices, customer service, or sales. What is most important is that employees' are recognized for behaving in a manner that is highly desirable to the organization. To be effective, an employee recognition program should specify (a) how a person will be recognized, (b) the type of behaviour being encouraged, (c) the manner of the public acknowledgement, and (d) a token or icon of the event for the recipient. When answering this question, make sure that students provide answers to each of the components of an employee recognition program. Students will not have too much trouble indicating the behaviour to recognize. When they do, be sure to ask them how employees will be recognized, the manner of

public acknowledgement, and the token or icon of the event for the recipient. A good example of an employee recognition program that specifies each of these components is the one for improving work attendance that is described in the text. Be sure to also bring in principles from operant learning theory and social cognitive theory. The importance of positive reinforcement and making rewards contingent on desirable behaviour from operant learning theory is particularly relevant. In addition, observational learning from social cognitive theory can be built into the public acknowledgement such that those who are recognized serve as role models for others to learn from. In addition, the public acknowledgement can also serve as a way to strengthen the self-efficacy of recipients and observers. Praise, encouragement, and social recognition can serve as strong means for strengthening self-efficacy.

9. *Do you think organizations should base their hiring decisions on applicants' personality? What are the advantages and disadvantages of doing this? If an organization were to do this, what personality characteristics do you think they should focus on when assessing and choosing applicants?*

Many organizations do use personality tests as part of the selection process. The research evidence described in the chapter does indicate significant relationships between many of the personality traits and various job attitudes and behaviours. Thus, a potential advantage is that employees with certain personality traits will have more positive attitudes and job performance. A disadvantage might be that the situation changes and the personality trait is no longer required for a particular task or job. Another disadvantage could be a lack of diversity of perspectives if employees are hired because of a particular personality trait. The key point for doing this as suggested in the text is the notion of fit. That is, putting the right person in the right job, group, or organization. This follows from trait activation theory and the idea that traits lead to certain behaviours only when the situation makes the need for that trait salient. Thus, if organizations are going to base their hiring decisions on an applicant's personality, then they must have a good understanding of the situation or job and the personality trait that is required for a particular situation or job. A good example is that extraversion is especially important for jobs that require a lot of interpersonal interaction such as sales and management.

10. *Refer to the Research Focus feature, "CEO Personality and Firm Performance," and consider the relationship between the Big Five personality characteristics and strategic flexibility. Why do you think conscientiousness was the only trait negatively related to strategic flexibility given that it has been found to be the best predictor of job performance among the Big Five? Why are openness to experience, extraversion, and emotional stability positively related and why is medium agreeableness better for strategic flexibility than high or low agreeableness?*

This question should cause students to think about the importance of the situation when it comes not only to the effects of personality in general, but to specific personality variables. Conscientiousness has been found to be the best predictor of overall job performance among the big five personality dimensions. Why then is it negatively related to strategic flexibility? According to the authors of the study, CEOs who are high on conscientiousness will have a strong concern for legalism or a commitment to established rules and so they will rely on dependable, tried-and-true strategies and ignore new and

unique strategies that challenge existing assumptions. As a result, they will develop a narrow field of vision and a selective perception bias that will create barriers to strategic flexibility. Their selective perceptions bias will undermine the ability to sense new and unfamiliar information in a timely manner and the ability to initiate responsive actions quickly through efficient resource deployment. Emotionally stable CEOs feel less threatened by new and unpredictable stimuli and are likely to improve their sensing and responsive capabilities which are important for strategic flexibility. Extraverted CEOs have the ability to take initiative and persuade and influence people to promote strategic flexibility. CEOs with high openness to experience develop broad fields of vision and consider multiple strategic perspectives. They will notice and interpret new and diverse environmental information and will consider a wide range of strategic alternatives. As a result, open CEOs will minimize selective perception and interpretation biases which can inhibit strategic flexibility. As for agreeableness, the authors argue that medium levels will maximize strategic flexibility and provide a balance between very high levels of agreeableness which can induce passivity and compliance and very low levels which can undermine employee creativity and risk taking thereby inhibiting strategic flexibility. In summary, this research provides a good example of trait activation theory and is a good example to show that when it comes to personality traits and whether or not they are important, the situation matters.

11. *Employee of the month (EOM) programs are one of the most popular forms of recognition in organizations. However, there is some evidence that such programs are not effective and can even have detrimental effects such as sabotage and unhealthy competition. Based on the material presented in this chapter, why do you think that the typical EOM program is not effective and how should EOM programs be designed to make them more effective?*

Students will probably be familiar with EOM programs and might have worked in organizations where they were used. It might be fun to ask students if they are familiar with such programs and if they have ever worked in an organization that had them and if they were ever chosen as the employee of the month. If so, additional probes might help to determine how an employee was chosen as the employee of the month. Students might be surprised to learn that EOM programs are often ineffective. Perhaps you can ask a student who is familiar with such a program what behaviours were being rewarded and reinforced. You might then ask the class why EOM programs are often not effective in terms of leading to improved behaviour and performance. As described in the chapter, a common organizational error is confusing rewards with reinforcers. In other words, EOM programs do not make the reward contingent on specific behaviours that are of interest to the organization. In addition, the focus of EOM programs is often results rather than specific behaviours. This means that employees might engage in undesirable behaviours but achieve the results needed to be chosen as employee of the month. This could involve unethical or illegal behaviour. In some cases, it is not clear what the criteria are for being chosen as employee of the month so employees do not know what they should be doing and what they have to do to be chosen as employee of the month. Another problem that is unique to EOM programs is that there is usually only one employee of the month which means that other employees who are doing a great job and are good performers are not rewarded. As a result, many good performers will be rewarded and overtime their good

behaviour and performance might be extinguished. It is also possible that the same few employees who are consistently the best performers will frequently be chosen as employee of the month making it difficult for other good performers to be rewarded and recognized. To make EOM programs more effective, it is important to first identify the important and desirable behaviours that the organization wants to recognize and reward. They should then make it clear to employees what the desirable behaviours are and what the criteria are for being chosen as employee of the month. Finally, it is probably a good idea to have an “Employees of the Month” program so that all employees who meet the criteria can be rewarded and reinforced. The key as always is to identify the desirable behaviours and make sure that the reward and reinforcement is made contingent on the desirable behaviours. EOM programs have to be careful to reward and reinforce desirable behaviours and at the same time, avoid punishing and extinguishing desirable behaviours.

SAMPLE ANSWERS TO INTEGRATIVE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Refer to the material in Chapter 1 on Mintzberg’s managerial roles. Use what you know about Mintzberg’s managerial roles and consider how personality might be a factor in how effectively a manager performs each role. Discuss the relationship among the Big Five personality dimensions, locus of control, self-monitoring, self-esteem, proactive personality, and general self-efficacy, with each of the managerial roles.*

This question helps students understand how personality might be an important factor in management. In terms of Mintzberg’s roles, it is possible to consider how some of the personality characteristics discussed in this chapter might be important. For example, *interpersonal roles* are used to establish and maintain interpersonal relations. This includes the figurehead role, leadership role, and liaison role. Of the Big Five dimensions, extraversion is likely to be important since it refers to the extent that a person is outgoing and enjoys social situations. Other dimensions of the Big Five that are important for the interpersonal role are emotional stability, agreeableness, and openness to experience. High self-esteem would also be important for the interpersonal role because it is associated with good social skills. High self-monitoring might also be important in those situations where one has to adapt their behaviour in social situations.

Informational roles are concerned with various ways a manager receives and transmits information. Roles in this group include the monitor role, disseminator role, and spokesperson role. High conscientiousness is likely to be especially important for this role as well as emotional stability and agreeableness.

Decisional roles deal with managerial decision-making and include the entrepreneur role, the disturbance handler role, the resource allocator role, and the negotiator role. Conscientiousness is likely to be important in this role. Also important would be an internal locus of control or the belief that one is able to control what happens to them. Internal locus of control is also important for this role to the extent that it is associated with less stress and the ability to cope with stress. Managers with high self-esteem will also perform better in this position because they are more likely to be sure of the correctness of their opinions, attitudes, and behaviours. Openness to experience would be

important for the entrepreneur role. Managers with a proactive personality would be especially effective in the entrepreneur role given their tendency to identify opportunities, show initiative, take action, and persevere until they bring about meaningful change. In addition, managers with high general self-efficacy (GSE) are likely to perform the decisional roles effectively given that they have strong beliefs about succeeding at a variety of tasks. Managers with high GSE will probably perform especially well in the entrepreneur and negotiator roles.

2. *Discuss how each of the organizational learning practices described in the chapter can be used by organizations to deal effectively with the contemporary management concerns discussed in Chapter 1 (i.e., diversity – both local and global; a positive work environment and employee well-being; talent management and employee engagement; and corporate social responsibility).*

The organizational learning practices can be applied to each of the contemporary management concerns discussed in Chapter 1. For example, organizational behaviour modification and employee recognition programs can be used to positively reinforce behaviours that are consistent with corporate social responsibility. That is, positive reinforcement and recognition can be provided when workers do things that support CSR such as green initiatives and volunteer work for charitable organizations. Training and development can be used to help employees appreciate and learn about diversity and corporate social responsibility, stereotype reduction, and to prepare employees for assignments in foreign cultures. In addition, training and development in the form of PsyCap interventions can be designed to develop employees' PsyCap. Employee recognition programs, training, and career development can be used as part of a positive work environment that makes an organization more attractive to job applicants and to retain employees (talent management). Many of the best companies to work for have employee recognition programs and provide more training and career development programs than other organizations (see Exhibit 1.1). Finally, employee recognition programs, opportunities for learning (training and development), and career opportunities (career development) can be used to improve work engagement.

SAMPLE ANSWER TO ON-THE-JOB CHALLENGE QUESTION: PLAYING HOOKY

How can we explain these behaviours? Based on what you know about learning theory, explain why workers engaged in these inappropriate behaviours during work hours and why they were not doing what they were supposed to be doing. What do you think needs to be done to stop these behaviours and increase the probability that workers will do what they are supposed to be doing?

This situation provides a good example of how the failure to use positive reinforcement and punishment effectively can lead to employees not performing expected behaviours and instead exhibiting inappropriate on-the-job behaviour. It might be a good idea to first have students identify the desirable and undesirable behaviours and to then ask them to describe what behaviours are being reinforced. It should be clear from the description in

the text that the desired behaviours are not being reinforced and as a result, employees are not exhibiting them and are instead engaging in inappropriate behaviours which it seems have not until recently been punished. This should help students see the importance of positive reinforcement and what can happen when positive reinforcement is not properly used. In this case, positive reinforcement should be used and made contingent on desirable behaviours. At the same time, the inappropriate behaviours need to be consistently punished. This is in effect what the school board has done following the news reports. Some workers were given warnings about their conduct while others were “dismissed for cause.” While this might help to reduce the instances of the inappropriate behaviour, it does not seem that any thing has been done to reinforce appropriate behaviours. As indicated in the text, punishment provides a clear signal as to which activities and behaviours are inappropriate. However, it does not by itself demonstrate which activities should replace the punished response. Of course, one has to assume that the workers in question do know what they are supposed to be doing. The problem seems to be a lack of reinforcement that is contingent on the desired behaviours. Thus, the best strategy moving forward would be to reinforce desired behaviours and continue to punish the undesirable behaviours.

EXTRA ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. How important is personality for organizational behaviour and when is it most likely to influence employee attitudes and behaviour?
2. Distinguish between locus of control, self-monitoring, self-esteem, and general self-efficacy.
3. What do employees learn in organizations and what are some of the ways they can learn these things?
4. How could organizational behaviour modification be used to increase the productivity of civil servants?
5. Defend or refute this statement: Operant learning is unethical because it entails manipulating people to behave in a certain manner.
6. Discuss some of the ways reinforcement could be used to teach students about organizational behaviour.
7. Differentiate between punishment, extinction, and negative reinforcement, citing examples to clarify your answer.
8. What can managers do to ensure that their use of reinforcement and punishment is effective?
9. Describe social cognitive theory and give an example of how each component of the theory can be used to improve student learning.
10. Describe various types of organizational learning practices and how an organization can use them to help employees learn to perform their jobs better.

TEACHING NOTES FOR *PROACTIVE PERSONALITY SCALE, GENERAL SELF-EFFICACY, AND CORE SELF-EVALUATIONS SCALE (CSE)* EXPERIENTIAL EXERCISE

Students should be asked to complete the Proactive Personality Scale, General Self-Efficacy, and Core Self-Evaluations scales prior to class. They can score and interpret their results by following the directions provided in the text on pages 73 and 74. This is the first of a number of exercises in the text that enable students to learn something about themselves that is related to organizational behaviour. Given the link between proactive personality and career success, general self-efficacy and job performance, and CSE and job satisfaction and job performance, students are likely to be very interested in their score and what it means. It might be worth discussing a study by Seibert, Kraimer, and Crant (2001, *Personnel Psychology*, pp.845-876) on the link between proactive personality and career success. You might ask students why they think people with a proactive personality have greater career progression (salary growth and number of promotions) and career satisfaction. What is it that proactive people do? In their study, Seibert et al. found that proactive personality was positively related to innovation (develop and work to implement new ideas, processes, and routines at work), political knowledge (gaining information regarding formal and informal work relationships and power structures within the organization), and career initiative (take responsibility for the management of one's own career such as career planning and skill development). These proactive behaviours were related to the positive career outcomes. Thus, proactive individuals influence work situations that increase the likelihood of career success.

To help students understand the meaning of proactive personality, general self-efficacy, and CSE and their scores, class discussion might revolve around the following issues:

1. What is proactive personality, general self-efficacy, and CSE?
2. How is proactive personality, general self-efficacy, and CSE relevant for organizational behaviour?
3. How might your proactive personality, general self-efficacy, and CSE scores influence your grades?
4. How might your proactive personality, general self-efficacy, and CSE scores influence your career?
5. Is it important for people to know about their own proactive personality, general self-efficacy, and CSE?

In terms of the discussion questions provided in the text, you might proceed as follows:

1. Is there a relationship between proactive personality and involvement in extracurricular and service activities? What about personal accomplishments that involve environmental change. Try to determine if there are differences between students with higher proactive personality scores in these and other ways. Have they been more involved in extracurricular and service activities? What do students with high scores on proactive personality do different from those with low scores?

Regarding GSE, have students with higher GSE been more effective in adapting to novel, difficult, and challenging situations? What do students with high scores on GSE do differently from those with lower scores?

For CSE, are students with higher CSE scores more satisfied with their current or a previous job and are they more satisfied with their life?

2. Have students try to understand how proactive personality, GSE, and CSE might be beneficial in some situations but not in others. Of course, one of the main benefits of proactive personality appears to be career success. But are there any other benefits? Are there any downsides? What about GSE and CSE?
3. Students are likely to frown upon the idea of hiring people just because they have a proactive personality or a high GSE and CSE. Try playing devil's advocate and challenge them to explain why they believe it might not be a good idea to do this. You might say something like, "If I have a business, isn't it my right to hire people who are high on proactive personality, GSE, and CSE?"
4. You might ask those who scored high on proactive personality, GSE, and CSE if they think it has helped them in school and in other areas of their life. You might also ask them how students who scored lower might be able to improve their proactive personality, GSE, and CSE. What things can they do that will help them to be more proactive and have higher GSE and CSE? It might be worth pointing that just because people with a proactive personality are more proactive, does not mean others cannot work on being more proactive. The text defines proactive behaviour as taking initiative to improve current circumstances or creating new ones. Can students who scored lower make more of an effort at being proactive? And what about GSE and CSE? GSE has to do with one's belief in their ability to perform successfully in a variety of challenging situations. Can this belief be changed? What can people do so they increase these beliefs and their GSE? Should people even try to change their GSE and what are the potential advantages of doing so? CSE is a broad personality concept that consists of self-esteem, general self-efficacy, locus of control, and neuroticism (emotional stability). Is this something that can be changed? What specific traits of CSE might be easier or perhaps difficult to change? Can people change their personality in the process? What if any aspects of personality might be worth trying to change and why?

TEACHING NOTES FOR *COURIER CATS* CASE INCIDENT

1. *Why do you think that the employees did not use the new software?*

There are a number of reasons why employees did not use the new software. To begin with, the training program (a one-day seminar) might not have been enough to learn to use software that was more complex and sophisticated than what employees were used to. Even if the training was sufficient, it is possible that employees were not provided with any positive reinforcement to use the software and were able to continue using the old

program. Lacking any form of positive reinforcement in the form of rewards, feedback or recognition, employees did not change their behaviour. As well, the fact that some employees did not think they would ever be able to learn how to use the new software suggests that their self-efficacy was probably weak, and as a result, they either did not try to use the new software or they gave up. Finally, it is possible that the work environment at Courier Cats does not encourage or support learning.

2. *Can personality explain why some employees refused to use the new software? What personality characteristics are most relevant for explaining why some employees refused to use the new software while others had no trouble learning and using it?*

A number of the personality variables described in the chapter might be important for learning and using the new software. For example, among the Big Five, persons higher on *openness to experience* would be more likely to use and learn the new software given their receptiveness to new ideas while those who are less open favour the status quo. *Proactive personality* is also likely to be important given the tendency to take personal initiative and to effect positive change in the one's environment. Employees with higher *general self-efficacy* are also more likely to use the new software program given that GSE is a motivational trait and individuals who score higher on it believe they have the ability to perform successfully in a variety of challenging situations. Thus, openness to experience, proactive personality, and general self-efficacy probably help to explain why some employees refused to use the new software while others had no trouble learning and using it.

3. *What are some of the implications that stem from operant learning theory and social cognitive theory for increasing the probability that the employees will use the new software? What do you recommend for improving the use of the new software?*

One of the most important implications from operant learning theory is that some form of positive reinforcement should have been provided to employees for using the new software. In other words, rewards, positive feedback, or recognition should be provided to employees for learning and using the new software. Perhaps rewards could also be provided for helping co-workers learn the software in order to facilitate learning. In terms of social cognitive theory, more effort has to be made to strengthen employee's self-efficacy for using the new software. Perhaps additional training both on and off-the-job will help. Self-regulation training might also be effective to help employees observe their behaviour, set goals, and reward themselves for attaining their goals. A good recommendation would be to combine the training program with some informal learning in which employees can work together, discuss the new software, and help each other on-the-job. An organizational behaviour modification program that rewards employees for using the new software, getting up to speed, and helping others would also be a good idea. Behaviour modeling training might also be effective especially if trainees are instructed to set goals and when rewards and sanctions are used in the work environment following the training.

TEACHING NOTES FOR *HOWE 2 SKI STORES CASE STUDY*

This is an excellent case for demonstrating how a poor understanding of learning

principles can cause problems in an organization. In particular, it shows how the lack of positive reinforcement and in fact an environment that does not reinforce desired behaviours can lead to undesirable behaviours and outcomes that threaten the reputation and success of a business. The case provides a good example of the importance of clearly identifying the desired behaviours that need to be reinforced and ensuring that rewards are made contingent on the desired behaviour. The case is also useful for applying the organizational learning practices described in Chapter 2.

1. *What are the main problems occurring in the Howe 2 Ski Stores? To what extent are the problems due to personality and characteristics of the work environment?*

Maria has noticed signs that employee productivity has begun to slide. For example, there were eight occasions where expensive ski orders were not delivered in time for the customer's ski vacation and she had to do a variety of things to retain the customers. The cost of these late orders was high and these incidents could damage the store's reputation. In addition, at least 15 percent of all ski orders were delivered more than two days late. After implementing the merit performance system for the moulders waves of discontent popped up all over the stores because the moulders felt that their merit ratings were inaccurate and other employees were interrupting them. Other employees complained because they were not given the opportunity for merit pay. Productivity problems were also occurring in other areas of the store. Complaints about customer service were up 20 percent. A record number of "as is" skis were sold at the end of the season because they were damaged. In addition, 20 percent of the rental equipment had been lost or seriously damaged and could not be charged to the renters because the records were poorly maintained. Fewer and fewer comments were being placed in the suggestion boxes. Similar problems occurred in the windsurfing season. Given that the problems seem to be occurring throughout the stores and across all employees and jobs, it is likely that they are due to the work environment and not to the personalities of some of the employees. Of course some might argue that the employees are not high on conscientiousness but this would not explain why these problems have only recently begun. Also, note that there is no indication that Maria has changed her procedures for hiring or that she is hiring a different kind of employee.

2. *What behaviours need to be maintained or increased and what behaviours should be reduced or eliminated?*

It is clear from the case that there are behaviours that need to be increased and others that need to be reduced or eliminated.

The behaviours that need to be reduced or eliminated include: delivering equipment late; clerks talking to each other while customers were in the store and waiting for assistance; damaging equipment; lost or damaged rental equipment not being charged to renters; poorly maintained records of equipment rentals.

The behaviours that need to be maintained or increased include: delivering ski orders on time; excellent customer service (e.g., assisting customers when they need help); proper handling of equipment in the store and warehouse to avoid damaging it; maintaining accurate and up to date records of renters; charging renters for damaged or lost equipment; comments for suggestion boxes.

3. *What do you think of Maria Howe's attempt to respond to the difficulties in the stores? Use operant learning theory and social cognitive theory to explain the effects of her merit performance system. Why wasn't it more effective?*

In an attempt to respond to the difficulties in the stores, Maria instituted a merit performance system for the moulders. Although productivity seemed to increase for a while, waves of discontent popped up all over the stores in part because the moulders did not believe that the merit ratings were accurate and because store managers could not observe them working much of the time. The moulders also complained that their performance levels were being hampered by other employees who were interrupting them. As well, other employees complained because they were not given the opportunity for merit pay. In terms of operant learning theory, it is not clear exactly what behaviour is being reinforced other than the performance of the moulders. But even if this was clear to them, the case shows some of the errors involved in using reinforcement. For example, the merit pay (reward) is not really contingent on the specific behaviour of the moulders. This is due in part because the merit pay is based on ratings made by managers that the moulders feel are inaccurate and because the managers are not able to observe the moulders very often. Thus, there is clearly a problem with the merit pay being contingent on the desired performance. As for the merit pay as a reinforcer, it would seem that pay is an important source of reinforcement for these workers although it is possible that there may be differences in preferences for reinforcers. It would also be a good idea to include other important sources of reinforcement such as performance feedback and social recognition. But overall, in terms of operant learning theory it would seem that the main problem is confusing rewards with reinforcers because the reward is not being made contingent of specific behaviours. In terms of social cognitive theory, we can consider each of the main components. For example, there might not be any models whose behaviour results in consequences that the moulders can imitate. In terms of self-efficacy, given that the moulders were hired for their expertise and the fact that they have performed the job successfully in the past, they probably have high self-efficacy for their job. As for self-regulation, perhaps the moulders can set goals for their own performance and then observe and reward themselves. However, the real problem here seems to be an environment that just does not reinforce the desired behaviours.

4. *What do you think Maria Howe should do to respond to the difficulties in the stores? Refer to operant learning theory and social cognitive theory in answering this question.*

Maria has to implement a system in which she clearly indicates the desired behaviours for all employees (not just the moulders) and provides rewards that will be desirable to employees. Well this might include pay it can also include other things, perhaps equipment and other gifts desired by the employees. In addition, she should also consider other sources of reinforcement such as performance feedback and social recognition. Performance feedback is especially important as the employees need to know how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Social recognition can also be used as an important but inexpensive reinforcer. She will need to train the managers on how to provide performance feedback and to give social recognition. And finally, she will have to make sure that rewards are made contingent on desired behaviours. Some of the desired behaviours as indicated in the answer to question #2 include delivering ski orders

on time; excellent customer service (e.g., assisting customers when they need help); proper handling of equipment in store and warehouse to avoid damage; maintaining accurate and up to date records of renters; charging renters for damaged or lost equipment; comments for suggestion boxes. She might also consider increased sales as well as this is a desired behaviour that some of the employees can influence. She might provide some form of reward for any suggestion made by an employee that is implemented. Rewards can be made contingent on ski orders being delivered on time, a decrease in customer complaints or a given low percentage of complaints, up to date and accurate maintenance of rental records, sales, etc. Note that these behaviours can and should be measured as part of a performance feedback system. For social cognitive theory, Maria needs to make sure that employees' self-efficacy is high for doing the things she is asking them to (e.g., deliver equipment on time, excellent customer service, increasing sales, etc.). She might also instruct employees on how to self-regulate their behaviour (set goals, monitor behaviour, self-reward, etc.) and she might identify those employees whose performance is exceptional and who can be role models for other employees.

5. *What organizational learning practices might be effective for changing employee behaviours? Consider the potential of organizational behaviour modification, employee recognition programs, and training and development programs. Explain how you would implement each of these and their potential effectiveness.*

All three of these learning practices can be used to change employee behaviours and to increase the probability of the desired behaviours. To be clear, what Maria needs to focus on is making sure that ski orders are delivered on time; excellent customer service and a reduction in customer complaints; more careful handling of equipment so that it does not get damaged in the store or warehouse (focus on amount of damaged equipment); and that any rental equipment that is not returned or comes back damaged is charged to the renter (this also requires up to date and accurate maintenance of records). To reinforce these behaviours, she should implement an OB Mod program in which the desired behaviours are reinforced through various means (monetary and non-monetary rewards such as gifts, performance feedback and social recognition). Managers need to be included in the implementation of the program and instructed on how and when to provide feedback and social recognition for the desired behaviour (e.g., when a sales clerk is observed providing excellent customer service or when there are no customer complaints; when a moulder delivers equipment on time). The key is to clearly spell out the desired behaviour and make sure that rewards are made contingent on the desired behaviour. This of course must include all employees and focus on the relevant and desired behaviour for each job. An employee recognition program would seem to be especially worth implementing as long as it follows the guidelines indicated in the text to be effective. In other words, the program must specify (a) how a person will be recognized, (b) the type of behaviour being encouraged, (c) the manner of the public acknowledgement, and (d) a token or icon of the event for the recipient. Employees can be recognized for providing excellent customer service, delivering equipment on time, making a suggestion that was implemented, increased sales, etc. It would also be a good idea to consider a peer recognition program in which the employees can nominate each other and vote for co-workers who deserve to be recognized for their behaviour and

performance. Finally, training might also be necessary to ensure that employees know what they have to do to provide excellent customer service, ensure that that equipment is properly handled and stored so it is not damaged, etc. Training can also be useful for increasing the self-efficacy of employees for performing their jobs. Thus, all three of the learning practices can be used by Maria to increase the desired behaviours. An employee recognition program would probably be the easiest and least expensive to implement.

6. *What advice would give Maria Howe on how to address the problems in her stores? Should she pay more attention to the personalities of the people she hires and/or should she make changes to the work environment? What employees and what behaviours should she focus on? Explain your answer.*

The main problem in Maria's stores is that there is no reward or reinforcement system in place. It does not matter what employees do or do not do as they are not rewarded for it and this is why there are performance problems. Maria needs to clearly indicate to employees what is expected of them and what will happen when they perform as expected. She needs to reinforce the desired behaviours and she needs to make sure that the rewards are made contingent on the desired behaviour. If she wants equipment to be delivered on time then she has to reinforce this behaviour by recognizing and rewarding employees who do this. There is no indication that the problem has anything to do with the personality of certain employees. This is a problem in the work environment and it is a work environment that does not reward and reinforce the desired behaviours. Maria should consider implementing a performance feedback system accompanied with social recognition and implement a formal employee recognition program that includes peer recognition. She needs to focus on the behaviours that are most desired as already indicated (e.g., delivering equipment on time, excellent customer service, etc.) and reinforce them.

That being said, it might be worth considering a change in the hiring of mainly part-time employees with skiing expertise. Given that such expertise can probably be taught, Maria might consider hiring some full time employees who might have a greater commitment to the store and its customers and train them on what they need to know about skiing and windsurfing. After all, part-time employees who do not plan to stay around very long might be experts when it comes to skiing, but not the best employees when it comes to doing what is in the best interests of the store and its customers. The hiring of full time employees might also provide examples/models of behaviour that the part time employees can learn from. This also makes sense given the increased competition and the potential for continued expansion. A mix of full time and part time employees might be a better strategy than just hiring part time employees who don't seem to notice or care about Maria's problems.