**Chapter 1**

Work and Its Place in Life

**Chapter Goals:**

The goals of this chapter are to introduce you to the study of organizational behavior and to describe the elements of the working environment, which is where organizational behavior occurs. You should realize the importance of studying organizational behavior and understand how the physical and mental work environment affect you. You should also begin to understand how you and the way you behave influence others.

**Author’s Explanation of Goals:**

*My intention with this chapter is to introduce the topic of organizational behavior and to show there are many influences on that behavior, including the influence of the physical surroundings within which organizations operate.*

**Chapter Objectives:**

When you finish this chapter, you should be able to:

* Explain the purpose of the study of organizational behavior.
* Trace the history of organizational behavior.
* Describe current trends in organizational behavior.
* Define work and explain the meaning of work.
* Differentiate between work and play.
* Explain why people work, and describe the basic philosophy associated with work.
* Describe employer theories of the meaning of work.
* List and describe the elements of the physical work environment.
* Explain how the elements in the physical work environment affect workers.
* Differentiate among the caustic coworkers.
* List and describe the elements of the mental work environment.
* Explain how the elements in the mental work environment affect workers.
* Describe your role in the mental work environment.
* Compare individual and organizational needs.

**Discussion Notes and Teaching Tips (corresponding with PowerPoint slides)**

*Content included in Italics are Teaching Tips & Enhancements to aid in facilitating the discussion of chapter contents and concepts.*

PART ONE – THE BASICS OF HUMAN RELATIONS (Slides 1 and 2)

* Part 1 of the text includes chapters designed to help students develop the insight, sensitivity, and improved understanding of people. The chapters introduce students to the study of organizational behavior, the role work plays in individual’s lives, perceptions, decision making, and communication.
* Chapters included in the first unit include:
  + Chapter 1 – Work and its Place in Life
  + Chapter 2 – Perception and Problem Solving
  + Chapter 3 – Primary Communications
  + Chapter 4 – Improving Communications and Managing Conflict
  + Chapter 5 – Ethics and Etiquette

WORK AND ITS PLACE IN LIFE (Slide 3)

* *Slide 3 provides an overview to key chapter content.*
* *As the introductory quotes to the chapter reference, work is that place where we as individuals define ourselves and view our place within society as a whole. Work is something we also use to compare our value and worth against another’s value and worth. Work is expected and without it we would not have any way of occupying our time. Thus, if we do spend such a large percentage of our time and lives in our workplaces, the need to understand Organizational Behavior (OB) is important not only for managers but also for employees in general. The issue of understanding OB involves understanding the relationships that exist in the workplace between managers, coworkers, and the employee as an individual. I have found that continually diagramming Figure 1.3 on the board offers OB students the opportunity to make the connection and assist in their understanding, anticipating, and coping with relationships, actions, and behaviors that occur in our workplaces. This may be the first time a student has heard the terms OB or Human Relations and this diagram helps them visually begin understanding what OB is and why studying OB is important for all employees. Not all of us are managers or supervisors in our workplaces, but we all are employees and if we understand the impact our behavior has on our managers and coworkers and the impact their behavior has on us, we are better able to cope with and anticipate the results of behavior within the organization.*

WHAT IS ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR and OB FOUNDATIONS (Slides 4 and 5)

* **Organizational Behavior** – or **OB** – is the study of the behavior of people and their relationships in organizations for the purpose of attempting to match their personal needs and objectives with the overall needs and objectives of the organization.
* OB is often called Human Relations or Interpersonal & Organizational Psychology.
* While OB is a multidisciplinary field with application of skills from psychology, sociology, and social anthropology, it is also concerned with the “why” of individuals and their groups and what can be done to anticipate behaviors and cope with or prevent the responses that come from our organizational actions.
* A major focus for studying OB is on developing human relations skills to better analyze behavior in our workplaces and thus understand, anticipate, cope with, and improve behavior in our organizations.
* Thus OB is about developing a work-related understanding about ourselves as individuals and the people we encounter in our workplaces and the impact these individuals have on each other.
* *You may find it beneficial to draw Figure 1.3 on the board as a visual reference to facilitate student understanding of OB at this point in the class.*
* Organizational members need to communicate and work together cooperatively to assist the firm in reaching its goals
* Organizations exist when two or more people work together on accomplishing mutual goals and thus have mutual interest in those goals. This means OB applies to all sizes of companies and not just Fortune 500 organizations and corporations.
* When these two or more people do come together to work, communication and coordination are essential. Conflicts inevitably will arise.
* OB does NOT offer clear-cut, cookie cutter solutions to organizational problems and conflicts within the workplace, but OB does assist us in understanding, anticipating, and coping with others in our work environment.
* *I review the author’s discussion of significant events and individuals in the study of OB at this point. Many students have previously studied Frederick W. Taylor and Scientific Management, as well as the Hawthorne Studies, and at this point in the class reviewing their contributions and the history of unions in this country provides a great background on why OB is such an important field of study. It also provides a look at how managerial principles were not based on a focus of the human resource, but rather this focus evolved over a period of time and, even today, is not fully embraced by all.*

WHY DO PEOPLE WORK and DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN WORK AND PLAY (Slides 6-7-8)

* When you ask most individuals why they work, they will likely tell you it is because of money (*especially if you are teaching to full-time college students working full- or part-time jobs*).
* A key to understanding OB is in the answer to why else we work. *Asking this question to students in your class typically reveals answers such as “flexibility in work hours,” “tuition reimbursement,” and occasionally I have heard “no amount of money is enough for putting up with my manager, but my coworkers are awesome so I stay at my job.”*
* Going to work is also considered the natural thing to do. We become a certain age, go to school, get a degree, and go to work.
* What is often interesting is that many people, managers included, have not thought about what OB is, nor taken the time and energy to understand it.
  + This may very well be a reason many managers haven’t considered the importance the human element has on productivity and morale in the workplace.
* *The author provides great questions in the text for discussing the distinction between Work and Play, including:*
  + “Does it seem unusual to say that some people may not like work, as if most people like work?”
  + “Or is it more unusual for people to supposedly dislike something they spend half of their waking hours doing during five days of every week?”
* While most of us know when we are working or playing, we do have difficulty explaining the difference between the two.
* *The author provides a meaningful way of differentiating between work and play in the text*. He proposes three factors be examined in distinguishing between the two:
  + **Purpose** of the task
  + **Attitude** of the person performing the task
  + **Reward(s)** received by the person performing the task

THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT – THE VERY PLACE WHERE OB HAPPENS (Slide 9)

* When studying OB, it helps to also understand the environment in which OB takes place.
* The working environment consists of two main elements:
  + The **physical** work environment
  + The **mental** work environment
* These two elements combine to affect everyone within the workplace, though each person is impacted differently because your individual behavior influences how others treat you.
* This is a key point: As an employee, you are part of the mental work environment so your behavior affects the mental work environment and the mental work environment affects you.
* The **physical work environment** includes the lighting, noise, temperature and humidity, ventilation, color and décor, layout, equipment, supplies, comfort, and security in the workplace. A recent addition to factors impacting the physical work environment includes “sick” buildings. A poor physical environment can decrease efficiency, cause fatigue, decrease morale and productivity, cause lost time, and increase absenteeism and turnover. Oftentimes individuals don’t notice these elements during their hiring process and not until they have been on the job for a period of time. *The author provides a thorough discussion of each element impacting the physical work environment in the text. What follows is a brief summary.*
  + **Lighting** – Increasing lighting generally increases productivity
  + **Noise** – As noise increases, communication and productivity decrease
  + **Temperature & Humidity** – Comfortable temperatures for indoor work are about 65 to 77 degrees Fahrenheit. Less than 50 or more than 86 degrees can decrease productivity. Comfortable humidity is about 40 to 60 percent. Higher humidity and higher temperature combine to make the environment even less comfortable.
  + **Ventilation** – Productivity, morale, and people’s health are all affected by fresh air. Room air should change 4 to 10 times per hour.
  + **Color & Décor** – Color usage can be functional, aesthetic, or both. Color can affect mood; Décor contributes to the corporate image and employee morale. Employee input and personalization should be allowed.
  + **Layout** – Concerns are for minimizing wasted motion and grouping resources logically. Communication and social relations may also be a concern.
  + **Equipment** – Ease of use, maintenance, safety, uniformity, and age all contribute to the efficient use of equipment.
  + **Supplies** – Logistic concerns are critical to operations. A balance must be found between inventory costs and resource idleness.
  + **Comfort** – Includes the cumulative effect of a number of physical and mental factors. Increasing comfort can reduce stress and increase productivity and job satisfaction.
  + **Security** – Policies and practices must support safety and security needs. People should be free from fear of theft, disease, or injury on the job.
  + **Sick Buildings** – Concerns from toxins from remodeling, cleaning products, pesticides, copiers, printers, fax machines, and even emissions from office furniture. Poor air quality inside buildings has become a top risk to employee’s health.
* The **mental work environment** is also known as the **psychological** work environment. The mental work environment is a collected perception of four factors:
  + **Work** – tasks that make up the job
  + **Managerial Style** – methods used by management in planning, organizing, leading, and controlling the organization
  + **Influences of Coworkers** – attitudes, beliefs, and actions of those individuals working with you
  + **You** – attitudes, personality, values, and perceptions

THE WORK ITSELF & ITS CHARACTERISTICS (Slide 10)

* Factors in which the actual work affects the mental working environment. *The author provides a thorough discussion of each of these components and their resulting impact into how each contribute to job stress in the workplace. What follows is a brief summary.*
  + **Work Pace** – The time required to perform a job task and the time between tasks.
  + **Work Pace Variety** – Is independent of the work itself and refers to the variability of work pace.
  + **Task Duration** – The length of time needed to complete one task.
  + **Concentration** – The required amount of concentration needed to perform the work tasks.
  + **Accuracy** – The degree of precision needed for the work at hand.
  + **Error Visibility** – The obviousness of an error to managers, coworkers, customers, suppliers, clients, or other individuals.
  + **Responsibility** – How accountable someone is for obtaining results.
  + **Authority Level** – The power or ability an individual has been given to command resources in order to achieve results.
  + **Autonomy Level** – The ability of a worker to perform his or her job independently or with minimal supervision.
* Accepting a position that pays well but is a gross mismatch of the worker’s mental needs is almost a sure recipe for conflict between the worker and his/her employer.
* The philosophy and managerial style used by managers in the organization has a tremendous influence on the mental work environment.
  + *This topic is covered extensively in Chapter 8, Understanding Management, of the text. I do take time at this point to discuss the Role of Management and Leadership within the firm. It provides the opportunity to define both terms and discuss their purposes for the organization.*
  + Resources 🡪 Functions🡪 Performance Outcomes

COWORKER INFLUENCES (Slide 11)

* Assumptions coworkers and managers make concerning work greatly affects the degree of how the individual worker will be affected by coworkers. Throughout the text, the influence of coworkers is discussed.
* The important point for the worker is to try to find a match between what they desire in coworkers and what is provided.
* *The author provides a discussion of seven types of caustic coworkers that employees may have to deal with in the workplace. He offers suggestions for dealing with these individuals as well. The Skill-Building Exercise at the end of the chapter provides an opportunity for students to apply their understanding of the different types of caustic coworkers and how to deal with them in a simulated work situation.*
  + **Lazy** – Gets little accomplished and therefore cannot be depended upon. While aggravating, it is better to concentrate on your own performance and avoid this individual.
  + **Hot-Head** – Has great difficulty controlling his/her temper. Remain calm and logical, and avoid them.
  + **Squealer** – Tattles on coworkers to management who must be willing to listen to him/her in order to be effective. Confront this individual about lies or exaggerations told and present erroneous facts and errors to the manager.
  + **Lone Wolf** – Maintains their distance from others in the workplace and often chooses to utilize email, phone, or memos over face-to-face communication. Try to bring them in by asking for their help.
  + **Boaster** – A shameless self-promoter who not only takes credit for actions, ideas, and achievements, but also tells whoever will listen to them how hard they are working.
  + **Critic** – Perfectionist controllers who need to have everything their way and are hypercritical of the ways of others.
  + **Blameless** – Ensure all blame is shifted away from them to someone else. You need to document your position and rationale in case the blame comes your way.

YOU AND THE MENTAL WORK ENVIRONMENT (Slide 12)

* The mental and physical work environments are interrelated. Coworkers affect you as an individual worker and the mental environment just as you affect coworkers and the mental environment. *Figure 1.3 of the text is very effective in illustrating this key point.*
* Individuals bring their personal needs to the workplace, and these personal needs can have significant effects on the organization.
* Our individual needs strongly influence our motivation and attitude toward our work.
* Organizations provide a structure, policies, and guidelines for employees to follow. This structure has a purpose, though it may or may not be compatible with individual worker’s needs.
* Organizations also have a culture which defines its values.
* The application of good organizational behavior skills is the responsibility of everyone in an organization. While managers and leaders define the culture, workers have a strong influence on it as well. Workers must also realize they share responsibility for the organization’s culture.

REVIEWING CHAPTER 1 CONCEPTS (Slides 13-14-15)

* *The slides offer a format you can utilize to summarize chapter concepts.*
* *Slide 13 provides a series of questions you can ask students as you review key concepts from Chapter 1.*
* *Slide 14 offers a “wrap-up” of the ultimate goals of OB*
* *Slide 15 provides a “wrap-up” quote from Former Labor Secretary Robert Reich that I like to use as we move from the introductory chapter onto the rest of the text.*

**Answers to Checking for Understanding:**

1. *What benefits can be derived from studying organizational behavior, given that this study will not provide all the answers?*Our study of OB will be action-oriented, emphasizing the development of human relations skills for analyzing behavior in order to understand, anticipate, cope with, and improve behavior. We will also examine behavior and draw conclusions that will apply to many, but not all, people. Rules of behavior which apply to everyone may not exist, but this should not prevent us from attempting to explain the behavior of many, as long as we remember to be alert for the exceptions. In addition, we will examine behavioral trends in order to help reduce and resolve behavioral problems within organizations. However, the study of OB seldom provides the “correct” solutions to human problems, although an understanding of behavioral concepts should assist you in developing better solutions. Individuals who view events as dichotomous or on a two-valued basis (a right-or-wrong, good-or-bad, one-answer philosophy) are often frustrated when they first confront a human behavior course and find that this narrow approach simply doesn’t work.
2. *Trace the history of organizational behavior.*   
   Industrialization began in the mid-1800s when farmers moved off the land and into towns in hope of improving their situations. Conditions in the early factories left much to be desired. There was little human concern for the worker before the 1920s and 1930s. Managers tended to regard workers merely as factors of production fortunate to be employed. Fredrick Winslow Taylor entered the organizational scene in the early 1900s. He was concerned principally with efficiency and productivity in organizations and as a result became known as the Father of Scientific Management. The studies of Taylor and other proponents of scientific management, such as Henry L. Gantt and Frank B. and Lillian M. Gilbreth, did bring needed attention to the human being in organizations and were instrumental in the later development of the field of organizational behavior. Scientific managers also failed to anticipate the resistance that many workers would develop toward standards perceived as unrealistic. Excessive concern for production at the expense of the human element brought about numerous organizational problems. As a result, in the 1920s workers formed or joined unions in greater numbers, while some managers became interested in the behavioral, or human, side of organizations.

Some research studies were conducted in 1927 by the late Elton Mayo (who became known as the Father of Human Relations), F. J. Roethlisberger, and their colleagues at Harvard University. These led to the development of Behavioral Management.

1. *What are the current trends in organizational behavior?*

In recent decades, new buzzwords and packages have been created for many established behavioral concepts. Some of the more common ones include Human Resource Management (HRM), Human Resource Development (HRD), Organizational Development (OD), Total Quality Management (TQM), Quality of Work Life (QWL), Knowledge Management, Human Capital, and Talent Management.

1. *Define work and explain the meaning of work.*

Work is a purposeful activity having external and internal rewards that is viewed as work by the person performing the activity.

1. *What is the difference between work and play?*Work has a definite purpose. Play, however, does not have to have a purpose. Sometimes people engage in play for its own sake. A task may be work if the person performing it believes it is work. If the person performing a task thinks it is play, then to that person it is play. Finally, external rewards are given for work; internal rewards are received from play.
2. *Why do people work? List all of the reasons.*Money; To fill up a lot of time; It’s natural; There are moral and social reasons for working; To satisfy various human needs.
3. *Describe the basic philosophy associated with work.*

To Douglas McGregor life meant activity – activity with a purpose. This activity may consist of work, or it may consist of play, but McGregor felt that the natural state of people is to do something. Essentially, he felt that by participating in activity, people were saying, “I am, therefore I work.”

1. *Describe employer theories of the meaning of work.*

In the view of some managers, people are here to fulfill the needs of the company. The belief is that work is a person’s main responsibility in life. Weekends are to rest up for the work-week, and evenings are to rest and prepare for the next day’s work. Workers are expected to dedicate themselves to the company, to always put the company and work first, and to always act in the best interests of the company. These are often the same managers who believe that people should leave their personal lives at home, that people should be able to throw a switch in their heads and turn their problems off so that nothing interferes with work. Some virtually believe that because they employ people, they own them. Often, the message is that work is of preeminent importance, that the rest of a person’s life is a distant second, and that if you don’t like it, then feel free to leave.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are bosses who view work simply as one part of life. The belief is that life outside of work is important, is valuable, and greatly affects a person’s performance at work. These types of managers are often as concerned for the welfare of their employee’s non-work life as they are for their work life. They may have employee assistance programs to help with work and non-work problems. They may allow personal days off or “mental health” days. They realize that people’s personal lives cannot be left at the company’s front door. The overall attitude of these firms is concern for the worker, the worker’s work and personal life, and the worker’s family.

These two views represent the extremes in a continuum of managerial attitudes toward work. Those believing work is a person’s whole life are at one end, while those believing work is just a part of life are at the other end, with many degrees of opinion lying between them.

1. *List and describe the elements of the physical work environment.*   
   The physical factors that affect people in their working environment include light, noise, temperature and humidity, ventilation, color and décor, layout, equipment, supplies, comfort, security, and safe buildings. *Light* is essentially the minimum illumination for most work areas. *Noise* consists of the sound level or loudness of a working environment. *Temperate and humidity* refer to the heat (or lack of heat) and the amount of moisture present in a work area. *Ventilation* is the flow of fresh air in the work area. *Color and décor* refer to the paint and decoration in a workplace. *Layout* refers to the utilization of space within the workplace. *Equipment* refers to the physical machines and tools needed for work. *Supplies* consist of the materials needed to perform work. *Comfort* is actually the cumulative effect of a number of working environment factors and is part mental and part physical. Certainly people should be as physically comfortable as feasible, but the overall work setting should be comfortable too. You should feel safe and free of unnecessary observation. *Security needs* range from security from theft of personal possessions to protection from transmittable disease, electrical hazards, cleaners, chemicals, radiation, and fire, to concerns for air quality. *Sick buildings* have recently been added to the listing of physical work environment factors as concern for the health of modern buildings and the contribution of a variety of factors that individually are of less concern combine and become hazardous. An example would be toxins from remodeling, cleaning products, and pesticides.
2. *How can each of the elements in the physical work environment affect workers?   
   Light* – As illumination increases, so does productivity. In addition to the total amount of light in the work area, the contrast and the ambient-to-work light ratio affects work and productivity. Less illumination is required when the contrast between objects is high. The ambient, or room, light also affects work. Accuracy is greatest when there is a 1 to 1 ratio of ambient light to work light.  
   *Noise* – Communication and productivity decrease as the noise level increases. While people are capable of making some adjustment to a constant noise level, if the noise exceeds 85 to 90 decibels, productivity will decrease over the course of the work day. Deleterious effects will increase as the frequency or pitch of the noise increases and as the exposure time to the noise increases. When background noise decreases, productivity increases and worker stress decreases.
3. *Temperature & Humidity* – For most people, indoor working temperatures below 50 degrees Fahrenheit or about 86 degrees Fahrenheit can significantly decrease work performance. The ambient (room) temperature that is comfortable is also affected by humidity. The general comfort zone for humidity is in the range of 40 to 60 percent. Too little humidity can cause problems with static electricity or drying of the nose, sinuses, and throat, which leads to increased chances for contracting colds and the flu. Excess humidity makes higher temperatures more uncomfortable or may cause sensitive equipment to jam or malfunction.  
   *Ventilation* – Productivity, morale, and worker health are all affected by the flow of fresh air, or ventilation, in the work area. *Color & Décor* – Color and décor in the workplace can be used functionally or for aesthetic reasons or both.  
   *Layout* – The main concerns for layout of the working environment are that of minimizing wasted motion and logical grouping of resources. Too much space and people waste time and energy moving resources. Too little space leads to inefficiency or the inability to perform work properly.  
   *Equipment* – There are five factors that contribute to the efficiency or inefficiency of the working environment and are related to Equipment. These five factors include age, ease of use, maintenance, safety, and uniformity. While learning to use new equipment takes time, workers often feel they are being supported when equipment is up to date. Easy-to-use equipment decreases worker fatigue, decreases time-on-task, and consequently increases efficiency. Proper maintenance, the ethical duty of the worker and the management, contributes to efficiency by decreasing downtime, but it also contributes to safety. Uniformity of equipment, when possible, decreases errors and increases efficiency by allowing workers to easily share equipment or assignments, and by reducing the training required.  
   *Supplies* – In supplying workers, management must strike a balance between the costs of inventory and the losses that occur when resources are idle. When supplies are inadequate, efficiency and quality decline, and worker frustration increases.  
   *Comfort* – The cumulative effect of a number of working environment factors. Comfort is part physical and part mental. Certainly people should be as physically comfortable as feasible, but the overall work setting should be comfortable too.  
   *Security* – As a basic need, security is an issue for virtually all workers. It is insufficient to simply talk about security issues – employees must have confidence that employers are doing everything possible. Fear that stems from security issues inhibits people’s ability to work and can erode job satisfaction.
4. *Sick Buildings* – Several well-publicized cases have recently raised concerns about the health of modern buildings and the contributions of numerous factors that individually are of less concern, but when combined may be hazardous. For example, ventilation systems in most buildings may not help with sealed windows, vents near traffic, carbon monoxide, etc. Poor air quality inside buildings is quick becoming a top risk contributing to employee health.
5. *What are the elements of the mental work environment? Describe each of them.   
   Work* – The actual work a person does affects the mental work environment, whether or not the work is primarily physical or primarily mental.  
   *Work Pace –* The time required to perform a job task, and the time between tasks, determines the work pace. *Work Pace Variety* – Work pace variety is independent of the work pace itself. A constant work pace, one with little or no work pace variety, may be present when the pace is fast or when the pace is slower.  
   *Task Duration –* The length of time needed to complete one task is task duration.  
   *Task Variety –* Task variety refers to the number of different tasks a person performs.  
   *Required Concentration –* Required concentration is the amount of concentration needed to perform the work at hand.  
   *Required Accuracy –* Required accuracy is the degree of precision needed for the work at hand.  
   *Error Visibility –* Error visibility includes the obviousness of the error to managers, coworkers, subordinates, customers, suppliers, clients, or others.  
   *Responsibility Level –* Responsibility level refers to how accountable someone is for obtaining results.  
   *Authority Level –* Authority means a person has been given the power or the ability to command resources (human, financial, material, and informational) in order to achieve results.  
   *Autonomy Level –* Autonomy is the ability of a worker to perform his or her job independently or with minimal supervision.  
   *Managerial Style –* The philosophy or managerial style or methods mangers use in running the organization greatly affects the work environment.
6. *Identify and describe caustic coworkers you have known and how they have affected you.  
   Possible answers from students may be similar to these descriptions*  
     
   *The Lazy –* hiding, surfing the Internet, talking to others, or just moving slowly. Gets little or nothing accomplished. Cannot be depended on.  
   *The Hot-Head –* has great difficulty controlling his or her temper. Can be overly emotional or rebellious.  
   *The Squealer –* tattles on his or her coworkers to management, sometimes reporting the truth and sometimes exaggerating or even telling a lie. Events they relate tend to be petty. Are not legitimate whistle-blowers.  
   *The Lone Wolf –* may be a recluse or outsider who maintains his or her distance. May be the office grouch. Chooses the phone, memos, or e-mails over face-to-face communication and is often pessimistic or highly critical. Left on their own, lone wolves may become even more malicious and unsocial.  
   *The Boaster –* is a shameless self-promoter who not only constantly takes credit for actions, ideas, and achievements, but also tells everyone who will listen how busy they are and how hard they are working. While first in line for recognition, they are typically last in line for blame.  
   *The Critic –* is a perfectionist controller who needs to have everything their way and are hypercritical of the ways of others. See things in absolutes, black and white, or all-good or all-bad. Blocks the ideas of others or insists on having their way even when it is not the best way.  
   *The Blameless –* ensures all blame is shifted away from them to someone else. Makes sure they cannot be blamed or held accountable for anything that goes wrong. May act preemptively by opposing something just after it is decided on or they may express some doubts just before implementation. If everything turns out well, the Blameless hope no one will remember their opposition or they may even deny they had reservations. If things go bad, they can say, “I told you so.”
7. *Describe your role in the mental work environment.*Many people who complain about work never consider looking in the mirror for another potential source of their problems. Sometimes a manager or coworker may treat you poorly because the manager or coworker is having a bad day. If these are only occasional incidents, then they should be forgiven and the incident forgotten. Other times, however, you may receive (or you may perceive to receive) poor treatment because you are having a bad day, are treating others poorly, and they are just responding to you. Possibly the best general advice is to treat people the way you would like to be treated (or as someone said, “treat others the way you would like to see your mother treated”).
8. *Compare individual and organizational needs.*Individuals bring their personal needs to the organizations in which they work. These needs are partially material and economic, partially social and psychological. The personal needs of employees can have significant effects on the organizations themselves. For example, your personal needs strongly influence your motivation and attitude toward your job. Managers, especially, should attempt to understand human needs because they influence the attitudes and behavior of employees.  
   Organizations need order and predictability. An organization without some structure can be compared to an airport that has no ground or air control over the airplanes using its facilities. Most well-managed organizations, therefore, will have some order and predictability, referred to as their required system (the formal organization).
9. *To accomplish their goals more effectively, should managers attempt to prohibit the emergent, or informal, organization? Explain.*No, regardless of how energetically the management enforces and coordinates formal policies, the emergent system, or informal, types of behavior related to personal needs will tend to evolve. The needs of workers create many behavioral situations that can’t be found in any company manual and should be handled on an individual basis.

**Self-Assessment:**

*Student answers will vary as they assess the match in their work environment with their individual needs.*

**Answers to Skill Building Exercise 1:**

Skill Question 1

*Differentiate between absenteeism and turnover (or are they, as Birks said, the same thing).*

Absenteeism is the failure of an employee to report to work when scheduled and often becomes a habitual act.

Turnover is typically discussed in terms of labor turnover and is a measurement of the ratio of the number of employees hired to the number of employees who have left employment in a given period of time.

*Whether they are different or the same, what does high absenteeism and high turnover tell us?*Companies with high rates of absenteeism and/or turnover typically have morale and motivation issues. In addition these high rates typically result when an individual’s personal needs are not being met either in their workplace or with the work itself. These unmet needs may definitely be related to low pay and wages.

Skill Question 2

*It seems Foyle needs you to help figure out if the coin graders are working or playing. First, differentiate between work and play in this situation.*

The distinction between Work and Play depends on the answers to three factors:

* Purpose of the Task – While a work task has a definitive purpose, a play task may or may not.
* Personal Attitude – If the individual completing the task views the task as work, it is work. If the individual completing the task views the task as play, it is play.
* Task Reward – Completion of a work task typically results in an external reward such as a paycheck, but may also have an internal reward as in the individual’s feeling of self-esteem from accomplishing a challenging task. Play tasks typically result in only internal rewards.

In the coin graders situation, they are completing a task that has a specific purpose for the firm, regardless of whether or not they have an interest in coin grading and collecting. The employees do receive an external reward in terms of a paycheck.

Skill Question 3

*Draw a conclusion as to whether this is either work or play.*

The coin graders are completing tasks related to work, though they may also individually receive self-fulfillment from performing this task due to their interest in coin collecting and grading.

Skill Question 4

*Is it too cold for a job where people sit at a table in order to perform their work? If it is too cold, what temperature should it be?*

Temperature and humidity conditions vary greatly in work environments and personal tolerances also vary greatly. The maximum comfortable indoor working temperature is about 77 degrees with the minimum comfortable temperature being 65 degrees. The temperature could be as high as 86 degrees for employees who perform their jobs sitting down, but a temperature below 50 degrees would significantly decrease their productivity. The temperature in this workplace is set at 50 degrees, which means it is too cold.

Skill Question 5

*If it is too cold, what temperature should it be?*

The temperature should be set between 65 and 77 degrees for indoor working conditions.

Skill Question 6

*What is task duration?*

Task duration refers to the length of time an employee has to complete one task.

Skill Question 7

*What effect can it have on workers?*

As task duration decreases, boredom typically increases and job satisfaction and performance typically decrease as boredom increases.

A short task duration combined with a low number of tasks may be required in order to have an impact on satisfaction and performance.

Skill Question 8

*What is Foyle talking about here? Is he correct about the effect this has?*

Foyle is talking about the fact that even though the tasks the coin graders are completing have a low task duration, there are too many short jobs and the jobs are not challenging or internally rewarding. In order to have an impact on job satisfaction and performance, the coin graders would need to have short task duration in combination with a low number of tasks. In their present situation, they have short task duration with a high number of tasks.

Skill Question 9

*Is Neuman a caustic coworkers and if so what kind is he?*

Yes, Neuman is a squealer who tattles on his coworkers to management frequently.

Skill Question 10

*What does the chapter suggest can be done with him?*

Neuman should be confronted about any errors in what he is reporting to management. Also, if he has been spreading lies and exaggerations, Birks must be open to listening to the facts and then confronting Neuman with the discrepancies. It would also help if Birks stopped allowing Neuman an unlimited amount of time to squeal.

Skill Question 11

*Is Renquist a caustic coworker and if so what kind is he?*

Renqust is a Lone Wolf.

Skill Question 12

*Is he a caustic coworker and if so what can be done with him?*

Handling a Lone Wolf can be challenging because they need to be brought out of their shell. You can ask them for their help and even approach them directly about the appearance their behavior has on the perceptions of others in the workplace.

Skill Question 13

*What kind of caustic coworker is Santos? What can be done with him?*

Santos is a Boaster.

Skill Question 14

*What can be done with him?*

Boasters are shameless self-promoters who consistently take credit for the work others perform. They usually spend large amounts of time telling others how good they are at jobs they really don’t perform. Because of this, working independently may be needed by other individuals in the workplace and ensuring you document your achievements and make management aware of them is necessary.

Skill Question 15

*What are your overall recommendations for improving this situation?*

Birks needs to understand the importance the work environment, both physical and mental, has on job satisfaction, morale, motivation, and productivity. The temperature is too cold and needs to be adjusted. The coin graders have experience in their jobs and do not need checklists or detailed instructions each time they complete a task. They should be offered autonomy and responsibility for the completion of their jobs, and they should also be offered recognition for the accomplishment of their jobs. The jobs they perform are redundant so not much can be done to make their job challenging, however, making adjustments to the physical and mental work environment would go a long way in increasing the satisfaction of the employees and reducing absenteeism and turnover.

**Chapter Application Question Answers:**

* 1. **– Life in the Fast Lane** – *Provides students the opportunity to assess the impact the work environment’s physical and mental components have on an individual’s behavior and performance in their workplace.*

1. *List five of the six physical work environment factors Rachel has to deal with. Cite examples. Which are negative and which are acceptable and explain why?  
   Equipment* – *A PC from 1996, running Windows 95, tries to display market conditions, but it crashes at least once each day; often Rachel just listens to the radio reports from a sister-station*. – A ***negative*** as it is out-dated and crashes frequently.  
   *Temperature & Humidity* – The temperature in Rachel’s control room is at least 89 degrees with about 40 percent humidity – The temperature is ***too high*** as 77 is typical with a range of 65 to 86 degrees Fahrenheit. The humidity is ***fine*** as 40 percent to 60 percent is the comfortable range.  
   *Light* – *She has about 8 foot-candles of light, all coming from her four black-and-white monitors* – This is a ***negative*** as 10 foot-candles is about minimum, plus the ambient-to-work light is bad as there is no ambient light. It is all coming from the monitors (the work light). *Ventilation – The air in the room changes once per hour* – a ***negative*** – room air should change four to ten times per hour; she should be okay with the lower end of this scale but once per hour isn’t even close to once every 15 minutes.  
   *Noise – Noise level is about 77 decibels* – this is ***fine*** as it is below the 85 to 90 decibel level that can be distracting or harmful.  
   *Security – The control room is locked even while Rachel is working; she can release the lock from her control panel to allow people to enter. Admission to the studio complex is by key only*. This seems okay as there is no mention of electrical hazard with any of the equipment (the computer crashing is a software, not a hardware, problem and this arrangement seems to have reasonable physical safety.)
2. *What three mental work environmental factors does Rachel face in her job? Cite examples. Which are negative and which are acceptable? Explain why.  
   Required Concentration – Rachel must make split-second decisions at any given moment in the eight hour program. There are no breaks or lunch away from the control console. Three monitors directly in front of her allow her to see the three off-site reporters while windows allow her to easily see both of the in-studio reporters. A fourth monitor shows what is on the air now* – A **negative** factor as she has seven things to watch (four monitors, two reporters in the studio, and her computer) and must decide which one to go to very quickly.  
   *Error Visibility – If Rachel puts a reporter on the air or takes one off at the wrong time, approximately 250,000 viewers notice* – a **negative** factor as her error would not only be seen by a quarter-million people but it would be obvious to management and coworkers as well.  
   *Responsibility Level – Rachel is the only one who decides what goes on the air* – being solely responsible is **negative** by itself, combined with the **high error visibility just increases the stress** here.
3. *Does Rachel have any caustic coworkers? If so, who are they and what type of caustic coworker is each of them? How should Rachel try to handle them (or herself, if necessary)?****Greg*** *is* the *Blameless* type – Rachel should document what she has asked of Greg and what she has done in case Greg tries to someday blame her for something. To counteract the Blameless, you may have to document your own position, including your rationale in case the blame starts to come your way (to cover yourself).  
   **Tyler** is the *Lazy* type – Rachel should concentrate on her work and stay away from Tyler, but since they are on a team together she should make sure Tyler gets specific tasks and exact deadlines (and document these). To counteract the Lazy, don’t take on their work and avoid being on a team with him or her if possible. If you must be on a person’s team with a lazy coworker, try to ensure that he or she has specific tasks and deadlines that will be visible to management if not completed.
   1. **– Paul’s Problems**

*Application 1.2, “Paul’s Problems,” is a favorite of mine. The application really offers a great scenario where students can see the impact an individual employee’s behavior has on others in the workplace. It’s a great way to wrap up Chapter 1 concepts with an individual assignment and sets the stage for the remainder of the class. Many students will look at Paul’s problems as being external to him, as in his supervisor, coworkers, etc. His problems, however, are caused because of him, his behavior, his attitude, and the resulting impact those have on others he interacts with in the workplace.*

1. *Identify the cause of Paul’s unhappiness.*Paul’s problem is Paul. The psychology involved is beyond the scope of this book but the problem is not the physical environment, not the coworkers who pitched in when their peers were sick, not the work, and not apparently the management. For whatever reason Paul is not very social or does not see the value of the social aspects of work and evidently is not even aware that he is causing his own problems.
2. *What do you think Paul should do?*Paul needs to take a good long look in the mirror. He needs to first realize that he is the source of his problem. He then has to decide whether or not to do something about it. He can try to get more positively involved with others and the organization, or maybe he can apply to be night watchman and then he won’t have to deal with others. *What advice can you give Paul that can improve his work environment?*Do not focus on the mistakes of others. Help out when needed without being asked, even if you think it is going above and beyond the call of duty. Work on being a better listener, it really requires very little energy. Don’t pry. If others do not wish to share something with you, respect those wishes.

**Personal Points:**

*Student answers will vary as they answer the Personal Points questions and make connections between chapter material and their individual experiences and personal work situations.*