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Chapter: 4

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Learning in Organization.

Learning:

A relatively Permanent Change in behavior due to Practice or Experience

First -: With learning Comes Change.

Second -: Relatively Permanent or long lasting

Third -: Due to Practice or Experience

Three Major theories.

→ Classical Conditioning:

Learning take Place When the Learner recognizes the Connection between an Unconditioned Stimulus and a Condition Stimulus.

Unconditioned Stimulus.

Anything that Produces an unconditioned response.

Unconditioned Response.

A ~~per~~ response that occurs naturally in the Presence of a given Stimulus

(2)

Conditioned Stimulus.

A neutral stimulus that, as a result of being paired with an unconditioned stimulus, elicits a response.

Conditioned Response.

A response that is called forth by a previously neutral stimulus (the conditioned stimulus).

→ Operant Conditioning.

Learning that takes place when the learner recognizes the connection between a behavior and its consequences.

→ Reinforcement.

The process by which the probability that a desired behavior will occur is increased by applying consequences that depend on the behavior.

Positive Reinforcement

Reinforcement that increases the probability of a desired behavior by administering positive

(3)

Consequences to Workers Who Perform the behavior.

Negative Reinforcement

Reinforcement that increases the Probability of a desired behavior by removing a negative consequence when a worker performs the behavior.

- Immediate versus Delayed Reinforcement
- Continuous Reinforcement versus Partial Reinforcement

→ Shaping:

The reinforcement of successive and closer approximation to a desired behavior.

Operant Conditioning in Practice.

Organizational behavior modification.

The systematic application of the principles of operant conditioning for teaching and managing important organizational behavior.

(4)

The Basic Steps of OB Mod

- Step 1: Identify the behavior to be learned
(Coming to Work on time).
- Step 2: Measure the frequency with which the behavior identified in Step 1 actually occurs prior to any intervention.
(Each member of a work group is late around 3 times a week)
- Step 3: Perform a Functional analysis.
(Workers know that they should come to work on time but receive no reinforcement for doing so or punishment for being late).

Step 4: Develop and apply a Strategy.

Positively reinforce Worker for Coming to Work on time as follows:

A Worker is allowed One Friday Afternoon Off each month he or she is never late.

(5)

Step 5: Measure the Frequency of the Behavior.

- Worker always Come to Work on time.

Social Learning Theory.

Social Learning theory:

A Learning theory that takes into account the fact that thoughts and feelings influence Learning.

Vicissious Learning.

Learning that occurs When One Person learns a behavior by Watching another Person Perform the behavior

simple observation was the impetus for an innovative product. What did Stride Rite employees learn from their CEO's behavior? They learned that creative ideas can be triggered in a variety of ways and that one should always be on the lookout for different ways of doing things.

Kanter suggests that CEOs can be most effective as role models by actually engaging in desired behaviors instead of trying to teach workers about them. David Dworkin, head of B&S, a British retailing company, exemplified this approach when he wanted to emphasize to sales associates the importance of new technology in increasing his company's level of customer service. Rather than delivering the traditional lecture with overhead transparencies or films on the new technology, Dworkin brought home his important message by actually learning how to operate advanced cash registers with some other top managers.²³

CEOs should always be aware that their status and expertise make them important behavior models for others in their organizations.

Managing One's Own Behavior: The Importance of Self-Control

Self-control

Self-discipline that allows a person to learn to perform a behavior even though there is no external pressure to do so.

Social learning theory acknowledges that people can learn on their own by using **self-control**—that is, by learning to perform a behavior even though there is no external pressure to do so. Several conditions indicate that a person is using self-control.²⁴

1. An individual must engage in a low-probability behavior. A low-probability behavior is a behavior that a person would ordinarily not want to perform. This condition distinguishes individuals exhibiting self-control from those engaging in activities they enjoy. For example, Sylvia Crano, an administrative secretary, has had a new software package for graphics sitting on her desk for the past six months. She hates learning how to use new software and, fortunately, her boss hasn't put any pressure on her to learn the new software. Taking the initiative to learn how to use the new software is a low-probability response for Crano. If she bites the bullet and comes in one Saturday to learn it, Sylvia will be exhibiting self-control.
2. Self-reinforcers must be available to the learner. **Self-reinforcers** are any consequences or rewards that individuals give to themselves. Potential self-reinforcers include buying oneself a present, eating a favorite food, going out to a movie, getting some extra sleep, and going out with friends. Sometimes self-reinforcement comes simply from a feeling of accomplishment or achievement. In the past, when Sylvia Crano has accomplished a particularly difficult task, she has rewarded or reinforced herself by buying a new CD or having lunch with a friend.
3. The learner must set goals that determine when self-reinforcement takes place. When self-control takes place, people do not indiscriminately reward themselves but set goals that determine when they will self-reinforce. How do people determine these goals or standards? Essentially, they rely on their own past performance, the performance of others on similar kinds of tasks, or some socially acquired performance standard. Crano's goal was to complete the new software's tutorial program and to use the new software to reproduce some graphs she had done previously.
4. The learner must administer the reinforcer when the goal is achieved. Crano allowed herself to have lunch out with her friend only when she was able to use the new software to reproduce her existing graphs.

All people engage in self-control and self-reinforcement to learn behaviors on and off the job. These activities can range from the relatively mundane (such as cutting short a lunch hour to learn how to send and receive E-mail) to the more involved (learning how to appropriately give subordinates negative feedback). Man-

Self-reinforcers

Consequences or rewards that individuals can give to themselves.

agers need to be aware that self-control takes place at work, especially when individuals are interested in and care about their work. When opportunities for self-control are present and workers engage in it, managers do not need to take as active a role in controlling behavior and consequences because workers are taking responsibility for learning and performing desired behaviors themselves. In such cases, the managers' efforts at control may be not only redundant but counterproductive because they may irritate and anger those who are self-controlled. Instead of trying to control those who do not need to be controlled, managers would be wise to focus their efforts on those who do.

Workers who manage their own behavior through self-control are often said to be self-managing. Sometimes, however, workers may need a bit of coaching and guidance to become truly self-managing. Managers can provide the training and support workers need to develop self-management skills and put them to use. Some organizations explicitly recognize this need and have formal programs in place to teach self-management. (See Insight 5.6.)

INSIGHT 5.6: **COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**

Facilitating Self-Management at National Semiconductor

Like most large organizations, National Semiconductor has always spent a considerable amount of time and money trying to select and hire only the most capable of new college graduates. The organization was successful at attracting highly qualified young people, but it seemed to take these new hires too long to make substantial contributions to the company without extensive guidance, coaching, and supervision by their managers. To remedy this problem, National Semiconductor created an innovative College Hire Assimilation Program (CHAP) to help new hires to become productive on their own more quickly.

One aspect of CHAP focuses on new hires' self-management of their own careers. National Semiconductor believes that responsibility for career planning and management should rest primarily with the worker, but the company recognized that newcomers often lack the knowledge and skills they need to manage their own careers effectively. To help new college hires acquire the knowledge and develop the skills to manage their own careers, National Semiconductor developed the CHAP adviser program.

Each new hire is assigned to an experienced manager to be his or her group who is not the new hire's supervisor. The adviser and the new hire meet periodically to formulate specific objectives that will help the new hire meet his or her career goals. These specific goals might entail specific types of assignments or tasks that new hires should seek out to help them reach their career aspirations. Throughout this process, the new hire is in control, and the experienced manager is an adviser who helps the new hire to begin to manage his or her career.

The objectives that the new hires set for themselves must be realistic and obtainable and must enable them to contribute as much as they can to the organization. For example, a process engineer who wants to learn more about product engineering might set a goal of selecting a product engineering project to work on and then becoming responsible for and completing the project.²⁵

Beliefs About One's Ability to Learn: The Role of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy

A person's belief about his or her ability to perform a particular behavior successfully.

Social learning theory also emphasizes the importance of **self-efficacy**—a person's belief about his or her ability to perform a particular behavior successfully—in the learning process. One secretary may believe that she can learn how to use a new

software package on her own, and another may have strong doubts about his ability to learn new software without taking a formal training course. Self-efficacy has powerful effects on learning because people try to learn only those behaviors that they think they will be able to perform successfully.²⁶ Self-efficacy affects learning in three ways:²⁷

1. *Self-efficacy influences the activities and goals that individuals choose for themselves:* Workers with a low level of self-efficacy may never try to learn how to perform challenging tasks because they think they will fail at them. Such workers tend to set relatively low goals for themselves. Conversely, an individual with high self-efficacy is likely to try to learn how to perform demanding tasks and set high personal goals. Consistent with this reasoning, research has found that individuals not only learn but also perform at levels consistent with their self-efficacy beliefs. You learn what you think you are capable of learning.
2. *Self-efficacy affects learning by influencing the effort that individuals exert on the job:* Workers with high self-efficacy generally work hard to learn how to perform new behaviors because they are confident that their efforts will be successful. Workers with low self-efficacy may exert less effort when learning how to perform complicated or difficult behaviors, not because they are lazy but because they don't think the effort will pay off. Their lack of confidence in their ability to succeed causes them to think that exerting a lot of effort is futile because they are likely to fail anyway.
3. *Self-efficacy affects the persistence with which a person tries to master new and sometimes difficult tasks:* Because workers with high self-efficacy are confident that they can learn how to perform a given task, they are likely to persist in their efforts even in the face of temporary setbacks or problems. Conversely, workers with low self-efficacy who think they are unlikely to be able to learn a difficult task are likely to give up as soon as an obstacle appears or the going gets a little tough.

Because self-efficacy can have such powerful effects on learning in organizations, it is important to identify the sources of self-efficacy. Bandura has identified four principal sources.²⁸

Past performance is one of the most powerful sources of self-efficacy. Workers who have succeeded on job-related activities in the past are likely to have higher self-efficacy for such activities than workers who have failed. Managers can boost low levels of self-efficacy by ensuring that workers can and do succeed on certain tasks. "Small successes" boost self-efficacy and enable more substantial accomplishments in the future.

Vicarious experience or observation of others is another source of self-efficacy. Seeing coworkers succeed at a particular task may heighten the observer's self-efficacy. Conversely, seeing coworkers fail is likely to discourage the observer.

Verbal persuasion—that is, trying to convince people that they have the ability to learn and succeed at a particular task—can give rise to self-efficacy. Research has shown that the greater managers' confidence is that their subordinates can succeed at a particular task, the higher is the level at which subordinates actually perform.²⁹

Individuals' readings of their internal physiological states is the fourth source of self-efficacy that Bandura identified.³⁰ A person who expects to fail at some task or to find something too demanding is likely to experience certain physiological symptoms: pounding or racing heart, feeling flushed, sweaty hands, headaches, and so on. The particular symptoms vary from individual to individual but over time become associated with doing poorly. If the symptoms start to occur in any given situation, self-efficacy for dealing with that situation may plummet.

Consider the case of Michael Pulinski, who was facing an important job interview. Pulinski really wanted to get this job and had spent a considerable amount of time preparing for the interview. He was familiar with the company and had pre-

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