

Third Edition

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# Behavior in Organizations

An Experiential Approach

James B. Lau  
Mariann Jelinek

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An Experiential Approach

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**James B. Lau**  
**Mariann Jelinek**



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## Introduction

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Like the two preceding editions, this third edition of *Behavior in Organizations* is designed first and foremost to meet needs we have not found satisfied in other texts. There are many continuities with the prior editions, but with some important changes to freshen and update the book. Major continuities include our basic approach, aims, and emphasis. As before, the book is intended for use in an experiential learning course for undergraduate or graduate students of business administration in a required organization behavior core course. Thus we provide basic coverage of essential OB topics. These topics are often taught solely by lectures and readings, a *cognitive* approach primarily emphasizing *content*. Content-based approaches do not deal adequately with the need for student involvement, nor do they assist students to acquire behavioral skills. In contrast, *Behavior in Organizations* emphasizes involvement exercises to help students quickly and effectively enter the *process* of thinking about behavior, applying concepts, and developing their own expertise. Lectures and readings are intended to bolster this process orientation.

Experiential methods provide a powerful stimulus for learning, growth, and change by helping participants focus on their own behaviors and reactions as data. For this very reason, some students may at first be uncomfortable about encountering experiential methods in a required course. (In contrast, students who have elected such courses are often eager and excited by experiential learning, or if they find it threatening, they can quickly drop the course.) To help students deal with this problem, we begin with more structured, less personal exercises that are readily recognized as relevant to human effectiveness in organizational settings. Personal growth and self-understanding exercises are introduced later in the text, after students have had enough experience to become more comfortable with and ready for them.

This edition also retains its emphasis on bringing to the university classroom the type of training that supervisors, managers, and executives experience in management development programs. It includes methods of adult education such as team activities, role playing, case studies, in-baskets, and other simulation exercises. Managers generally will not sit through many lectures, nor do they find time for long reading assignments. But action-oriented exercises which provide a new conceptual input and permit them to apply their experience and share it with others are undertaken with great energy and involvement. The exercises in this text, or others similar to them, have all been used successfully with supervisors, managers, and executives in federal agencies (such as the Federal Executive Institute, IRS, National Park Service, Forest Service, CIA, and U.S. Office of Personnel Management), in other state and local government settings, and in numerous private companies.

Since one of our objectives is to bring what is being done in management training into the university classroom in a basic course, there has been no attempt to be highly original in content or exercises. Many exercises have been written by the authors, but are similar to others already in use. The theoretical and conceptual writings which integrate the exercises are basic organizational behavior theory. Both theory and exercises are intended to present an eclectic approach, and no attempt is made to take a position of advocacy, except for the experiential approach.

## ALTERNATE PLANS FOR USING THE BOOK

The design of the book meets the needs of instructors to adapt the course to the conditions under which they are teaching and the type of students with whom they work. It can be used in classes with time blocks of one, one and a half, two, three, or four hours by planning the exercises and readings accordingly. The workload can also be adjusted for desired depth of coverage by following one of the three plans suggested in Figure 1.

Plan A can be used when no homework is required other than the chapters, articles, and case studies of the textbook. A basic supervisory or management course is frequently conducted in this manner. Plan B can provide the richest and most challenging approach: the teams complete an outside-class task project lasting throughout the course, which allows for skills development and the application of course concepts to team members' own behavior. Plan C has the same objectives, but no task project; team activities are limited to classroom exercises and several outside preparatory meetings. The time requirements of Plan B make it more appropriate for a semester-length course, while Plan C can be readily completed in a quarter course.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Alternate Course Designs for Using This Book**

<b>PLAN A</b> Complete the exercises and readings with classroom discussion	<b>PLAN B</b> Complete Plan A, and add the outside team task project described in Appendix A
	<b>PLAN C</b> Complete Plan A, and add the in-classroom team study described in Appendix B

## THE COURSE TOPICS

The sequence of the topics in this text is depicted in Figure 2. The chapters have been arranged to utilize the appropriate learning methods and to provide a generally logical development of the theory and concepts. Several considerations were important in the design:

1. Involvement learning proceeds best when it starts with the first class session and continues with growing intensity, particularly early in the course. Because students come with the expectation that the classroom is a lecture-listener, chairs-in-a-row environment, they will quickly lapse into that mode if the course structure does not avoid it. Thus there are class exercises in the introductory chapters: the students use their own experience to define organization behavior (Chapter 1), and the classroom climate is established through dialoguing (Chapter 2).

2. Reinforcement and opportunities to apply learning are provided for by introducing major concepts early and studying their various aspects throughout the course. Thus the small group, a primary focus of the book, is introduced in Chapter 5 and returned to at intervals



**FIGURE 2**  
**Sequence of Learning Areas in Course**

Text Chapter No	AREA OF FOCUS				CORE CONCEPTS			
	Individual or Interpersonal	Small Group	Intergroup or Interface	Organization	Communication	Motivation	Perception	
1	Defining Organizational Behavior				X	X	X	
2			Organizational Dialoguing	Organizational Climate	X		X	
3	Leadership Styles	Team Style		Organizational Style	X	X	X	
4	Professional Manager Style	Team Skills		Traditional versus Behavior Models		X		
5		Problem Solving-Team Skills			X			
6		Decision Making (Participation)			X	X	X	
7	Formal Organization versus the Human Organization							
8		Small Group Dynamics		Formal Organization Influence	X		X	
9 & 10	Motivation	Group Influence on Motivation				X	X	
11	Perception			Between Levels of Hierarchy	X	X	X	
12	Interpersonal Communications				X	X	X	
13		Small Group Communications			X	X	X	
14		In-Group Dynamics		Intergroup Conflict and Coordination	X	X	X	
15	Personal Growth				X	X	X	
16	Personal Growth—Managing Stress				X	X	X	
17	Manager Effectiveness	T Groups and Team Building		Management by Objectives	X	X	X	
18	Manager Effectiveness	Team Building		Organization Development	X	X	X	
19	Systems Approach at All Levels				X	X	X	
20	Systems Approach at All Levels				X	X	X	
					Legend			
					□ = Major Topic    ▨ = Secondary Topic			

Figure 2 illustrates how the major and secondary topics covered in the text chapters are integrated into the four levels of behavior studied in the course. The core concept columns on the right indicate where communication, motivation, and perception are applied to the topic analysis.

throughout the course. Group processes and group skills are integrated toward the end in team building (Chapter 18), and in organization development (Chapter 20). In Plan B and C courses, requiring group projects, student groups can apply new theory and concepts to their own project teams throughout the course. Three pervasive core concepts—communication, motivation, and perception (see the right-hand columns of Figure 2)—are discussed throughout the text in conjunction with other topics as the course progresses. This learning is integrated when the topics are addressed directly in later chapters (Chapters 9 and 10 for motivation, Chapter 11 for perception, and Chapters 12, 13, and 14 for communication).

3. The general logical sequence of material after the introduction proceeds through increasingly inclusive organizational levels, from individual behavior (leadership style, Chapter 3), to small group and intergroup behavior in the middle of the course (for example, small group dynamics, Chapter 8, and intergroup conflict and coordination, Chapter 14) to effectiveness of the organization as a whole in Chapters 19 and 20. However, materials on interpersonal relations, personal growth, T groups, and team building are placed mainly in the later chapters of the text, where students will reach them after having become more comfortable with experiential learning and personal topics.

The book has been divided into four parts. Statements at the beginning of each part provide previews of the coming chapters and, in Parts Two through Four, a review of material already covered. A more complete understanding of the subject areas and the learning method of the entire book can be achieved by reading through these statements at the beginning of Parts One, Two, Three, and Four.

Human behavior in organizations is both fascinating and important to understand. It surrounds and concerns us all, and affects every aspect of our lives. Moreover, it is the heart of effective management. Students respond with great eagerness to organization behavior concepts in a properly designed course. Their enthusiasm offers the quickest route to the working skills they will find essential in the organizational world. This book's main aim is helping them succeed.

**NOTE TO PARTICIPANTS**

*Please do not read ahead in this book unless the assignment at the end of the chapter specifically instructs you to do so. The format of this book is to start many chapters with an exercise, then to develop the concepts and theories using your experience as data. If you look at the exercise ahead of time, some of the spontaneity of participation will be lost. You will miss out on the enjoyment, and on an important part of the learning as well.*



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## Part One

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# DEVELOPING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

This course is concerned with *how* you learn as well as *what* you learn about human behavior in organizations. The *how* and the *what* are closely connected in this course, because so much of what you will learn is a process: a different way of looking at your own experience, a deeper way of understanding the power of attitudes or expectations, or a new awareness of how people experience work organizations, for instance. The American Indians said, "If you wish to understand a person, walk in their moccasins for a day." Management education has adopted that motto, and many workshops for managers use experiential methods to help participants "walk through" new learning. We will use experience in just that way. Your own experiences in this course, just as in the rest of your life, will be basic data to build your understanding. The experiences of this course are structured to help you understand the behavior of people in organizations.

Management workshops often spend the first hours or days in developing a sense of community and agreed-upon expectations for how to use experiences and interactions of participants for maximum learning. (After all, managers are investing their scarcest resource—time—and companies often spend many thousands of dollars for each manager's training.) Participants find out about one another and about the faculty, they become part of a team, and they learn more effective ways of interacting. The climate that best promotes learning is one in which participants support one another in their learning, are open with one another about their responses, and are willing to confront or compare different responses, insights, and experiences. Learning to learn is important enough (and difficult enough) for managers to spend time building such a climate systematically. So, too, in this course. We, too, will spend time learning to learn and creating an appropriate climate. A key aspect of this sort of learning environment involves learning how to effectively utilize our own experiences and those of others. Part One of this book is designed to accomplish these ends.

### PREVIEW OF PART ONE

The learning climate of the classroom is developed in the first two chapters. In Chapter 1 and Exercise 1, class members participate in a triad exercise in which each tells of an experience from his work. A number of participants then relate their experiences to the entire class. From these experiences, the topic areas of organization behavior are constructed for the class by the professor to demonstrate that the behavioral study of the course has immediate relevance to everyone.

In Chapter 2 and Exercise 2, an open communication dialogue is practiced to examine

the assumptions of the students and the professor relevant to the course and its learning goals. Content and process learning are discussed, and the first two exercises are used as illustrations to enhance understanding of process (experiential) learning. The values of the learning community model are also discussed.

Once the classroom learning climate has been established, participants are assigned to working teams. The first substantive area, that of contrasting leadership styles, is introduced in Chapter 3. Exercise 3 provides a questionnaire through which participants can examine their own and fellow team members' assumptions about leadership. The five leadership styles examined in the book are then explored, and the professional manager style is highlighted as the one that systematically incorporates behavioral science findings and methods into management practices.

The professional manager style is the vehicle for leading participants into other topic areas of behavioral science. In Chapter 4 the behavioral science approach to effectiveness in organizations is discussed, along with the reasons it has become of great interest to business and government. The traditional and behavioral models of organizational effectiveness are illustrated in Figure 4-1 to emphasize the need for integration of both in professional management.

The establishment of the learning method and climate through interaction exercises and the introduction of the framework of the content areas to be studied should satisfactorily prepare course participants for Part Two, which deals with various aspects of small group dynamics.



# Chapter One

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## A Working Definition of Organization Behavior

What is a course in human behavior in organizations all about? The best way to answer that is to examine some of your own experiences and then relate them to what you will study. We will refer to “human behavior in organizations,” but the topic has had many names in the past. Other names include “human relations,” “organization behavior,” “administrative behavior,” “managerial behavior,” and “organization development.” Each name carries its own special connotations, but for our purposes we need not be quite so specific. What we are interested in is what happens to people in organizations—how they behave, react, and respond, how their supervisors try to get them to perform, how they (and their supervisors) react to one another and to their organizational world. However, we want to begin by drawing on *your* experience as an organization member.

Before we discuss the definition of human behavior in organizations any further, Exercise 1 below should be completed.

### EXERCISE 1. DEFINING ORGANIZATION BEHAVIOR

#### *Objectives:*

- a. To identify course topic areas from your own work experiences.
- b. To introduce involvement learning, and begin building the learning environment.
- c. To introduce the communication skills of sharing, listening, and paraphrasing.

#### *Task 1:*

Working alone, use the worksheet that follows to answer the following:

- (1) Describe an experience in a past work situation that you think illustrates something about human relations in organizations.
- (2) What does it illustrate?

(Time: Five minutes for individuals to think about their experiences and jot down notes.)

#### *Task 2:*

- a. Participants form triads.
- b. Member A tells his or her experience and what it illustrates to Member B. Member B listens carefully and paraphrases back to A the story and what it illustrates about human relations in organizations. Member B must do this to Member A's satisfaction that B has understood fully what A was trying to communicate. Member C is the observer, and remains silent during the process (a role many find difficult). Member C should note how

well A and B were able to communicate, and what seemed to help or hinder the process.

- c. Member B tells an experience to Member C, while A observes.
- d. Member C tells an experience to Member A, while B observes.

(Time: Each member will have five minutes to relate an experience and have it paraphrased back by the listener. The instructor will call out the time at the end of each five-minute interval, to allow for equal "air time" among participants. Total time: 15 minutes.)

#### Task 3:

Each group selects one of its members to relate his or her experience to the class. The instructor briefly analyzes for the class how the incident fits in with some topic to be studied in the course, such as motivation or leadership style. Topic areas are listed on the blackboard.

#### Task 4:

Any exercise of this sort generates far more material for discussion than can usually be covered, even in an extensive workshop. Thus the following discussion topics are only suggestive, not exhaustive. Your instructor will indicate which questions you should focus on for your class.

#### Questions for discussion

What is the general character and tone of the experiences you have heard? What are the implications of these findings for managers who have responsibility for supervising people like you and the other participants in the class? What difficulties did you experience in communicating what happened to you and what it meant? What helped or hindered you or others in your group in communicating? What implications do your experiences and reactions have for you as a manager?

## THE SYSTEMS APPROACH TO ORGANIZATION BEHAVIOR STUDY

Your experiences in organizations are the sorts of behavior that concern us in this course. Some experiences were good, others less good or downright awful. Organizational behavior is the study of such experiences and concerns improving the effectiveness of people in industrial, governmental, or other human organizations. Clearly, from your experiences and those of other participants, both *what people do* and *how they (and others) feel about it* are important aspects of human behavior in organizations. This is particularly so since much human experience in organizations involves long-term, ongoing relationships among people in an organization that is expected to continue. What happens today between two members has later implications both for the relationship between the two of them, and for the relationship between their work group and others, or even the organization as a whole. Thus we will take a *systems approach* to understanding, managing, and directing people in organizations.

The study of an organization system and its subsystems in this text focuses on interactions at four levels of behavior:

1. Individual behavior (the employee, the supervisor, the manager, the executive).
2. The work group or team where individuals come together to do the job.
3. Relations between or among different teams.
4. The organization as a whole.

Our special interest is effectiveness at every level, covering both performance of needed tasks, and the maintenance of people's satisfaction with their lot as organization members.

Individuals make up organizations, and so individual effectiveness is necessarily important in organizations. But to be "in an organization" clearly implies association with others. Small work groups and teams are the basic interaction units of organization life. Most individuals spend most of their organizational time working in such groups. Thus they are an appropriate focus for our study, as they have been for organizational researchers. Considerable research on small groups underlines the influence of the group on the individual and the individual on the group. The relationships among groups are also important, since most organizations are made up of many such groups. Their conflict or cooperation will obviously affect whether the organization as a whole is successful or not.

**WORKSHEET FOR EXERCISE 1**

*Task 1 (1):* Describe an experience in a past work situation that you think illustrates something about human relations in organizations. (Time: Four minutes.)

*Task 1 (2):* What does your experience illustrate? (Time: One minute.)