

## **Suggested lecture/seminar plan for Chapter 4**

Introduce session by asking students to think about something that they are or have been very motivated to do. Then ask them to think of something that they lack the motivation to do. Ask them to briefly discuss in pairs why the two tasks/situations produce such different effects. Use answers to define and illustrate what psychologists mean by motivation, drawing particular attention to the difference between drives and motives (10 minutes).

Précis the differences between content and process theories. Ask students to consider

- a) What is or would be the most important motivator for them at work
  - b) How they would judge the fairness of their pay and conditions in any specific job
  - c) What factors would influence the amount of effort they would put into their work.
- Discuss answers with reference to relevant aspects of content theories (a): equity theory (b): and expectancy theory (c). (20 minutes).

Show Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics model and explain each component. Ask students to work in small groups and to use the model to examine the motivating potential of any one job that any one member of the group has performed in either a voluntary, part-time or full-time capacity. If there are no members of the group with work experience, ask them to examine their perceptions of the job of a teacher or lecturer (20 minutes).

Ask students to consider the problems they might have in designing a performance related pay scheme for a job that is difficult to deconstruct into tangible outcomes. Nursing might be one example. Use their answers to discuss the merits/drawbacks of using performance related pay as a motivational tool. (10 minutes)

## **Discussion question guidelines for Chapter 4**

### **1. On what grounds can theories of motivation be criticised?**

- (i) Students should consider the extent to which motivation theories account for the context of employment e.g. the shift from manufacturing to service industries, temporary short-term contracts, portfolio careers.
- (ii) The extent to which motivation theories help managers design jobs and fit people to them. Here, the student should draw attention to the vast individual differences in levels of motivation and in what individuals find motivating.

### **2. When attempting to increase productivity, what can organizations do about the fact that different people are motivated by different things?**

Students should draw attention to the fact that content theories neglect this issue because of their universalist assumptions and point out that process theories are explicit in recognising that motivation is highly idiosyncratic. However, they should also point out that content theories tend to be those that offer organizations solutions about how to motivate people on aggregate. Applying Vroom's theory, for example, would be incredibly impractical.

The most useful model in this respect is possibly Hackman and Oldham's model which explicitly recognises that employees have different needs for self-actualisation and this is built into their model. It is probably also worth drawing attention to the fact that despite the fact that research continues to suggest that money is not the greatest motivator, it is the preferred method of motivation and reward in the vast majority of organizations. Students might wish to think about this issue as an example of the difference between theoretical 'evidence' and practical 'evidence'.

### **3. Since there is little evidence to suggest that enriching jobs does more than increase job satisfaction, is this a viable way to spend money?**

The key issue to consider here is the tension between improving the quality of working life for employee's vs ensuring that organizations are profitable/efficient. Students need to consider the indirect benefits that organizations might accrue by attending to the needs and desires of employees. The student might also consider how the emphasis on either working conditions or productivity might be related to the relative health of the economy. When the economy is depressed for example, it is not unusual to find that employers are less concerned with employees' rights, needs and desires than when the economy is buoyant, providing greater opportunities for employees to sell their skills,

#### **4. How might organizations set about retaining staff who have expert skills and knowledge?**

The key issue here is that highly skilled staff are unlikely to have difficulties in obtaining employment and are likely to be highly attractive to competitors who want to save money on training. The student may draw attention to the fact that process theories, particularly Vroom's and Adam's theories are probably highly salient here.

The student should explain how either expectancy theory or equity theory might be applied to help organizations retain skilled staff. Organizations could, for example, establish the types of rewards such staff value and how to more closely link their performance and their retention, with the attainment of those rewards. Organizations might also want to keep abreast of how their competitors reward valued staff and ensuring that their own reward packages are comparable.