

From the Center for
Positive Organizational Scholarship

TEACHING NOTE

Job Crafting Exercise

By

Justin M. Berg

Ph.D. Student
The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania

Jane E. Dutton

Robert L. Kahn Distinguished University Professor
Ross School of Business, University of Michigan

Amy Wrzesniewski

Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior
Yale School of Management

Wayne E. Baker

Professor of Management and Organizations
Ross School of Business, University of Michigan

The *Job Crafting Exercise* is a tool that helps people identify opportunities to make their jobs more engaging and fulfilling. To do this, the exercise encourages people to view their jobs in a new way – as a flexible set of building blocks rather than a fixed list of duties. Using this perspective, participants put together a visual plan for redesigning their job to better fit their motives, strengths, and passions.

Acknowledgements: We thank Scott Sonenshein, Gretchen Spreitzer, and Adam Grant for their valuable contributions to this teaching note.

THIS PAGE LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- ***What purpose does the Job Crafting Exercise serve?:*** Individuals often have opportunities to redesign their own jobs in ways that better align their jobs with their motives (or the outcomes they want to get out of work), their strengths (or their strongest personal assets), and their passions (or the activities and topics that deeply interest them). The concept of “job crafting” captures this process of people making their jobs more engaging and fulfilling through self-initiated changes to their formal job designs. Research suggests that many individuals can and do engage in job crafting, but many people have unrealized opportunities to beneficially craft their jobs. The *Job Crafting Exercise* helps people uncover these opportunities. More specifically, the exercise is designed to help people assess how their motives, strengths, and passions align with what they actually do on a day-to-day basis at work, and in response to this assessment, diagnose ways to better achieve their motives, utilize and build on their strengths, and fulfill their passions. In addition, the exercise can be used with full-time students as a tool to help them analyze a past job, plan for a future job, or identify opportunities to craft their lives as students—and learn about job crafting in the process.
- ***How does the exercise work?:*** To formulate a job crafting plan, the *Job Crafting Exercise* challenges participants to take a step back and think about their jobs in a new, visual way. This visual perspective enables participants to seek answers to a number of questions at the same time, which helps them gauge how they allocate their time, energy, and attention between their day-to-day tasks and link these tasks with their motives, strengths, and passions in a fairly clear, concise, and simple manner. The visual nature of the exercise—combined with the creativity that is fostered through the experience of playing with the tasks that compose one’s job as a flexible set of building blocks—helps people generate positive attitudes with respect to their jobs, innovative insights and ideas on how to improve their lives at work, and resourceful solutions to problems that they did not see before doing the exercise. See the Appendix for quotes that describe the ways in which people have found the *Job Crafting Exercise* to be valuable.
- ***Where did the ideas behind the exercise come from?:*** Most of the theory and research that inspired the *Job Crafting Exercise* is summarized in the POS theory-to-practice briefing *What is Job Crafting and Why Does It Matter?*, which is available free of charge through our Web site: www.jobcrafting.org.
- ***Where can I send feedback related to the exercise and/or this teaching note?:*** We would greatly appreciate any feedback, suggestions, or insights that you generate through administering the *Job Crafting Exercise*. Please email anything you would like to share to Justin Berg at justberg@umich.edu and copy positiveorg@umich.edu.

IMPORTANT POINTS ON ADMINISTERING THE JOB CRAFTING EXERCISE

- ***How much class time does the exercise require?:*** The exercise consists of two main parts, the *Before Sketch* and the *After Diagram*. Completing the exercise takes participants a wide range of time—the fastest people finish in under 50 minutes, but some people may take up to two hours. However, we have found that after an hour, everyone is far enough along to have a productive discussion about their *After Diagram* arrangements and the exercise in general. To save class time, you can assign the *Before Sketch*, which typically takes 15-25 minutes, as homework to be completed before class. To save even more class time, you can have students

read through the instructions for Part 2 (the *After Diagram* part) and fill out their *Crafting Element* stickers before class. This should help speed up Part 2 in class.

- ***What should I tell students before they do the exercise?:*** Each instruction booklet contains all the necessary supplies to do the exercise (besides a writing instrument—we suggest using an ultra fine-point permanent marker, like a Sharpie, as these work best on the stickers). The instructions are written so that the exercise is self-explanatory, so you do not have to provide students with much background information (although we recommend having a class lecture and/or discussion on job crafting before doing the exercise—see the following section). However, it is helpful to give a summary of what the exercise entails so students can wrap their minds around the entire process before they begin. Also, we suggest providing students with the following clarifications before they start working on Part 2 (the *After Diagram* part):
 - Clarify that their *After Diagram* is supposed to serve as an image of possibilities for them to work toward in the future, so it should depict a job that is more ideal than the way they currently enact their job but still realistic in that it accounts for the responsibilities they are required to uphold.
 - Explain that they may have tasks in their *After Diagram* that they do not like or want in there, but the exercise might help them look at or approach these tasks in a new, more motivating way.
 - Explain that their *After Diagram* does not have to be a neat and tidy “Venn Diagram” like the examples in the booklet. If they wish, they can have some tasks not in any *Role Frame*. Also, on a related note, clarify that *Role Frames* are simply a tool within the tool to help them mentally re-group, re-label, or re-classify tasks in a meaningful or strategic way. In other words, *Role Frames* are a way to infuse a task or groups of tasks with a new meaning or purpose.
- ***How can I use the exercise with full-time students who do not currently have jobs to craft?:*** The instruction booklet is written to help people craft the full-time job in which they currently work, but we have found a few different ways in which the exercise can be used as a powerful and enjoyable way to teach full-time students about job crafting and job design more generally. We suggest giving students the three options outlined below and encouraging them to pursue whichever one excites them the most. (Note: Because these three approaches are different than what is described in the instruction booklet, it is important to give students a fairly detailed explanation of what they will be doing for each step of the exercise before they begin):
 - ***Analyzing a past job:*** Students who have had a job in the past that they are still interested in can use the exercise as a tool to help them evaluate how the tasks involved in the job fit with their motives, strengths, and passions, as well as diagnose how they could have crafted their job to make a better fit.
 - ***Planning for a future job:*** Students who have a fairly clear and defined vision of the kind of job that they would like to pursue in the future can approach the exercise as a tool to help them plan how they might craft this job to best suit their motives, strengths, and passions.
 - ***Crafting one’s life as a student:*** Students who have a significant portion of their time in school still ahead of them can use the exercise as a tool to help them

identify opportunities to craft their lives as students. To help students approach the exercise in this way, we have created a document—which includes examples of each step of the exercise using this “student crafting” approach—to supplement the instruction booklet. This document can be downloaded free of charge from our web site: www.jobcrafting.org. Note that students who are near the end of their time in school typically do not find this approach to be as valuable as students with relatively more time left in their degree; so if possible, we suggest that students in their final semester of school use one of the first two approaches.

- ***When should students talk to each other during the exercise?:*** We have found that it is important for students to be able to communicate with each other while doing and after they have finished the exercise. In particular, we suggest having students discuss, in groups of 2-4, the set of *Reflection Questions* that come after creating the *Before Sketch* (page 4 in the booklet), as well as their *After Diagrams* and *Action Plans* (page 12) after they are complete. In addition, students are usually eager to informally communicate with one another while arranging their *After Diagrams* and find these unstructured discussions to be valuable, as they often spark new creative ideas, help them sort out their thoughts, and make their plans feel more “real.” If possible, it works well to arrange the desks/tables in the room into groups of four, as it enables participants to easily discuss in pairs as well as with the other pair at their table.
- ***How can I help students who are having trouble getting started on their After Diagram?:*** If students have trouble getting started and/or feel overwhelmed, suggest that they lay their *Task Block* and *Crafting Element* (motive, strength, and passion) stickers out in columns next to each other and start assessing, one-by-one, which tasks enable them to achieve a motive, utilize a strength, or fulfill a passion and which do not. Once they have split their tasks into two groups—one group of tasks that do not fit with any *Crafting Element* and one group of tasks that do fit at least one—they can set the tasks that do fit next to their corresponding *Crafting Element(s)* and begin to figure out ways of making the other group of tasks fit. Once they find a place for all these tasks, they can revisit the tasks that initially fit in and try to figure out ways of creating an even better fit.

DESIGNING A CLASS PERIOD AROUND THE *JOB CRAFTING EXERCISE*

- We have found that the *Job Crafting Exercise* is not only valuable as a self-development tool, but also as a way to teach and foster discussions about job crafting and job design in organizations more generally.
- As mentioned above, we suggest providing students with some background information on job crafting before they do the exercise. To do this, you can use the other three teaching materials on job crafting offered by the Center for Positive Organizational Scholarship (CPOS): a theory-to-practice briefing that summarizes theory and research on job crafting in a manner useful for present or future managers (available free of charge), and three teaching cases that illustrate real life examples of job crafting. These materials are all available through: www.jobcrafting.org.
- When designing a class period on job crafting, we suggest that you follow the progression of using the briefing to build students’ understanding of job crafting as a theoretical concept, then using either one of the cases to illustrate real life examples of job crafting, and then using the

exercise to help students craft their own jobs. We have found that this “define ⇒ illustrate ⇒ do” approach is an effective way of having the suite of job crafting materials mutually reinforce one another. Below, we outline a class period that uses this approach. Feel free to pick and choose different elements of the outline to create a class period that best fits your needs.

- The CPOS also offers another teaching tool, called the *Reflected Best Self (RBS) Exercise*, which can be used as a complementary precursor to the *Job Crafting Exercise*. The *RBS Exercise* guides participants through steps to collect feedback from significant people in their lives, enabling them to identify their unique personal strengths. People can then use the *Job Crafting Exercise* to connect these strengths to their day-to-day work activities and see how they can utilize and build on their strengths to help achieve their motives and fulfill their passions.

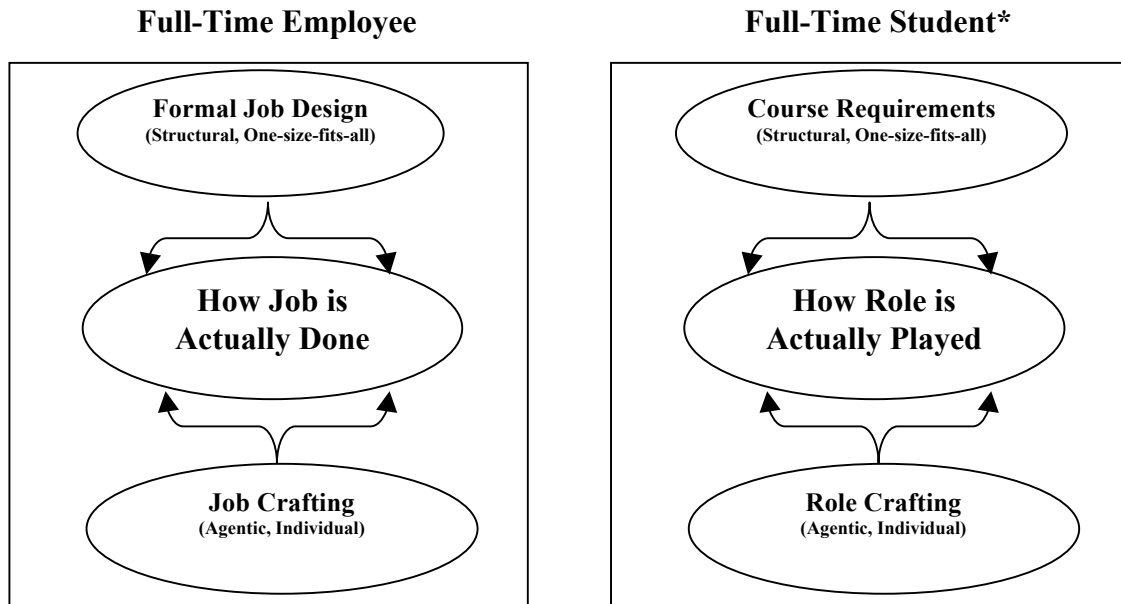
1) ***Define - What Is Job Crafting and Why Does It Matter? (POS theory-to-practice briefing)***

You can either assign students this briefing to read before class, summarize the main ideas in a quick lecture during class, or both. Below, we outline key points to cover in a class lecture/discussion about the briefing. The outline addresses three questions: 1.) What is job design?; 2.) What is job crafting?; and 3.) Why does job crafting matter?

- a) ***What is job design?*** To understand job crafting, students must first gain some basic knowledge about traditional views of job design. Here are some key points to make about job design:
 - i) Jobs are usually designed by managers for employees¹.
 - ii) *A job design*: a set of tasks and social relationships assigned to one employee in an organization (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1992).
 - iii) *The Job Characteristics Model* (Hackman & Oldham, 1976)
 - (1) Certain features of a job design can often play a significant role in determining job motivation, performance, and satisfaction, as well as absenteeism and turnover. The Job Characteristics Model points to five key job features:
 - (a) *Skill variety*: Degree to which job requires a variety of activities, skills, and talents.
 - (b) *Task identity*: Degree to which job requires completion of a “whole” and identifiable piece of work.
 - (c) *Task significance*: Degree to which job has an impact on other people.
 - (d) *Autonomy*: Degree to which job provides freedom in structuring and scheduling work.
 - (e) *Feedback*: Degree to which the job results in obtaining direct and clear information about job performance.

¹ For an example of an organization in which employees are able (and actually required) to create their own job designs, see W.L. Gore & Associate’s website:
www.gore.com/en_xx/aboutus/culture/index.html

- b) **What is job crafting?** Now that students understand that (1) formal job designs are usually created by managers for employees and (2) certain features of formal job designs can greatly influence employees' experiences at work, they are ready to start learning about how and why employees change their formal job designs through job crafting.
- i) Job crafting builds on traditional job design theory that focuses on managers designing jobs for employees.
 - (1) *Job crafting*: Employees actively changing their formal job designs to better fit their motives, strengths, and passions.
 - (2) *Job crafters*: People who engage in job crafting.
 - ii) Job crafters reshape the formal boundaries of their jobs in three main ways (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001):
 - (1) *Task crafting*: Taking on more or fewer tasks, expanding or diminishing the scope of tasks, or changing how one performs tasks (e.g., an accountant creating a new method of filing taxes to make her job less repetitive).
 - (2) *Relational crafting*: Changing the nature or extent of one's interactions with other people (e.g., a computer programmer offering help to co-workers as a way to have more social connection).
 - (3) *Cognitive crafting*: Altering how one perceives tasks (e.g., a hospital cleaner seeing his work as a means to help ill people rather than simply cleaning) or thinking about the tasks involved in one's job as a collective whole as opposed to a set of separate tasks (e.g., an insurance agent seeing her job as 'working to get people back on track after a car accident' rather than 'processing car insurance claims').
 - (4) Individuals can use any combination of the above job crafting techniques to informally alter their jobs
 - iii) In addition to some of the figures in the theory-to-practice briefing, you may want to include a diagram like the one below to depict how the actual way someone does a job is the result of an interaction between his or her formal job design and the way he or she crafts it. This diagram can also serve as a nice segue into the next topic: why does job crafting matter?



*If all your students are approaching the exercise as a means to craft their lives as students (see section on using the exercise with full-time students above), then you might want to also include the figure on the right to show the parallels between job crafting and “student role crafting.”

c) ***Why does job crafting matter?***

- i) Job crafting is likely to happen whether managers know about it or not.
- ii) Research suggests that job crafting can bring about positive outcomes for employees including:
 - (1) Enhanced view of the meaning of work and one’s identity at work
 - (2) Experiences of achievement and enjoyment
 - (3) Higher performance
 - (4) Increased ability to cope with adversity
- iii) But job crafting can also be harmful if it takes away from organizational goals, acts as a distraction, or produces unintended side effects like extra stress.
- iv) So managers are confronted with the challenge of fostering beneficial job crafting while discouraging costly job crafting.

2) ***Illustrate – “Job Crafting at Burt’s Bees” or “Crafting a Fulfilling Job: Bringing Passion Into Work” or “Having a Calling and Crafting a Job: The Case of Candice Billups” (POS teaching cases)***

After you use the theory-to-practice briefing to define job crafting and why it matters, we suggest using any one of these three cases to illustrate real life examples of job crafting. Below, we provide background information and outline a class discussion on each of the cases (note that the questions in the final section entitled “The Challenge of Managing Job Crafting” are relevant to a class discussion on any of the cases).

a) ***Outline of a class discussion on Job Crafting at Burt’s Bees***

- i) **Assignment questions:** Here are possible questions to assign students to guide their thinking while reading the case.
- (1) Part 1: Why do employees job craft?
 - (a) Which of the four employees' job designs aligns the least with his or her motives and strengths? Which employee's job design aligns the most with his or her motives and strengths?
 - (b) If these four employees had to enact their jobs exactly as they are formally designed, how do you think it would affect their engagement, satisfaction, and performance?
 - (2) Part 2: How do employees job craft?
 - (a) How would you summarize the way each person crafted his or her job? What does this tell you about the options that people have in crafting their jobs?
 - (3) Part 3: In their own words
 - (a) In what ways is job crafting beneficial for the four employees described in the case? What could make the four employees' job crafting costly to Burt's Bees? In general, what are the potential benefits and costs of job crafting?
 - (b) What factors or circumstances probably enabled these four employees to craft their jobs to better align with their motives and strengths (e.g., autonomy, extra time)? What factors or circumstances would limit the opportunity employees have to craft their jobs (e.g., being micromanaged, lack of free time)?
 - (c) In general, what can employees learn from these four stories of job crafting? What can managers learn from these stories?
- ii) **Class discussion questions:**
- (1) Before moving into specifics from the case, we suggest having a discussion about the features of an organization that may increase or decrease the opportunity employees have to craft their jobs. Here are a couple questions you could pose to the class: 1.) What features of an organization or its members would likely constrain or limit an employee's ability to job craft?; and 2.) Conversely, what features of an organization would likely create a context that fosters or encourages employees to job craft? Possible responses to the second question may include cultural values that make employee development and growth a priority, an organizational strategy that relies on employee engagement and ingenuity, or an organizational structure that empowers employees. The opposite of these responses could be possible responses to the first question.
 - (2) After the class discusses limiters and enablers of job crafting, you can segue into why Burt's Bees is an enabling environment for job crafting. It is important for students to know that although Burt's Bees does not take any measures specifically aimed at fostering job crafting, their espoused organizational values and culture create a work context conducive to job crafting, particularly their

focus on supporting and caring for employees and encouragement for the organization to embrace change.

- (3) To help students understand why job crafting is alive and well at Burt's Bees, we suggest giving some background information on Burt's Bees, especially because students are often quite interested in this unique and well-known company. Burt's Bees' website includes extensive information on their history, mission, values, and culture that you may find helpful to present to your class: www.burtsbees.com. For a concise visual summary of what makes Burt's Bees different from many other manufacturing companies, you may want to show your class the diagram of Burt's Bees' "Greater Good Business Model" found here on their website: www.burtsbees.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/ContentView?storeId=10001&catalogId=10051&langId=-1&contentPageId=49. You may also want to mention that Burt's Bees was purchased by Clorox at the end of 2007: www.burtsbees.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/UtilityView?contentPageId=590&storeId=10001&catalogId=10051&langId=-1. This move may have an impact on job crafting by influencing Burt's Bees' culture and practices.
- (4) To structure and facilitate a discussion of the examples of job crafting from the case, we suggest filling in a table like the one below as a class activity. The bold text in the table is the set-up, or what you should prepare before the discussion. The italicized text is some (not all) possible responses that may be included in the discussion. Students will likely come up with different or additional responses.

Person (Position)	Person-Job Design Fit	Job Characteristics Rating	Job Crafting Techniques (Type/Form)	Outcomes
Mindy (Customer Care Representative)	<i>Very Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes on small projects like updating info sheets or brushing up on training material (Task) • Volunteers to travel to trade shows (Task) • Forges relationships with clients (Relational) • Sees her job as more than a set of routine tasks (Cognitive) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less boredom • More engaging and satisfying experiences • Increased meaning • Possibly an increase in customer satisfaction
Andy (Maintenance Technician)	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ran an experiment to save energy (Task) • Sees improving procedures as a part of his job (Cognitive) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoyment • Feeling energized and empowered • Saved the organization energy
Jake (Compounder)	<i>Very Poor</i>	<i>Very Poor</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms and maintains relationships outside the boundaries of his job (Relational) • Serves on the Eco-Bees (Task) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoyment • Opportunities to learn • Enhanced social connection
Karen (Marketing Brand Manager)	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frames undesirable tasks as a means of creating a full story (Cognitive) • Restructured a pricing analysis by starting with creative thinking before getting into the data (Task) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling positively energized • Increased ability to cope with unpleasant tasks

- (a) Begin by filling in the “Person-Job Design Fit” box for each of the four people by asking the class whether the fit between the employee’s motives and strengths and his or her job design is: very good, good, medium, poor, or very poor (or whatever scale you would like to use). Then, have a discussion about which employee has the worst and best person-job design fit. It is possible that an argument will be made for each of the four people having the worst or best fit.
- (b) Next, using the same scale, fill in the four “Job Characteristics Rating” boxes by asking the students to give a general rating of how well each person’s job design scores on the five criteria included in the Job Characteristics Model. The class will likely not rate any of the four job designs better than medium.

Then, have a discussion about which person is worst and best off according to the Job Characteristics Model.

- (c) Finally, fill in each person's "Job Crafting Techniques" box directly followed by his or her "Outcomes" box, as opposed to doing these columns separately. Have the class think of as many examples (i.e., techniques) of each person crafting his or her job as possible, and after each technique, note in parentheses which of the three job crafting forms it illustrates (task, relational, cognitive, or a combination). Once you have an exhaustive list for a person, ask the class for the ways in which the person's crafting has affected his or her life at work and record them in the "Outcomes" box. Repeat this process until all the boxes are filled. Then, have a discussion about which person the class thinks crafted his or her job the most significantly and who benefited the most from crafting.

b) **Class discussion on *Crafting a Fulfilling Job: Bringing Passion Into Work***

Whereas the Burt's Bees case focuses on employees crafting their jobs to better align with their motives and strengths, this case focuses on the third "Crafting Element" included in the *Job Crafting Exercise*—passions. Pursuing passions, or the activities and topics that deeply interest us, can be a rich source of enjoyment, engagement, and meaning (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Vallerand et al., 2003; Wrzesniewski, Rozin, & Bennett, 2002). In this way, we consider passions to be a powerful motivator and guide for engaging in job crafting. *Crafting a Fulfilling Job* illustrates this by telling the stories of four educators who all have a passion for an occupation besides teaching and have crafted their jobs to incorporate or emphasize their passions.

- i) **Assignment questions:** Here are possible questions to assign students to guide their thinking while reading the case.

(1) Part 1:

- (a) In what ways did Bruce craft his job to incorporate or emphasize his passion at work? Are these changes mostly cognitive (i.e., occurring in his mind), behavioral (i.e., driven by his actions), or a mixture of both?
- (b) For Bruce and John, what are the outcomes of job crafting? How does job crafting affect them and their students?
- (c) *Self-Reflection:* How would you describe your passions or the activities and topics that deeply interest you? To what degree have you been able to change what you do at work or the way you think about yourself at work that allows for the expression of this passion? If you have not altered your job to accommodate your passion, why not? Have you noticed anyone you know incorporating or emphasizing his or her passions at work?

(2) Part 2:

- (a) What are some of the general ways in which these four educators crafted their jobs to incorporate or emphasize their passions? (e.g., adding tasks to their jobs or viewing the role they play at work in a different way)

- (b) What circumstances could make job crafting to incorporate or emphasize one's passions easier or more difficult to do? (e.g., how strict one's manager is)
 - (c) What are the potential positive benefits of incorporating or emphasizing one's passions through job crafting? What are the potential negative costs of incorporating or emphasizing one's passions through job crafting? (e.g., the rapping grocery store employee could be reprimanded by management)
 - (d) *Self-Reflection*: What are the features of your current job (or any of your previous jobs) that make it easier or more difficult to craft the job to incorporate or emphasize your passions?
- (3) Part 3:
- (a) What specific lessons about job crafting can be drawn from each of the teacher's quotes?
 - (b) What about these four individuals makes them masterful job crafters?
 - (c) *Self-Reflection*: What can you learn from these four examples of people crafting a fulfilling job for themselves that would help you craft your own job in a positive way?
- ii) ***Class discussion questions***: Here are possible questions to foster a class discussion about the case.
- (1) *Passion as a motivator of job crafting*: In what ways does the case illustrate the importance of passion as a motivator and guide for engaging in job crafting? Has passion driven you to craft your job? Why or why not?
 - (2) *Outcomes of crafting passion into work*: How did incorporating or emphasizing their passions through job crafting influence the four teachers in the case? In general, what can crafting passion into work do for someone and ultimately his or her organization? What has it done or could it do for you and your organization?
 - (3) *Enabling and limiting conditions of crafting passion into work*: What about the four teachers' work situations in the case enabled them to craft their passions into their jobs? In general, what conditions or circumstances would enable employees to craft their passions into their jobs? Conversely, what conditions or circumstances would limit this kind of job crafting?
- c) ***Class discussion on Having a Calling and Crafting a Job: The Case of Candice Billups (video case)***
- i) ***Introduction***: In addition to motives, strengths, and passions, the idea of viewing work as a calling can be a powerful driver and outcome of job crafting (Berg, Grant, & Johnson, 2010). You can use the video case on a hospital cleaner named Candice Billups to enrich understanding of the role of calling in job crafting, as well as several other organizational behavior concepts more generally:
 - An analysis of job design and its link to employee motivation

- An analysis of job crafting, focusing on how employees craft their work and what difference it makes for them and their organizations.
- An analysis and discussion of work orientation and what it means for employees to see their work as a calling
- A discussion and analysis of the meaning of work and why it matters
- An analysis of job attitudes and why they matter
- An analysis of emotions at work, focusing on employee emotions on the job and how employees can attempt to positively influence the emotions of others

In each case, it will be most helpful to invite students to imagine the job of a hospital custodian. Depending on the session focus, this small group or full-class discussion may detail the design of the job, the rigidity of the task and relational boundaries of the work, the kinds of meaning or emotion experienced on the job, or the attitudes one might have toward the work. Students are likely to detail the kinds of tasks, materials, interactions, and rewards of the job in this discussion, or can be prompted to if they do not. It is likely that the general view of the job will be slightly negative to strongly negative, with some students describing the positive elements of the job. After establishing where the group is with respect to their view of this work, introducing the case protagonist and allowing her to describe her work and its meaning to her, return to a discussion that considers the assumptions and predictions of the group regarding the work of a hospital custodian.

- ii) **Background:** Candice Billups has worked as a hospital custodian at the University of Michigan Hospitals for 30 years as of February 2009. The actual interview was conducted and taped in November 2007. Over the impressive span of her career, she has worked as a cleaner in several different areas of the hospital, coming to see herself as an ambassador of the organization who knows many of the doctors, nurses, and staff who work there. More importantly, Candice knows her patients, whether they are first-timers or veterans of the hospital system who have been coming for years. In her role as the Custodian of the Cancer Center, Candice primarily cleans areas used to administer chemotherapy and treatment for cancer patients. Many of the patients return regularly for follow-up treatments. Though it is not part of her official role, Candice defines her job in part by her responsibility to ease, enhance, and enliven the experience of the patients in “her” center. Thus, a typical day can find her going to get fresh scrubs for a patient to wear home after getting sick on their clothes, swooping in with tissues for a family member who is overcome by the emotion of caring for a relative fighting cancer, or anticipating the needs of the staff on her unit by stocking supplies well in advance of when they’ll be needed.

Candice did not start out working in the Cancer Center. Instead, she was hand-picked by the hospital administration to be the sole full-time custodian assigned to the unit when it opened because she is known to bring much-needed joy, humor, empathy, and competence wherever she works in the hospital. For example, see Appendix A

for additional excerpts from an interview with Candice that was conducted in the spring of 1995. As the Appendix shows, Candice's attitude toward her work, her way of engaging other people and her sense of her work as a calling has long been apparent in how she does her job. The remarkable way that Candice enacts her job at the Cancer Center is best captured in her own words. In the accompanying DVD, she describes her role, its meaning to her, and the practices she engages in that mark the way she crafts her job.

Rather than simply following the clear set of job responsibilities of a hospital custodian, Candice has actively altered the boundaries of her job to create a role that meets the needs of the hospital while transforming her contribution into one that is well-aligned with her strong sense of the worth of every human being and the value of what the hospital is doing to try to save the lives of its patients.

iii) ***Flow of topics in the DVD:*** The full DVD of Candice discussing her job is approximately 16 minutes in length. In it, she discusses topics ranging from the nature of her role at the University of Michigan Hospital, her duties there, the relationships she has with patients and their families, her favorite and least favorite aspects of the job, and her general work philosophy. Students can watch the entire DVD to launch a deeper discussion about the nature of her work, how she approaches it, and the difference it makes to her, the patients, her coworkers, and the organization. As well, shorter clips have been divided into chapters that cover specific aspects of Candice's approach to her job as described in the next section.

- Chapter 1: The Basics of the Job

Candice describes her history and positions at the University of Michigan. She provides details about her job, emphasizing that she is there for the patients, and the kinds of things she does to keep them healthy and laughing.

*What strikes you about how Candice talks about her work at the hospital?
What seems to matter most to her in her job?*

- Chapter 2: Humor and Empathy at Work

In this short clip, Candice describes her approach to the frequent problem of nausea in the chemo center. Due to the nausea caused by chemotherapy, patients often feel embarrassed about getting sick. Candice comforts patients by using humor about their helpful role in her job security.

How does Candice's use of humor strike you? What kinds of skills are evident in the way she describes helping patients? Are there situations faced by you or your employees that could be approached with the empathetic humor she uses here?

- Chapter 3: Ways of Caring

Candice describes her relationships with the families of the cancer patients and her desire to help when she can. She talks about being close to the families of her patients, trying to get them laughing, offering them refreshments while they're waiting, and making the place clean for them. She describes her enjoyment of what she does and her awareness of how

she can help. She tells a story about getting the necessary supplies when a patient went into cardiac arrest.

How might Candice's actions with the families and patients affect them? Why? What difference do you imagine her attitude and competence makes for the goals of the hospital?

- Chapter 4: Being Part of the Team

Candice describes the importance of being on good terms with the doctors, nurses, and staff at the hospital. She talks about the importance of being a family and part of a team at work, as opposed to being just an occupant of a role. Well, Candice describes her positive impact on others by trying to make them laugh, detailing her strategy of making the toughest person in the unit laugh as a way of getting everyone there in a good mood.

Candice clearly feels that she's part of the team. How does this contrast with other organizations you're aware of (or may manage), where role differences can lead to divisions among employees? Why is it important for Candice to feel she's part of the team? What difference might it make to her work and to the work of the hospital?

- Chapter 5: The House of Hope

Here, Candice summarizes her philosophy, describing her love of patients and her sense of all she has to offer them when they are sick. She describes the chemo center as being the “House of Hope” and all that means to her.

iv) ***Questions for general class discussion:***

- (1) How would you describe Candice's approach to her job? Is this work a calling for her? Is it more than just a job? What makes you think so?
- (2) What impact is Candice likely to have on the patients and families she sees in the chemo center?
- (3) What impact is Candice likely to have on the other staff in the chemo center?
- (4) What impact is Candice likely to have on the hospital as a whole?
- (5) What can managers learn from Candice and her approach to her work?
- (6) What can you learn from Candice about how you think about and approach the job you have, or, if you're a student, the job you hope to have some day?

d) **The challenge of managing job crafting (can be included in class discussion on any case)**

- i) Under what circumstances could job crafting be beneficial to an individual but detrimental to his or her organization? How about the reverse—under what circumstances could job crafting be beneficial to an organization but detrimental to the job crafter?
- ii) How might managers handle the challenge of fostering beneficial job crafting while discouraging detrimental job crafting?

3) ***Do – Job Crafting Exercise (POS teaching tool)***

The *Job Crafting Exercise* is the final part of the “define ⇒ illustrate ⇒ do” approach to teaching a class period on job crafting. Since students now understand job crafting as a

theoretical concept and have discussed real life illustrations of it, they are poised to create a plan for how they would like to craft their own jobs. For further information about administering the exercise, please consult the section above entitled “Important Points on Administering the *Job Crafting Exercise*.”

APPENDIX

Quotes from people who have completed the *Job Crafting Exercise*:

I really liked the exercise and took a lot of positive attitude and hope from it. It helped me be creative, find a sense of direction, and formulate a plan to improve my work life. It was rejuvenating.

- *Product Engineer*

A very short exercise that reveals a truckload of information and insight. It helped me believe that I'll be able to start liking and enjoying my job.

- *Project Manager*

It was great and enlightening—made me realize what I could do to make small improvements. In a way, made me realize what I liked about my job and what I didn't in a clearer way than I thought possible.

- *Benefits Analyst*

In a sense, the exercise was a logical process and involved somewhat common retrospective thinking. And yet, I have never reflected on my experiences in this way.

- *Financial Analyst*

Thought provoking. It gives a sense of comfort that if we look at this exercise in detail we can at least plan our actions to achieve our goals.

- *Industrial Engineer*

Forced me to look at my job in a different way—enabled me to see positive aspects I had not seen before. It's interesting to see what you come up with when you're asked questions you aren't usually asked.

- *Account Executive*

It asked very fundamental and obvious questions—yet I was surprised that I have not really asked all these questions at the same time. It helped me realize that I need to think harder about what I want and create a clearer end goal.

- *Lead Systems Engineer*

Enjoyable, informational, and inspiring. I enjoyed stepping back and looking at the relationship between what I do and what I want to do with my time, energy, and attention. I'm looking forward to putting ideas into action. Now I have concrete take-home materials to use for further reflection.

- *Retirement Consultant & Work Excellence Manager*

Matters to what I'll do tomorrow, not ten years and two jobs later.

- *Marketing Analyst*

The way it aligned my strengths, motives, and passions with my day-to-day tasks was a great learning exercise. It helped clarify some of these connections and how we can leverage our strengths to achieve our motives.

- *Senior Systems Development Engineer*

I must confess that I was a bit skeptical before starting the exercise. I felt that there wasn't much room in my job to re-craft it. However, I realized that I am already crafting my job and there is even more room to change.

- *Senior Accountant*

It definitely helps one to think deeper and see if there is anything a person can do to make things better for him and people around him.

- *IT Professional*

The exercise helped me realize what kind of job I want to get into after I get my MBA.

- *Radio Frequency Engineer*

REFERENCES

Berg, J. M., Grant, A. M., & Johnson, V. (2010). When callings are calling: Crafting work and leisure in pursuit of unanswered occupational callings. *Organization Science*, 21(5), 973-994.

Czikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: Harper & Row.

Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1976). Motivation through the design of work: Test of a theory. *Organizational Behavior & Human Performance*, 16(2), 250-279.

Ilggen, D. R., & Hollenbeck, J. R. (1992). The structure of work: Job design and roles. In M. D. Dunnette & L. Hough (Eds.), *Handbook of Industrial/Organizational Psychology*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Vallerand, R. J., Blanchard, C. I., Mageau, G. v. A., Koestner, R., Ratelle, C., Léonard, M., et al. (2003). Les passions de l'âme: On obsessive and harmonious passion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(4), 756-767.

Wrzesniewski, A., & Dutton, J. E. (2001). Crafting a job: Revisioning employees as active crafters of their work. *Academy of Management Review*, 26(2), 179-201.

Wrzesniewski, A., Rozin, P., & Bennett, G. (2002). Working, playing, and eating: Making the most of most moments. In C. L. M. Keyes & J. Haidt (Eds.), *Flourishing: The Positive Person and the Good Life*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

MORE REFERENCES ON JOB CRAFTING

Berg, J. M., Wrzesniewski, A., & Dutton, J. E. (2010). Perceiving and responding to challenges in job crafting at different ranks: When proactivity requires adaptivity. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31(2-3), 158-186.

Leana, C., Appelbaum, E., & Shevchuk, I. (2009). Work process and quality of care in early childhood education: The role of job crafting. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(6), 1169-1192.

Wellman, N., & Spreitzer, G. (2010). Crafting scholarly life: Strategies for creating meaning in academic careers. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*.

Wrzesniewski, A., Berg, J. M., & Dutton, J. E. (2010). Turn the job you have into the job you want. *Harvard Business Review*, June, 114-117.