DO IT MY WAY, IT WILL BE EASIER ON THE BOTH OF US:

"CHANGING THE LEARNING"

A Dissertation

Submitted to the

Faculty of Argosy University Schaumburg, IL Campus

Collage of Business

In Partial Fulfillment of

The Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

by

William J. Fanizzo

June, 2013

Stephanie Marberry, Ph.D. Chair

Herb Hupfer Ph.D. Committee Member

Department: College of Business

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this exploratory study was to attempt to discover the reasons people do not at first perform their task in the approved method while on the job. Hence, the research question was why do new employees initially find a different way or a better way for the task rather than using the method shown. The researcher created the term *Changing the learning* or (CL) for this study which describes this behavior.

The study looked at grounds maintenance operators from a golf course maintenance company. Self-administered surveys were sent to 31 locations in four regions of the United States and 205 operator surveys responses were tabulated to compute their CL tendency. The operators' answers were compared to the answers given by 55 Supervisors along with the Company's Human Resource Department.

This study found that 42.2% of the respondents did change the method of performing given work tasks. The results also demonstrated a lack of significant differences between different education levels (F= 1.588, $p > .05$), age (F= .136, $p > .05$), race (F = .1.823, $p > .06$) and experience (F= 1.156, $p > .05$). The operators endorsed five work place learning theories in explaining why they changed the learning: Proactive employees (f =88.9%), Prosocial non-compliant behavior (f =87.8%), Workarounds (f =86.7%), LMX model (f =77.8%) and Non-compliant behavior (f =68.9%). Based on the findings, future research should further examine the reasons and prevalence of CL across different industries and consider behavioral characteristics that might be common among learning changers.

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DEDICATION

To my wife whose love and support have helped turn this once lifelong dream into a shared reality.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

The research that follows seeks to find the most common reasons why some people would rather change the method of performing a task rather than using the method shown. This research does not attempt to explain why experienced employees might innovate but only why someone without a complete grasp (new to the task) of an entire process might change the process without fully understanding the outcome. The purpose of this study was to identify if this behavior exists. It also examines to what degree it exists and which current workplace learning theory or theories might explain this behavior.

Workers who take their own initiative to accomplish a task after being shown the prescribed method can cost companies money through injuries, equipment damage, reduced quality, retraining, and customer dissatisfaction if not detected in time. Corporate training costs are significant and retraining costs to the prescribed method only add to this figure. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) state that in 2010 the mean hourly wage for grounds maintenance workers was $11.41.

The BLS further states that most of the training for this type of work is the on the job method. The monetary cost of retraining is not only the direct cost but there are indirect costs as well. Companies that calculate training costs often compute the expense of the individual being trained, the expense of a substitute worker who covers for them while they are being trained and the cost of the trainer and a substitute for them as well. Research reports that to train 400 nurses with 400 other employees replacing them in training can cost 6.4 times their hourly rate (Hlusko & Pahoulis, 1998). Industries that have high turnover, large equipment investment or significant inherent danger to the

worker are very sensitive to established procedural methods of task performance. Most companies cannot afford to retrain employees or suffer the expense of mistakes (Kivimäki, Vanhala, Pentti, Länsisalmi, Virtanen, Elovainio, & Vahtera, 2007).

Dolfin (2006) looked at quasi-fixed employment costs that include recruiting, hiring training, benefits and firing. Dolfin (2006) suggests that these costs are often overlooked by researchers who usually focus on the employees but those costs are taken into consideration by the employers when making hiring decisions. Dolfin (2006) found that companies might reduce benefits as wells as hiring numbers to compensate for these quasi-costs. All training costs either direct or indirect can be significantly affected by the knowledge that an employee once shown may not perform as instructed. The opportunity to minimize these training costs by understanding that CL exists and taking preventive measures to minimize or reduce the occurrence of CL that can affect a company's bottom line.

Deviation from established procedures by employees that do not fully understand the outcome of their actions put the company at risk financially and the employee at risk in terms of their own safety or job security. Further, the new employee that changes a procedure and that is corrected may be embarrassed because what they had perceived as a better method was rejected. This embarrassment not only affects the employee's performance immediately but also influences future learning (Murry, 1998).

The topic of why employees change the method just shown addresses an element in the research that is missing. This research attempts to fill this gap by examining worker behavior. The literature that follows reflects the thinking in the fields of workplace learning, proactive employees, workarounds, workplace dissent, non-

compliant work behavior, and worker deviant behavior. From within these fields the researcher plans to identify which if any of these theories apply to or explain CL behavior.

Research Questions

This exploratory study sought to discover the reasons people do not at first perform a task in the approved method. The researcher seeks to address the following research questions:

1. Why do new employees initially find a different way or a better way to perform a task rather than the method shown, also known as *changing the learning*, or CL?
2. Does CL behavior exist and if it does to what extent?
3. Is there a difference in the incidence of CL behavior based on worker location (i.e., regions of the country), race, age or education level?

These research questions were explored through survey responses of workers, supervisors and the Human Resource Department. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be analyzed using t-tests, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Chi-squared.

Definitions of terms

For the purposes of this research, the following terms are used to identify important constructs within the study, instruments used, or within the review of literature.

Changing the learning (CL). Is the behavior of a employee when they perform a task in a different manner than initially shown.

Deviant behavior. Is when the employee goes against the policy of the company and exhibit dissent behavior **(**Robinson & Bennett, 1995).

Dissent behavior. Employees that are unhappy (Kassing, 2006).

Epistemic action. Worker that does the task their own way or any method the choose (Smith, 2006).

Leader Member Exchange Model (LMX). Employee seeks to get an advantage with supervisor (Campbell, 2000).

Non-compliant (maverick) behavior. Includes employees who do not like to be told what to do (Williams, Podsakoff, & Huber, 1996).

Proactive employees. Strive to outperform and impress (Ohly & Fritz, 2007).

Prosocial non-compliant behavior. The employee does something different for the benefit of an individual or the company (Puffer, 1986).

Workers own experience. Where the workers own experience contributes to the learning (Beckett, 2000).

Workarounds. The study of people who like to do things differently (Halbesleben, 2010).

Workplace learning. Is the Study of the methods in which people learn (Fenwick, 2008).

The studies covered in this paper all could have potential implications to CL some more directly than others could. For this reason each is looked at and those that apply the most are investigated in the research instrument.

Limitations/Delimitations

The limitations of this study include the use of a single Company and occupation which may not generalize to another workforce. The study faces additional limitations because the subject matter has not been previously researched. Another limitation is that the answers of the respondents were dependent on their perception of the questions asked, their degree of willingness to participate and what context the survey was introduced.

Importance of the Study

The importance of this study is in the direct and indirect costs of retraining, loss of product due to employee error, time lost in re-working mistakes and injuries to workers due to improper procedures. Companies that employ and train workers may benefit from a greater understanding as to why employees change the learning. By understanding the underlying reasons for CL and its prevalence, companies can build into their training methods to prevent or minimize this behavior and ultimately lower training or re-training costs. The current research study examines the occurrence of CL and some of the reasons as to why this phenomenon might occur to help mitigate its impact in the future.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

In the literature review that follows there is no mention of a concept or theory that resembles changing the learning, albeit directly in either those words or some other phrase that has the same meaning. Within this literature, the researcher indicates which theories might point to possible reasons for CL. This research attempts to isolate the most appropriate theories that might relate to CL.

The research began with a search of the term's workplace learning, worker behavior, resistance to learning, and resistance to change. Those articles talked about other topics such as proactive employees, workarounds, deviant behaviors, non-compliant workers and dissent behaviors that the researcher further investigated. The current literature describes reasons why people learn or do not learn and the surrounding conditions that promote or inhibit learning (Fenwick, 2008; Sostrin, 2009).

There is literature that suggests that workers resist learning because it requires a change on their part, learning takes effort or they want to demonstrate their expertise of the task (Kiselev, 2003). The studies on resistance to learning, change learning, effort or expertise theories only offer reasons why employees change a process with which they are currently involved. Changing the learning seeks to find out if any of these theories might also apply to a worker that initially changes what they have been shown.

The damage done by an employee performing the task incorrectly the first time, the costs incurred in re-training or the costs to both parties of replacing an employee who refuses to relearn are significant (Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Murphy, 1993). If CL can be identified as a viable problem then its early recognition and prevention can produce

considerable savings in both dollars and human capital. Turnover costs are estimated at 150% of annual wages for lower to mid-level workers and increases for the higher-level employee (Contino, 2002; Bliss, (nd)).

The literature that seems to relate the closest to CL behavior is workplace learning, proactive employees, workarounds, non-compliance/maverick behavior, worker deviant behavior, and worker dissent. The meaning of the terms listed and how they apply to CL will be discussed in the following section. The intent of this research was to isolate the most common reasons for changing the learning developed through the researchers' surveys and then to tie them to one of the more established theories on worker behavior. Once those reasons are identified, preventive measures or corrective actions can be determined based on the findings of previously published works.

Workplace Learning

Workplace learning takes place in two areas, individually and in groups (Fenwick, 2008). Changing the learning behavior would seem to be primarily an individual act but the literature also suggests that group learning might affect why a worker might change the learning. Many factors influence workplace learning both individually and because of being in a group. Among them are organizational characteristics (Sostrin, 2009), epistemic actions (Smith, 2006), the employee's own experience (Beckett, 2000), community (Gherardi & Nicolini, 2002), the social nature of the workplace (Blaka & Filstad, 2007), and power and politics (Goffman, 1959; Sebrant, 2008). Each of these characteristics can contribute positively or negatively to workplace learning.

Barriers to learning can also exist in the workplace at both the group and individual level. Specific barriers within the organization include identity, opinions,

complacency and different perspectives (Sostrin, 2009). Learning or implementing a new process, procedure or system can have negative impacts on the work that is completed. This can lead to subterfuge to meet standards that the employee deems too difficult to meet (Fenwick, 2008; Belfiore, Defoe, Folinsbee, Hunter, & Jackson, 2004). Epistemic actions can govern the manner in which the employee learns new information; "Epistemic actions are those actions that an individual manages themselves" (Smith, 2006, p. 302). What Smith means is that a worker has their own context in which they learn. Smith goes on to explain that each worker has his or her particular agenda when they learn based within one of the contexts. When the worker changes the agenda or perhaps even moves to another action then the resultant behavior of the worker is resistance to learning.

Smith, 2006 states:

> Her management (i.e. one of the subjects in his study) of this particular relationship revealed primarily through the organization action set supports an agenda that initially reflects resistance to expansion within this area of the set. In this way epistemological agency has learning directional qualities that may be interpreted as indicative of resistance to learning inappropriate learning or failure to learn (p. 302).

These action sets described by Smith relate to someone who simply does it their own way or any method they choose. Employees' experiences can contribute to the learning in the workplace (Beckett, 2000) but a problem can develop when an experienced worker is confronted with learning that his experience does not entail. What does the worker do in that instance, learn or change the learning to something with which they have experience?

The community or the work environment also influences learning through the employee's interactions with their co-workers. Employees can learn by social contact of their co-workers, the working environment and his/her participation in work-related

activities (Blaka & Filstad, 2007; Gherardi & Nicolini, 2002). The communications "expressions given and given off" (Goffman, 1959, p. 2), the micro political environment (Fenwick, 2008) and identity construction of the worker (Sebrant, 2008) contribute to workplace learning. The new employee may show other employees that they have been performing a task the hard way all along as a way to establish or socialize themselves within the group.

Each of the elements of workplace learning listed above could conceivably result in CL through social contact or trying to impress their co-workers and display their own credibility and value in the work environment. The message that a new employee presents to other workers through their actions (e.g., that they are clever) could easily be why they might change the learning. If the environment the individual works in is one where everyone does their job his or her own way then there is less pressure to change the learning versus an environment where the group pressures new employees to change the learning. The workers' individual experience in performing the task may cause them to revert to a method they are more comfortable with and the method that the employee uses to learn, if different, could cause him/her to change the learning.

Proactive employee

Proactive behavior is "taking initiative in improving current circumstances; it involves challenging the *status quo* rather than passively adapting to present conditions" (Ohly & Fritz, 2007, p. 623; Crant, 2000). The common view of a proactive employee is one that is of a committed, involved and independent individual. Ohly and Fritz (2007) suggest that self-efficacy play a role in proactive employee behavior specifically role breadth self-efficacy where the individual's self-efficacy goes beyond the job itself. In

their research they did not find a significant correlation between proactive behavior and job self-efficacy, but did find a significant correlation between proactive behavior and role breadth self-efficacy. Speier and Frese (1997) found a correlation for job self-efficacy but Ohly and Fritz point out that the controls they used were work, complexity of work, and personal initiative such as operationalization. This suggests that although the worker might have the initiative to improve the task they are also motivated by self-efficacy to change the learning initially in order to make an impact on their fellow workers or their supervisor.

There are high exchange and low exchange relationships between the supervisor and the employee. In the case of the high exchange employee the advantages to both parties are substantial, for the employee rewards might include more desirable tasks, greater responsibility, pay increases, better office, etc. (Yukl, 2010). In the case of Leader-Member Exchange theory (LMX) the new employee seeks to develop a high exchange relationship with the supervisor by again showing his or her value in the hopes of eventually receiving some future benefits.

A weakness of LMX is that it does not explain how differentiation in treatment can improve performance of the group especially if it is perceived as being fair and appropriate (Yukl, 2010; Linden & Erdogan, 2006). The Leader-Member Theory also does not explain how resentment from the lower exchange members can develop (Yukl, 2010; McClain, 1991; Yukl, 1989). This weakness may not be a concern of the proactive employee.

A proactive employee can also be an effective follower; ambition can motivate them to gain the confidence of their superiors by exercising independent and critical thinking.

They may not be a follower as such, but only exercising followership to advance their own ambitions (Kelly, 1998). In doing this it gives the follower the opportunity to do as they please eventually.

Supervisors with high proactive traits have subordinates with high proactive traits and that supervisors are perceived by the subordinates as having an elevated degree of LMX (Sears, 2009). Sears states that if both supervisor and subordinate possess a high degree of proactive personality the employee is more likely to express their proactive tendencies (e.g. take initiatives aim to improve the work process). A pattern of this behavior on either the current job or a new job can easily lead to CL behavior with not always successful outcomes.

The three elements of a proactive employee: effective follower, LMX, and self-efficacy discussed here seem closely interrelated with each other and CL. The following theories could help explain why CL exists in new workers. The relationship between these theories and CL behavior was investigated in the current research through specific questions covered in the survey.

Workarounds

Workarounds are deviant or non-compliant behavior where the employees resist doing the prescribed method as a product of an employee's opposition to domination or control (Ferneley & Sobreperez, 2006; Cook, 1999). Workarounds can benefit the company, such as in IT, when there are coding errors and the workarounds actually benefit the organization. When the employee does not inform anyone of the problem or continues to work with the flaw in the system then according to Ferneley and Sobreperez (2006) there can be resistance and the effects can be negative. Where an employee

comes from an environment where workarounds are commonplace the workaround would be viewed by the worker as a part of the job and not think of it as non-compliance.

> Workarounds can be detrimental to the organization by exposing the worker or others to injury. Safety workarounds represent a form of unsafe behavior whereby there is recognition of safety procedures by the employee: however he or she views these procedures as a hindrance to performance on the job. As such the employee puts himself or herself at risk of injury in order to complete other tasks. (Halbesleben, 2010, p. 2)

Research in the field of human factors, especially safety and medical, focuses on not just ergonomics in the workplace but also the factors of why people make errors. Human behavioral models tell us that if there are more ways than one of doing something then people will try every way.

> If it is possible to administer a drug via the wrong route then over time it is likely to happen unless there are adequate barriers and defenses. People's natural tendencies towards shortcuts, workarounds, or violations should always be considered if safety defenses rely on procedures and protocol alone. (Amalberti & Vincent, 2006; Norris, 2009, p. 207)

This literature suggests an employee that chooses to change the learning could be either doing something they have done before as part of their job (commonplace) or view finding shortcuts a challenge, this would be their opposition to control or a hindrance to their performance. In the survey two questions specifically point to workarounds. Spear and Schmidhofler (2005) suggest preventative measures for workaround behavior, acknowledging that this has been a problem identified in their research on job ambiguity and workarounds.

Deviant Behavior

Deviant workplace behavior as defined by Robinson and Bennett (1995, p. 556) is "voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of the organization, its members or both". Warren (2003, p. 622)

defines it as “behavior outside of the norm of a reference group” Warren found that deviant and non-compliant behavior is interrelated and can lead to positive results as well as negative results. Warren suggests that actions by whistle blowers voicing concerns over a practice of an individual or the organization can lead to the prevention of harm to the organization or a group outside of the organization (i.e. customers) in contrast to keeping silent.

Within the literature on deviant employee behavior there are two areas of thought, positive and negative forms (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). Spreitzer and Sonenshein focus on positive deviant behavior. They acknowledge the sociological literature offers four perspectives on deviant behavior, statistical behaviors (behaviors that differs from the average or normal), supraconformity (behaviors are excessively confirmative), reactive behaviors (if there is negative condemnation by others) and normative behaviors (departure from the norms). Spreitzer and Sonenshein, (2004, p. 829) define positive deviance as “intentional behaviors that depart from the norms of a referent group in honorable ways”. Robinson and Bennett (1995, p. 556) define deviance as “intentional behavior that significantly departs from norms." These two definitions would imply that there is some knowledge beforehand of what the norms are (voluntary).

The negative form of deviant behavior is well studied. In its’ broadest form business losses attributed to deviant behavior are between 6 to 200 million dollars in 1993 (Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Murphy, 1993). The negative type is also defined as voluntary but it threatens the well-being of the organization or its members (Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Vardi & Weitz, 2004). Robinson and Bennett (1995) put together an extensive list of (45) negative deviant behavior descriptions ranging from taking

excessive breaks to various kinds of abuse to other employees or simply going against their boss's decision. This type of negative deviant behavior may not always apply to a new employee if they have not had time to develop a negative attitude toward their employer. Therefore, the following forms of deviant behavior appear to be more relevant for the purpose of this research.

In their work, Diefendorff and Mehta (2007) cite the work of Cullen and Sackett (2003) who linked personality to deviant work behavior. Cullen and Sackett (2003) found that those workers that initiated deviance did this to satisfy a need (i.e. pleasure, greed, thrill seekers, risk takers, etc.). Diefendorff and Mehta (2007) found in their research a strong positive correlation between intrapersonal deviance and individuals "behavioral activation system" substantiating the findings of (Cullen & Sackett, 2003, p. 974). People who change the learning could be included in this group. This leads to an additional question of whether people that initiate deviance, change the learning for individual greed or the thrill of doing something different as Cullen and Sackett found. This is examined through specific questions in the current study.

Non-Compliant Worker Behavior

Non-compliant work behavior is a form of deviant behavior which can be destructive or constructive (Warren, 2003) or positive or negative (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). Puffer (1986) explains that there are two forms of non-compliant behavior within non-task behavior which is behavior not directly related to the task. Puffer's definition is limited to non-task behavior but the definition is very similar to the LMX and deviant behavior theories in that they are more than non-task.

Puffer (1986) divides this behavior (non-compliant) into two forms: prosocial,

where the individual does something extra for the benefit of an individual or the company. The other form that Puffer discusses is the more accepted version of non-compliant behavior, where the individual breaks the rules. Puffer notes that non-compliant work behavior can be more informative about the employee than is compliant behavior. "Non-compliant behavior can be construed as a separate category from compliant in that it is probably more active, deliberate and premeditated than simply obeying the rules (assuming the rules are known and understood)" (Puffer, 1986, p. 616; Williams, Podsakoff, & Huber, 1986). Non-compliant workers exhibit this behavior for several reasons. They can be dissatisfied, resistant, risk takers or just non-conformists. The non-compliance can also be intentional or unintentional as in ignorance of the rules or procedures (Karjalainen & Kemppainen, 2009; Warren, 2003; DeHart-Davis, 2007). Rule benders can also be included with this group. Rule benders can detest red tape or being controlled and therefore do not even take the time to learn the rules let alone adhere to them (DeHart-Davis, 2007; Thompson, 1977).

The authors above discuss behavior patterns that the researcher discussed earlier. Non-compliant behavior could be associated with CL behavior when the employee wants to do something for an individual or the company that sets them apart. They could be non-conformists or they just do not like being told how to do something or what to do so they change the learning. They seldom focus on intangibles such as the company's goodwill or reputation but on those outcomes that are tangible to them (Puffer, 1986).

Dissent Behavior

Some of the literature is about employees who are unhappy and the methods they use to express their dissent to their Supervisors (upward dissent) (Kassing, 2006).

Kassing has studied employee upward dissent (i.e. with superiors). He finds that dissent is more common with newer employees while older employees who have found their own way of voicing dissent through the existing political channels.

In one of his earlier articles Kassing, (2002) lists four methods that newer employees express dissent: repetition (repeated attempts at dissent), solution presentation, (solutions rather than open dissent), circumvention (dissent above an immediate supervisor's head) and threatening resignation (the threat as a form of advantage). Of the four forms of dissent behavior solution presentation is the most relevant to this research. Solution presentation happens when the employee suggests a solution to a perceived problem without actually dissenting. A new employee confronted with a task that he or she believes is too complicated, wasteful of their time, unnecessary or any other reason they might have for not performing the task in the directed manner; can change it thus demonstrating solution presentation dissent. In their way of thinking the supervisor will allow the change because they have offered an alternative to the prescribed method and the supervisor assumes that result will be the same.

Job satisfaction is another area of dissent and the employees' responses to dissatisfaction. Three common responses to job dissatisfaction according to, (Farrell, 1983; Hirshman, 1970) are exit (where the employee resigns or turns over the job), voice, (any attempt at all to change rather than escape from an objectionable state of affairs), loyalty (this is when an employee sticks it out rather than exiting).

In our application of worker dissent and CL behavior the theories presented by both (Kassing, 2002), solution presentation and (Farrell, 1983) voice seem to apply. The new worker, rather than perform the task in the prescribed method, either offers a

different method (solution) or voices their ideas for a different way (change). A reasonable next step would be to envision the employee changing what has just been shown without asking as a possible third step.

Summary Literature Review

From the literature on workplace learning, proactive employees, workarounds, noncompliance/ maverick behavior, worker deviant behavior and worker dissent the connection to CL may exist. While each of these topics is unique in their theories, the researcher feels that within them there is a connection to CL behavior. The experiences described by the authors inside this literature have similarities to CL. This study aims to identify the connection between CL and the topics identified in the review of the literature. Each of the six theories partially explains CL, but not completely.

Epistemic actions where the worker manages their own learning (Smith, 2006) as described in workplace learning could be interpreted as: I will manage my learning by changing it to something I am comfortable with and in this instance the worker will have changed what they have been taught. The survey questions that ask if the worker had a better way of doing the task or did they do this kind of work somewhere else, would point to this kind of behavior. The worker would rather revert to a method they know rather than learn something new.

A proactive employee could change the learning in order to build an exchange relationship with their superior by showing that they are trying to improve things for the company. In another instance, a new employee may view the prescribed method as a challenge and devise a workaround just to prove to himself, herself or to everyone that it can be done or that he/she is smarter than whoever developed the original method. The

researcher addresses this theory by asking the questions about whether they would change the method if they thought it would be a benefit to the company and would their supervisor appreciate it. They make assumptions about their method that may not result in benefits to the company but proceed anyway.

Those occasions where the worker does not want to be controlled, told what to do, does not want to bother with rules etc. or in other words exhibit non-compliant or maverick behavior closely relates to CL behavior. A new employee would not take chances by being non-compliant but if they have something to prove or are risk-takers by nature then CL would be one form of expressing it. The survey question that asks if they would rather not receive instructions would suggest this behavior.

Changing the Learning would probably not be included in negative deviant behavior although the results of CL might unintentionally threaten the well-being of the organization. Positive motivated deviant behavior is more likely where the results are in the best interest of the company (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004). The researcher addresses the survey question that asks if they thought the prescribed method was a better way of doing the task and they answered no, would point to this theory. Dissent behavior would be more likely with employees who have not been on the job awhile (Kassing, 2006). Solution presentation is similar to an exchange relationship where the worker performs a new solution to a method rather than open dissent (Kassing, 2002). The survey question that asks if they did not like the method of doing the task would they change it suggests this behavior.

The literature on the above subjects is extensive but none directly describes CL behavior. The intent of this study is to show where CL is based in the literature through

conducting this research. The research seeks to discover if the reasons for changing the learning can be associated with previous theories that have been investigated by administering a survey to several employees and their managers. The next chapter discusses the methods in which this research was carried out.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Participants

The study surveyed employees of a golf course maintenance company that has approximately 500 employees in 125 locations within 27 states in the United States. The company agreed to participate in the study and informed the managers of the selected locations of the company's willingness to participate in the study. This company gave the researcher a uniformity of job duties and work rules as well any other company policies that might affect operator behavior. The geographically diverse locations were determined by the Vice President of Operations depending on which locations were operating due to the seasonality of their business. The geographical diversity provided the study with a broader picture of changing the learning and the ability to compare results from one part of the United States to another.

The participants consisted of 205 operators and their 55 Supervisors who are responsible for grooming and maintaining the grounds at golf courses. The operator position was chosen because the equipment is complex and dangerous to operate, therefore following instructions is very important. The operator included those who use small equipment such as mowers, tractors, power hand tools and the repair technicians who maintain this type of equipment. The second set of participants consisted of 55 managers or line Supervisors who manage the operators. Some of the locations had more than one Supervisor.

The instrument was accurately reproduced and distributed in Spanish since this is the language spoken by approximately one third of the operators. An individual who speaks Spanish as their native language translated the survey to a common Spanish

dialect. The survey was translated back into English by a Spanish language interpreter licensed by the State of Texas for court reporting to verify the quality of the initial translation. Both versions English and Spanish were distributed to the locations operators and Supervisors (see Appendix A).

Measures

Due to the lack of research relating to this topic, two surveys were developed expressly for this study by the researcher. The questions in both surveys (i.e. operators and Supervisors) consisted of dichotomous answers and a few open-ended responses. There were a total of 29 questions for the operators and 17 for the Supervisors including questions relating to demographics. Considering the number of questions, it took participants 10-15 minutes to complete the instrument.

The instrument was accurately reproduced and distributed in Spanish since this is the language spoken by approximately one third of the operators. An individual who speaks Spanish as their native language translated the survey to a common Spanish dialect. The survey was translated back into English by a Spanish language interpreter licensed by the State of Texas for court reporting to verify the quality of the initial translation. Both versions English and Spanish were distributed to the locations operators and Supervisors (see Appendix A).

The questions asked in the survey were developed at a 5^{th} grade reading level because of the time constraints and the potential limited reading ability of some of the operators. Both the operator and Supervisor surveys sought to identify such demographics as work experience, education levels, age, gender, etc. of the employee and

Supervisors (anonymously). The age question for the operators (under 30, over 30) was asked in this manner because it was assumed the supervisor would not know the operator's exact age. The surveys asked questions to quantify the reasons for employee's behavior from both the employees and the Supervisors perspective.

Operators' survey. The operators' survey asked if there had been a task shown to them when they began working on this job that was inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary and if they felt they had a better way initially. The survey inquired which task if any they changed (e.g. setup, mowing, raking, etc.) and if they implemented their method without gaining approval from their supervisor, (e.g. Did they suggest their method to supervision first or say nothing). The operators' survey quantified the frequency that new employees changed the learning and determined possible reasons why the operator did the task differently (see Appendix A).

Supervisor survey. The second survey asked the managers if they experienced the new employee's CL behavior. The supervisor survey attempted to quantify the frequency that the manager has experienced new employee's CL behavior. The survey measured how the supervisor addressed the problem and what course of disciplinary action, if any, was taken (e.g. permitted to continue, retrain, and terminate the employee). This survey also tried to quantify the costs incurred from CL by asking questions on the amount of time lost, the turnover rate due to terminations, etc. (see Appendix B).

Procedure

The present study sought to find out if the employee behavior of changing the

method of doing a task just demonstrated to them is very prevalent within the golf course maintenance industry and if so, sought to explore the reasons, cost for this behavior and the possible correlation to past research findings. A survey was administered to 31 maintenance crews representing 5 to 10 people in each crew including the supervisor in various regions of the United States. The methodology for this exploratory research was twofold. One part (A) was to survey the employees who might have experienced CL behavior themselves and the Supervisors who might have observed it. Once the company identified the locations to be surveyed they contacted the location Superintendents (General Managers) and gained their commitment to participate in this research. The Superintendent of each golf course was contacted by phone by the researcher to discuss the purpose and administration of the survey.

The surveys were shipped to each location's Superintendent along with instructions on how to distribute the survey to their employees. The instructions asked the Superintendent to deliver the surveys to their direct reports at a time and location on the job that he/she deemed appropriate. Both English and Spanish versions were provided to participants in a paper and pencil format. The Spanish version of the survey was only administered to operators because Supervisors are required to read and speak English for their position. The instrument included instructions with examples and explanations to aid those individuals unfamiliar with self-administered surveys. The envelope contained the surveys for the Supervisors and a separate envelope for the operators. The Supervisors completed their own survey at the same time as their direct reports.

The Superintendent explained the survey and read the instructions and the

statement of consent. The Superintendent asked each member of their staff if they had any objection to taking the survey (See Appendix D for consent form) and if they did, they were excused. The Superintendent then handed the envelope with the surveys to one of the operators and to one of the Supervisors. The employee distributed and collected the completed surveys, sealed the envelope and returned it to the Superintendent. The Superintendent collected the envelopes and mailed them back to the researcher. By distributing the surveys in this manner any influences by the Supervisor were minimized.

The administration of the surveys took place over a 4-month period. The method (i.e. self-administered & mail) was chosen due to the widely geographically dispersed groups that were surveyed and the short amount of time available to them to take the survey. The time chosen to administer the survey was during the employees' free time at work. This conserved the employees' time and provided a place where they were at ease (Creswell, 2003). Some of the respondents had limited reading abilities in either Spanish or English, therefore, the survey was kept as simple as possible and the number of questions limited.

The second part (B) of the methodology attempted to verify the findings of the survey from part (A) through data collected from the company's Human Resource records (i.e. training expense, total terminations, and terminations relating to poor performance, work rules infractions, and damage to company property due to negligence) (see Appendix E). Approach (B) was used to measure the impact of CL on the incidence of retraining, dismissals for not following procedures or the difficulty in learning a task.

Data Analysis

The intent of the study was to determine if CL behavior is demonstrated in the workplace, how prevalent it is and possible reasons for its existence. A separate analysis was conducted on both the operator and Supervisor surveys. The study examined the similarity of the responses among the operators surveyed using ANOVA and t-tests. Descriptive statistics were examined for differences by age, gender, length of service and level of education to determine the differences between the respondents for future analysis. The Descriptives were examined as a preliminary screening where range, means, standard deviation skewness and kurtosis to determine normality.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a parametric test which was used to analyze the continuous data for the CL composite percentage. Analysis of variance is able to utilize the whole range of data as opposed to a dichotomous data set that may provide different results. ANOVA was used to analyze race, education, region of the country and experience as the independent variable (IV) and CL percent score as the dependent variable (DV). For analyses comparing two age groups (i.e., >30, <30), a t-test and Chi-Square test was utilized using age as the IV and percent score as the DV. A Chi- Squared analysis was only performed with skewed or non-normal data sets.

Prior to conducting these analyses data was examined for normality. The skewness and kurtosis of the distributions were analyzed to ensure a reasonably normal distribution. Skew and kurtosis helped to identify any outliers or data entry errors that may exist in the data set for further examination. Since ANOVA is a parametric test that requires a normal distribution, it was important to ensure the normalcy of the data set even though researchers find ANOVA is a very robust test and has been used with

distributions that are not normal (Bowerman, O'Connell, & Murphree, 2009). Besides normality, the other assumptions of ANOVA are homogeneity of variance and independence. The researcher tested for homogeneity of variance with a Levene's test of Equality of Variances to ensure that the Standard Deviations between groups were not significantly different. The subjects were not selected by the researcher but their participation was voluntary. Their locations were chosen by the Company based on the geographic area that was operational at the time of the survey. The locations and the willing operators were random in the sense that no one selected them they were selected by conditions not predetermined by anyone. This would suggest the independence assumption was satisfied (Bowerman, O'Connell, & Murphree, 2009).

A Chi-squared analysis was conducted in instances when the distributions of the scores were not normal and for scale data that was nominal. Since Chi-square is a distribution free test it would not require the same adherence to the distribution assumptions required for parametric analyses (Bowerman, O'Connell, & Murphree, 2009). Non-parametric tests like Chi-square may lead to a Type II error and do not offer the same amount of power as parametric tests provide which is why both analyses were used when appropriate.

The researcher analyzed the operators' responses by comparing their answers to a benchmark or "Gold Standard" (Humbely & Zumbo, 1996), as seen in Appendix C. This comparison refers to those questions on the operators' survey that are used to calculate their CL score. The benchmark was created by the researcher through calculating the maximum amount of questions which indicated if the operator is a CL, such as "did you like the method shown, Yes, No", did you change the method shown, Yes, No". The

researcher used the respondents' answers, either positive or negative, to the questions of liking direction, trying new methods, and the tasks changed to create the benchmark score. Some questions with a No response received a point towards their CL score because a No response such as; "did you like the method shown" would suggest CL behavior. Each of these questions received 1-point and were added together to create a maximum score for CL, setting the gold standard benchmark to a maximum of 25 points. The percent CL score was then computed for participants by comparing their total score to the gold standard in order to calculate a CL percentage. Those participants scoring above 25% were defined as CLs and below 25% were non-CLs.

Cunningham, Young and Lee (2000) state that the use of multiple methods and sources can actually strengthen the findings of the study, where one source has weaknesses another source can have strengths. Therefore, the supervisor's survey results and the Human Resource survey were used to compare the operators' results through the triangulation process depicted and described below. The respondents' answers were reviewed further by triangulating (Creswell, 2003) the responses of their Supervisors if they had observed CL behavior, the company employee records provided by the company's Human Resource department relating to injuries, dismissals for not following company policies and training costs for new employees.

In this study a comparison of the operator's answers, which might be biased, to the supervisor's answers was made to see if the two groups had similar responses. For example if the operators and the Supervisors agree that the operators do not change what they have been taught then the operators' responses would have a high degree of

uniformity. If the opposite occurs then the operators' responses would have a low degree of uniformity and this would be reported.

Operators' survey. Questions consisted of dichotomous format answers except for the demographics and two questions dealing with time. The survey questions have been grouped by related topics (e.g. demographics,, non-CL's, CL's, and reason for CL). An analysis of variance (ANOVA), t-tests and Chi-Square tests were conducted utilizing IBM's SPSS software and Microsoft Excel. Frequency scores were calculated for each question, as well as an overall percentage score for those questions that deal directly with CL behavior as discussed above. The association of age, gender, region of the country with the overall CL frequency score was determined.

An analysis was conducted to identify which questions were answered most frequently that were associated with the work place learning research reviewed in Chapter Two. This was done to establish a relationship to existing research findings on worker behavior or any new findings that the results might reveal. The open-ended survey questions were content analyzed for common recurring answers relating to particular CL behavior themes by the researcher. The identified items specific to particular workplace learning concepts, were summarized with the frequency of respondents. Those themes were then ranked one through nine by order of most frequently indicated in the survey responses. The survey questions that were associated with the various themes were sorted in Excel to establish their rank. The top five workplace learning concepts were identified by the percentage of responses to those questions that indicated a particular kind of CL behavior. The questions associated with the concepts were sorted by the most frequently chosen by the respondents. The

operators' survey also contained a section with the various key tasks that the operators perform. The respondent indicated which tasks or task, if any, they changed and the frequency of each occurrence was recorded. This information is also useful to the company in the future to evaluate where additional training or re-training might be necessary.

Supervisor survey. The Supervisor survey also utilized a dichotomous response scale. The surveys were analyzed the same way as the operators' survey but without a benchmark for CL behavior (as used in the operator survey). The supervisors' questions are based on their experience of the operators' actions that would indicate CL behavior. The supervisors' answers were tabulated by frequency and cross-referenced to the comparable operator survey items to see the similarity in frequencies between answers. The researcher could find that the supervisor has observed CL behavior actions but the frequency of the operators admitting to it could be different.

The supervisor survey was also reviewed for answers to how much time lost in retraining, possible damage to the equipment, injury to the employee incurred by not following direction the first time and if disciplinary action was necessary. The incidences of formal disciplinary action, injuries or dismissals were items that the supervisor could recall with some degree of accuracy because those actions are not everyday occurrences. The questions were asked within the period of employment with their current employer not entire experience.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The study explored the reasons the cost of CL and the possible correlation to the literature on worker behavior. This chapter looks at the data collected and analyzes the relationship to proactive employees, prosocial non-compliant behavior, workarounds, LMX model, non-compliant worker behavior, workers own experience, positive deviant behavior and epistemic actions. The operator results will be addressed first, followed by the supervisor's and lastly the Human Resources results will be discussed.

The operator surveys were examined for completeness by entering the raw data into an Excel spreadsheet and later importing the data into SPSS for analysis. Some of the operator surveys had missing responses such as age, experience or education. In instances where less than 5% of the data was missing for a respondent, the mean for the demographic item was substituted. The surveys with missing data represented less than 5% of participants or ten surveys. The Supervisor survey was also reviewed by the researcher. It was assumed in the review some of the supervisors felt that there was no money lost in retraining because in a previous question they answered no time was lost it is felt because of this answer several left that question blank.

Those participants who indicated they had made a change to the method shown were asked which tasks they had changed. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, points were assigned to the questions that indicated whether they had changed the learning (see Appendix C). The total of the questions that would indicate a very strong CL individual (i.e. changed many tasks) added up to a maximum of 25 points. Each respondent's recorded numerical value was then divided by 25 to get a percent tendency toward CL. Percentage scores that were above 25% were classified as CL's. This cut point was

determined based on the number of scores above 25% that began to show a tendency towards changing the learning such as “did not like the method shown” or the operator changed one or more methods shown.

In order to ensure that the homogeneity of variance assumption for ANOVA was not violated, a Levene’s Test was conducted to determine that the Standard Deviations of each group were reasonably equal. The subjects were not selected by the researcher but their participation was voluntary. Their locations were chosen by the Company based on the geographic area that was operational at the time of the survey. This would suggest the independence assumption was satisfied (Bowerman, O’Connell, & Murphree, 2009). The test found no violations of independence or homogeneity of variance.

. A preliminary data analysis examining descriptive statistics in SPSS was performed to determine if a parametric or non-parametric test should be run on the data. It can be pointed out the CL scores for all respondents have a slight positive skew of .868 and kurtosis is, -.587 or Leptokurtic indicating that this was within an acceptable range of +/- 2.0 indicating that it was a normal distribution and ANOVA and t-test could be utilized (Tabacnick and Fidell, 1998) . The mode for these scores is 16.0% which indicates that most respondents were not CL’s (57.6% have scores below 25%).

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for the Non-CLs, CLs and All operators combined. The skewness and kurtosis for Non-CLs was outside of +/- 2.0 the researcher ignored this because no further analysis on this group was conducted. It should be pointed out that the range of scores for the non-CL’is between 5-25 because most stopped at the question “did you have a better method” (question 10) and were told to stop they

only scored 5 points. The Descriptives for the CL's and the combined groups both indicate a normal distribution.

Table 1.

CL Percent Scores Frequency Distribution Non-CL's and CL's

Operator	n	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Non-CL's	118	16.576	1.976	2.474	7.138
CL's	87	47.586	11.969	.249	-.330
All	205	29.737	17.283	.868	-.587

Note: N = 205.

Survey Demographics

The regional participation of all participants was varied: Mid-West= (MW), (n=84), South East (SE), (n=42), Middle Atlantic (MA), (n=34), and North East (NE), (n=43). The response of Supervisors by region also was varied: MW (n=18), SE (n=7), MA (n=11), and NE (n=16). Table 2 displays the ethnic participation rate of the 205 operators.

Table 2.

Race Demographics all Operators

Race	Frequency	Percent
White	125	61.0
Hispanic	55	26.9
Black	25	12.1

Note. N = 205.

Approximately 98% (n = 201), of the operators were male with 2% (n = 4) o the operators being female. The average age of the operators was 38, with ages ranging from 18 to 76 years. Their years of education ranged from 6 to 22 years of schooling, with an average of 11 years. Similar to the operators, approximately 96% of the 55 Supervisors were male (n = 53) and 4% (n = 2) were female.

Operators Survey Results

The results of all operators (N = 205) showed that 57.6% (n = 118) scored 25% or below (Non-CL's) and 42.4% (n = 87) of the operators scored above 25% (CL's). The operators were divided into two groups (CL's and Non-CL's) and the demographic variables of age, education, and experience level were examined. The age of the CL participants ranged from 18 to 72 years and the Non- CL participant age ranged from 18 to 76 years the mean ages were 40.4 and 36.5 years, respectively. The education in years for both the CL and Non-CL's participants ranged from 6 to 22 years, with means of 12.1 and 11.7 years, respectively. The CL operators had an experience level that ranged from zero to 47 years, with a mean of 8.4 years. Operators in the Non- CL group ranged from 0 to 45 years of experience with a mean of 6.5 years.

Table 3 displays the race and gender of the CL's and the Non-CL's. The Non-CL's tend to consist of more White participants than the CL's (68.8% vs. 50.6%), but the CL's tend to consist of more Hispanic participants (36.8% vs. 19.5%) than in the Non-CL group. The low frequency of females in this sample prohibits any further analysis.

Table 4 contains the CL and the Non-CL percentages by the different ethnicities. The CL's have a larger range between the races, 8.1% or from 42.18% for Blacks to 50.27% for Whites than the range for the Non-CL's, .9% or from16.52% for Blacks to

17.43% for Whites. The range possible for the CL's is from 25-100% and for Non-CL's from 1-24%. It should also be noted that the scores for the female non-CL operators is very close to the males but the CL's have a wider variance due to the wider range possible.

Table 3.

Changing the Learning Demographics

	CL's		Non- CL's	
Race	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
White	44	50.6	81	68.6
Black	11	12.6	14	11.9
Hispanic	32	36.8	23	19.5
	CL's		Non- CL's	
Gender	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Male	84	98.0	117	99.0
Female	3	2.0	1	1.0

Note. CL's n = 87, Non-CL's n = 118.

Table 4.

Race and Gender Mean CL Scores for all Operators

Race	Percent CL's	Percent Non- CL's
White	50.27	16.44
Black	42.18	17.43
Hispanic	45.75	16.52
Gender	Percent CL's	Percent Non- CL's
Male	42.43	15.58
Female	52.00	16.00
Frequency	87	118

Note. N = 205. The low number of total female participants prevented any further analysis of gender.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the continuous data for the changing the learning. Analysis of variance is able to utilize the whole range of data as opposed to a dichotomous data set. For analyses consisting of two groups, a t-test was utilized.

Table 5 displays the descriptive statistics for all three races. The Hispanic group had a slightly higher CL score than the other two races examined. There also seems to be a wider range of CL percentages for White operators but part of this might be due to the larger sample size within this group as the overall variance of the White operators is small compared to Black and Hispanic operators. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run to compare differences in CL based on operator Race and found a lack of significant differences between groups in changing the learning $F(2, 202) = 1.823$, $p = .164$ (see Table 6). A Levene's Test for Equality for Variances found no significant difference $F(2,202) = 1.786$, $p = .170$.

Table 5.

Descriptives CL Score by Race for All Operators

	Percent Score					
Race	n	Mean	SD	SE	Min	Max
White	125	28.352	17.568	1.571	12.0	80.0
Black	25	28.320	13.901	2.780	16.0	56.0
Hispanic.	55	33.527	17.714	2.389	12.0	68.0

Note. N= 205.

Table 6.

ANOVA Table, Race for All Operators

	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	*p*
Between Groups	1080.115	2	540.057	1.823	.164
Within Groups	59853.661	202	296.305		

Table 7 and 8 contain the education data for all operators. Table 7 displays the descriptive statistics for the education levels. The range of the CL percentage scores across all 3 education levels is 7.859%. The ANOVA results presented in Table 8, demonstrate a lack of significant differences between the groups F (3, 201) =1.588, *p* =.193 indicating that there were no significant differences between the CL scores at each education level. A Levene's Test for Equality of Variances found no significant difference F(2,202) = 2.743, *p*=.067.

Table 7.

Descriptives CL Score by Education for All Operators

		Percent Score				
Education	N	Mean	SD	SE	Min	Max
< HS	0					
HS	130	30.062	16.400	1.438	12.0	68.0
HS +	49	26.449	17.829	2.547	12.0	80.0
Col. Deg.	26	34.308	19.893	3.901	16.0	68.0

Note. N= 205.

Descriptive statistics were run on the age of the operators and their CL scores compressed into three age groups 18-38, 39-54 and 55-76 years of age (see Table 9).

This was done to show any differences between group's verses individuals since there were not a significant number of operators in a given age. Table 9 displays the mean differences between the three groups is within 1.650 percent and the SD of each group indicates a strong similarity between groups. An ANOVA test was run on the independent variable of three age groups: 18-38, 39-54 and 55-76 years. The ANOVA test reports F (2, 202) = .136 p = .837 indicating that there were no significant difference between age groups and CL scores (see Table 10). A Levene's Test for Equality of Variances found no significant difference F(2,202) = 1.233 p = .294.

Table 8.

ANOVA Table, Education for all Operators

	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	*p*
Between Groups	1410.890	3	470.297	1.588	.193
Within Groups	59522.886	201	296.134		

Note. N= 205

Table 9.

Descriptives CL Scores of Age for All Operators

		Percent Score				
Age	N	Mean	SD	SE	Min	Max
18-38	112	29.250	17.913	1.693	12.0	80.0
39-54	40	30.900	17.611	2.785	16.0	68.0
55-76	53	29.887	15.896	2.183	12.0	68.0

Note. N= 205.

Table 10.

ANOVA Table, Age for all Operators

	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	*p*
Between Groups	81.855	2	40.927	.136	.873
Within Groups	60851.921	202	301.247		

Note. N=205.

Table 11 displays the CL scores by three groups for operator level of experience as expressed in years: 0-5, 6-10, and 11-47 years. The mean difference in CL scores across the three groups is 4.31%. An ANOVA was run on operator experience. In Table 12 the ANOVA test reports F (2, 202) =1.156, p =.317 indicating that there were no significant differences between years of experience and CL scores. A Levene's Test for Equality of Variance found no significant differences, F(2,202) = .443 p = .643.

Table 11.

Descriptives Scores by Level of Experience for All Operators

		Percent Score				
Years	N	Mean	SD	SE	Min	Max
0-5	124	28.290	17.633	1.584	12 .0	80.0
6-10	40	32.600	17.366	2.746	12.0	68.0
11-47	41	31.317	15.998	2.498	16.0	68.0

Note. N= 205.

Table 12.

ANOVA Table, Experience for All Operators

	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	*p*
Between Groups	689.749	2	344.875	1.156	.317
Within Groups	60244.026	202	781.479		

Note. N= 205.

Table 13 displays the descriptive statistics for the four regions. The mean CL score percentage difference between all four regions is 5.524%. The mean CL scores for each region are close (within 6 points) indicating a strong consistency between regions. It should be pointed out again the range for all CL's was 26-80% which means the scores for the CL's are spread out with a wider range of scores whereas the Non-CL's with larger numbers are concentrated at the lower range (5-25%).

Table 13

Descriptives Scores by Regions for All Operators

		Percent Score				
Age	n	Mean	SD	SE	Min	Max
MW	84	32.381	17.214	1.878	12 .0	76.0
SE	42	26.857	15.811	2.440	12.0	64.0
MA	34	27.176	17.919	3.071	16.0	68.0
NE	45	29.422	18.054	2.691	16.0	80.0

Note. N= 205.

Table 14 displays the results of ANOVA for the CL scores by regions. The ANOVA found a lack of significant differences, F (3, 201) = 1.304, p =.274. A Levene's Test for Equality of Variances found no significant difference F(3,20) = .445, p = .714

CL Operator Results

Table 15 displays the operators that scored as CL's were divided into two age groups: under 30 and over 30. An independent t-test was performed on the two CL age groups which found a lack of significant differences between the two groups, t (85) = 1.291, p = .200. The mean difference between the two groups is 3.383 percentage points and the SD between them is 1.868.

Table 14.

ANOVA Table, Regions for All Operators

	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	*p*
Between Groups	1162.904	3	387.635	1.304	.274
Within Groups	59770.871	201	297.366		

Table 15.

T-test, Differences in CL's based on Operator Age

Age	N	Mean Percent	SD	SE
<30	33	49.647	13.031	2.235
>30	54	46.246	11.163	1.533

Note. n=87.

Table 16 displays that the CL scores were fairly close from one educational group to another indicating only a 6.719% difference in CL percentage scores across groups. A Levene's Test of Equality of Variances found no significant difference between the three groups $F(2,84) = 2.076$, $p = .132$. The table does display that the two more educated operators tended to have slightly higher CL scores (HS = 45.896, HS+= 49.867, College = 52.615). This would indicate that the number of tasks they changed were greater than the other education groups thus increasing their score. In Table 17, a one-way ANOVA found a lack of significant differences of the CL percentage scores between the three education group's $F(2, 86) = 2.056$, $p = .134$.

For those instances where there was not a normal distribution for a group of CL's a Chi-Square test was used. To utilize the Chi-Square test the CL operators were divided into those that scored below the midpoint of their scores at 48.00% and above 48.00% (i.e., low and high). This sub-grouping of low and high CL has been applied to all of the following Chi-Square analyses that were performed only when the assumption of homogeneity of variance or when unequal or small group size was violated.

Table 16.

CL Operators Analysis by Level of Education

		Percent Score				
Education	n	Mean	SD	SE	Min	Max
HS	59	45.896	11.151	1.452	28.000	68.000
HS +	15	49.867	15.482	3.997	32.000	80.000
Col. Deg.	13	52.615	9.912	2.749	32.000	68.000

Note. n=87.

Table 17.

ANOVA Table, CL Operators Education

	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	*p*
Between Groups	574.903	2	287.452	2.056	.134
Within Groups	11746.200	84	139.836		

Note. n=87.

Table 18 displays the descriptive statistics for race of the CL operators. A difference between the CL score means of 8.121 indicates relatively large difference in CL between the groups, however, Table 19 displays that there is no significant difference between the three races $F(2, 86) = 2.710$, $p = .072$. A Levene's Test of Equality for Variances indicated that there was no significant difference between the three groups $F(2,84) = 2.091$, $p = .130$. A Chi-Square test was run because of the unequal group sizes and two of the groups consist of less than 30 participants, which violates the Central Limit Theorem (CLT). Confirming the findings of the ANOVA, a Chi-Squared test reported no significant difference between the groups ($\chi^2(2, 87) = 3.987$, $p = .136$).

Table 18

Descriptives CL Score by Race for CL Operators

		Percent Score				
Education	N	Mean	SD	SE	Min	Max
White	44	50.273	11.195	1.688	32.000	80.000
Black	11	42.182	8.830	2.662	28.000	56.000
Hispanic	32	45.750	13.206	2.334	28.000	68.000

Note. n= 87.

Table 19

ANOVA Table, Race for CL Operators

	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	F	*p*
Between Groups	946.740	2	373.370	2.710	.072
Within Groups	11574.364	84	137.790		

Note. n= 87.

Table 20 displays the experience of the CL operators. The table displays a difference in the CL score means of 2.548 percentage points indicating relatively close results within the group. A one-way ANOVA in Table 21 indicates that there is no significant difference in the CL percentage scores between the three experience group's, F (2, 84) = 33, p = .734. The results of a Levene's Test for Equality of Variances found no significant difference F(2,84) = 2.759, p = .069. A Chi-Square test was run because of the unequal group sizes and two of the groups consisted of less than 30 participants, which again violate CLT. Confirming the findings of the ANOVA, a Chi-Squared test reported no significant difference between the groups ($\chi^2(2, 87) = .035$, p = .983.)

Table 20.

The CL percentage score by Level of Experience for CL's

		Percent's				
Experience	N	Mean	SD	SE	Min	Max
0-5	46	48.348	13.801	2.035	28.000	80.000
6-10	21	47.619	9.373	2.045	28.000	68.000
11-47	20	45.800	10.008	2.238	28.000	68.000

Note. n=87.

Table 21.

ANOVA Table, CL Operator Experience

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	90.516	2	45.258	.311	.734
Within Groups	12230.587	84	145.602		

Note. n=87.

Table 22 and 23 display the scores of the CL operators by region of the country. Table 22 displays a difference in the CL score means of 4.00 percentage points indicating relatively close results within the group. Table 23 displays the results of ANOVA for the regions indicating no significant difference in CL operator scores between regions $F(3, 83) = .774$, $p = .512$. A Levene's Test for Equality of Variances indicated that there was no significant difference between the three groups ($F(2,82) = 2.759$, $p = .408$). A Chi-Square test was run because of the unequal group sizes and because the three groups consisted of less than 30 participants which is in violation of CLT. Confirming the findings of the ANOVA, a Chi-Squared test reported no significant difference between the groups ($\chi^2(3, 87) = 2.715$, $p = .438$).

Table 22

CL Operators Results by Region

Region	N	Mean CL Score	SD	Min	Max
MW	44	46.182	12.516	28.000	76.000
SE	15	46.400	9.657	32.000	64.000
MA	11	50.182	14.013	28.000	68.000
NE	17	47.586	11.969	32.000	80.000

Note. n=86.

Table. 23.

ANOVA Table, CL Operator by Regions

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	335.204	3	111.738	.774	.512
Within Groups	11985.899	83	144.408		

Note. n=86.

Operators Qualitative Survey Results

Further questions were asked to determine the reasons why people changed the learning. The participant was asked what task or tasks they changed. The operator's primary tasks were based on interviews with Supervisors to develop a standard terminology that is used within the company.

The tasks are displayed in Table 24 along with the frequency the task was changed by the operators. The percentage of all tasks was calculated by dividing the frequency of the task by the frequency of all changed tasks. It should be noted that the task of edging was changed the most (45.2%). Tasks were not mutually exclusive some operators changed all tasks.

The operators that completed the survey (n=87) were asked why they changed the method that they had been shown by their supervisor. There were five operators (5.7%) that answered their method was faster, 30 operators (34.4%) easier and 52 operators (59.7%) gave no reason. The respondents were asked how long they took to change to their method; 59 (67.8%) answered one day, 25 (29.7%) chose not to answer and 6 (6.8%) answered greater than one day. The respondents were asked how long did they do the task their way 32 (36.8%) did not answer, 29 (33.3%) reported within one day.

Participants were asked if they were presently doing the task their own way and 53, (60.9%) answered yes. In a follow up question 60, (68.9%) said they did not have to go back and redo the task they changed. Table 25 displays a complete synopsis of the questions and the frequency of responses.

Table 24.

Percentage of Tasks Changed

Task	Frequency Changed	Frequency Not changed	Percentage changed
Edging	28	62	45.2
Mowing	41	49	24.2
Trimming	31	59	18.3
Setup	24	66	14.2
Other	30	60	17.8
Sprinklers	15	75	9.7
Total	169		

Note. n = 87.

Some of the questions in Table 25are associated with various work place learning theories. The matching of the theories with the questions was determined by the researcher based on the literature reviewed with the strongest similarities to the questions asked. Table 26 displays the question and the associated theory.

Supervisor Survey Results

The regions for the Supervisors are the same as the operators. Table 27 displays the age, education and experience of the Supervisors and the operators for comparison. The demographic question regarding race was not asked for the Supervisors because the researcher determined that Supervisor race was not relevant to the study. Tenure with the company was not asked of the operators because the questions asked were from the perspective of when they first started with the company. The Supervisors were asked was

there an age group that was more likely to change the learning, 36.7.% responded, “No” and 53.3% answered “Yes” and 10.0% did not disclose. Supervisors were then asked what age group changed the learning and 14.0% said over 30, 16.0% answered under 30, 15.0% answered any age and 55.0% were unable to supply a specific age.

Table 25.

Frequency Analysis for Operator Questionnaire

Question		Frequency	
#	Question	Yes	No
9	When you started did you like their method?	84	4
10	Did you have a better method?	86	2
12a	When you started, did you do the tasks as shown?	83	7
I2b	If no to 12a did you use your own method?	20	21
14	Are you now using your method?	53	26
17	Did you have to go back to their method?	20	60
18	Did they show you again?	28	55
19	Was their method better?	48	37
20	Are you still using their method?	49	37
21	Have you done this kind of work somewhere else before?	39	45
22	Did your last place have a better method?	21	57
23	Would you rather figure out a task for yourself?	53	29
24	Would your supervisor appreciate it if you had a better way?	70	17
25	Would you rather not receive instructions?	22	64
26	Do you like to figure different ways of doing things?	78	9
27	Do you enjoy improving a method that has been around for a while?	80	7
28	If you did not like a task would you change it?	62	22
29	Would you change the task if you thought it would be a benefit?	79	7

Note. n = 87 Numbers are raw data. Questions have been shortened or paraphrased for space considerations. See Appendix B for complete questions.

In the next two questions the Supervisors were asked what reason was given for why the operators changed the method, and 68.3% answered “that it was easier”, 15.0%

responded with “other”, 11.7% expressed “that their way was better”, and 5.0% offered no opinion.

Table 26.

Frequency Analysis for Proposed CL Theories.

Question #	Survey questions associated theories	Percent Yes	No
27	Proactive employee, (Ohly and Fritz, 2007)	88.9	7.8
29	Prosocial non-Compliant behavior, (Puffer, 1986)	87.8	7.8
23	Workarounds, non-compliant behavior (Halbesleben (2010)	86.7	10.0
24	LMX model (Campbell, D. 2000)	77.8	18.9
25	Non-compliant behavior, (Williams, Podsakoff, and Huber, 1986	68.9	24.4
26	Workarounds, (Ferneley and Sobreprez, 2006)	58.9	32.2
22	Workers own experience, (Beckett, D. 2000)	43.3	50.0
25	Positive deviant behavior, (Cullen and Sackett, 2003)	24.4	71.1
22	Epistemic actions, (Smith, R. 2006)	23.3	63.3

Note. n= 87 More than one answer per theory is possible.

Table 27.

Demographics for Supervisor and Operator Participants

Years	Supervisors			Operators		
	Mean	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max
Age	37.3	23	61	38.8	18	76
Experience	16.4	2	40	7.8	0	47
Education	14.9	7.0	22	10.9	3	20
Tenure	5.04	1.0	11	N/A		

Note. N= 260. There were two female Supervisors, the question about tenure was not asked.

Supervisors were asked if the operator was allowed to continue if they changed the method and 58.0% answered No, 30.0% answered Yes, and 12% did not respond. A

follow up question was asked of those that were not allowed to continue: did you have to show them again, 51.7% answered yes while 10.0% answered no, and 38.3% of the Supervisors were unable to supply a specific answer. The Supervisors were asked how much time was lost and 38.3% said one hour, 3.3% said none. A follow up question asked about how much money was lost and only two Supervisors answered between $8 and $10. The question was asked if the employees were given any disciplinary action: 51.7 % answered no while 10.0% said yes and 38.3% did not respond. An additional question asked if any operators were terminated for changing the learning and only 1.7% (N= 55) responded yes (see Table 28).

Table 28.

Frequency Analysis of the Supervisor Questionnaire

Questions	Percent Yes	No
Have you experienced an employee CL?	98.1	1.9
Have you experienced CL in your career?	92.5	5.7
Is there an age group is this likely to occur?	53.3	36.3
Was their method better?	18.3	65.0
Did you allow them to continue?	30.0	58.3
Did you have to show them again?	51.7	10.0
Did their method waste time or money?	40.0	23.3
Was disciplinary action necessary?	10.0	51.7
Were any employees terminated?	1.7	58.3

Note. N = 55. The questions have been shortened or paraphrased to save space see appendix B for complete questions.

Table 29 displays the Supervisor's tenure with the Company. The largest tenure group of Supervisors (n = 17) was 8 and 9 years, Table 30 displays the Supervisors' responses when asked how many times they have experienced CL at their current company and how recently. The largest group of Supervisors (n = 30) that experienced

CL had experienced it between 1 and 5 times over the course of their time working for the company. Table 30 displays that 80% of the supervisors experienced employees CL within the last month.

Table 29.

Supervisor Tenure with Company Descriptives

Mean	SD	Range	Min	Max
5.04	2.56	10	1	10

Note. N=55.

Table 30

Supervisor CL Experience with Company Frequency

Question	Frequency	Percent
How many times, 1-5	30	50.0
How many times, 6-10	16	26.7
How many times, 11 +	9	15.0
How Recent, 1 mo.	48	80.0
How Recent, 2 mo.	2	3.3
Did not answer	9	15.0

Note. N= 55.

Human Resources Results

The researcher's questionnaire (Appendix E) was read to a representative of the corporate Human Resource (HR) department by the VP of Operations over the telephone while the researcher listened in and took notes. The following is an abbreviated narrative of HR's answers: The question was asked "on the average how much time does the

company allocate for training operators." HR reported, "30-60 minutes of hands-on training also, to supplement the hands on training, sixty minutes of video training was provided with certain task work". HR was asked how many operators have been given written warnings for work rules infractions in the last two years. HR answered, "less than 10". They were then asked how many operators have been terminated for work rules infractions in the last two years. HR answered, "98% or our terminations revolve around punctuality or failure to show up for work. They indicated that probably less than 5 of the cases were for rules infractions".

The Human Resource representative was then asked how many operators have been given written warnings for not following company procedures in the last two years. HR answered, "Again 98% around punctuality issues and probably less than 5% for other reasons". The final question asked how many operators have been terminated in the last two years for not following company procedures, and HRs answer was, "Probably less than 5 operators for non-punctuality issues". (Vice President of Operations, personal communication, September 21, 2012)

Between Group Comparison

In the operators survey there were questions that could be tri-angulated with the Supervisors' and the Human Resource questions that applied. Table 31 displays the results and any discrepancy between the operator's answers and the Supervisor's answers. Of the Supervisors that participated in the study, 51.7% indicated that they had to demonstrate the method again while 67.0% of the operators stated that they did not have to be shown the method again. The Human Resource survey substantiated the

Supervisors answers on disciplinary actions and terminations. Of the Supervisors surveyed, 10% reported that they had given disciplinary actions of some form while HR reported that disciplinary actions had been reported less than10 times throughout the company and less than 5 of the terminations occurred due to rule violations which may or may not include following procedures.

Table 31.

Comparison of Supervisor Operator Questionnaire

	Percent				Incidence	
	Supervisor		Operator		HR	
Questions	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Have you experienced an employee CL?	98.1	1.9				
Have you experienced CL in your career?	92.5	5.7				
Is there an age group is this likely to occur	53.3	36.3				
Was their method better?	18.3	65.0	53.8	40.7		
Did you allow them to continue?	30.0	58.3	58.0	30.8		
Did you have to show them again?	51.7	10.0	20.9	67.0		
Did their method waste time or money?	40.0	23.3				
Was disciplinary action necessary?	10.0	51.7				<10
Were any employees terminated?	1.7	58.3				<5

Note. N = 260. The questions have been shortened or paraphrased to save space. See Appendix B for complete questions.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY

CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study suggest that slightly less than half of new operators change the method of performing a task when they start a new job (CL). The results suggest several possible reasons for this behavior as they relate to the various work place learning theories. This discussion is divided into three sections, the incidence of CL, and the demographics of operators who change the learning and the basis for CL. The lack of previous research on this topic prevents the contextualization of these findings.

Earlier it was pointed out that 42.4% of the survey participants admitted they had changed the learning to some degree. It is important to recognize that some operators may have been reluctant to admit changing a task in a survey fearing there may be repercussions for their actions even though the survey was anonymous. The respondents submit demographic information in the survey that could be used to identify them. In a small work group an operator that is 76 years of age can be quickly identified. The worker understanding this could be less than forthcoming with his responses (Latimier, O'Brien, Vasquez, Medina-Mora, Rios-Bodeya and Floyd, 2006). There also can be response bias where the respondent either knowingly or unknowingly misrepresents the truth either to seem more intelligent or to conceal personal information (Zigmund, 2003).

In the Supervisor's survey 98.1% of the respondents said they had witnessed operators changing the learning (80.0% within the last month). This suggests that the 42.4% admitted incidence of CL might be on the lower end of the true proportion that actually changed the learning because the Supervisors response of incidence for the last

month is so high. The fact that 80% of the Supervisors witnessed CL in the last month strongly implies that the frequency of CL is greater than 42.4%.

Statistical analysis of the four regions of the country, age groups, races and education level found no significant differences between the Non-CL group and the CL group. This suggests that the incidence of CL is uniform across the Company and possibly generalizable across groups. When the CL group was examined separately, no significant differences were found in the same categories of data although there were some differences between races and education. The results found that for education the CL scores increased as education increased indicating the better educated were more likely to CL. The results also indicated a slight difference between Black and White races. This data suggests that the behavior of CL does actually exist.

Within the operator's survey, nine questions are tied directly to theories on work place learning. The theories and the questions were chosen from the research in Chapter 2 because of their relevance to the type and nature of the work studied. The five questions and their related theories that were cited most frequently by the survey respondents are proactive behavior, prosocial non-compliant behavior, workarounds, LMX model and positive deviant behavior. Each of the five theories and their possible association to this study will be discussed next.

Proactive behavior. The operators were asked; "do you enjoy improving a method that has been around awhile", and 88.9% answered that they did. The research reviewed may suggest that self-efficacy plays a role in proactive behavior. The inquiries on self-efficacy suggest that the proactive employee is generally motivated for the good of the organization. This study also suggests that the reason for proactivity is based on

self-efficacy because the good of the company is not apparent to the operator. This could be true because when they were asked this question it was in the reference of when they first started the job and it is unlikely they would have the company interests in mind that soon.

Prosocial non-compliant behavior. Another question tied to the research asks; "would you change the task if you thought it would be a benefit to the company", and 87.8% said they would. As in the description of proactive behavior, prosocial behavior also is for the benefit of the individual or the company. The social aspect of this behavior can be extended to co-workers as well, (Puffer, 2006). Puffer includes "compatible with company goals", (p. 616) which a new employee would not know or fully understand. This inclusion in the definition of prosocial behavior results in only two motives that relate to this study for the benefit of the group or the individual. In this research, the high percentage of survey participants that responded saying that they would change the method reveals that they do this for their own self-efficacy within their groups not for either their co-workers or the company.

Workarounds. The operators were asked; "if they liked to figure out a different way of doing things," and 86.7% said they did. Halbesleben (2010) studied workarounds within the safety field and he feels that; "an operator will devise a workaround to a recognized procedure if that procedure is a hindrance to their performance to the extent the employee will put themselves at risk of injury", (p2). Amalberti and Vincent, (2006) suggest that people have a natural tendency toward shortcuts, workarounds or violations. Halbeslebens' (2010) work is concerned with conservation of energy due to exhaustion. This study points to conservation of energy where in the results that operators and

Supervisors reported "it was easier" was a frequent reason for why they did not perform the task as shown. Exhaustion is not an issue in this survey but the prevention of perceived excessive effort could be an issue that operators tried to alleviate.

LMX Model. The question that is linked to LMX asks operators if their Supervisor would appreciate if they found a better way of doing a task and 77.8% stated that the Supervisor would. It should be pointed out that this question was asked in the context if the operator were just starting the job but it is possible that the operator was answering in the present tense and not necessarily when they first started the task. However, these tasks are not very complicated and an expected appearance (i.e. look) of the work is what drives the methods they are trained to. The likelihood that significant improvements could be made especially by a new employee is minimal. This then suggests that the motive for the employee changing to a different method is not necessarily for the benefit of the company but instead the manager or themselves. Campbell (2000) suggests that an employee's behavior to gain special treatment (i.e. LMX model) is a form of proactive behavior. The large percentage (i.e., 70%) of operators that answered that their Supervisor would appreciate them changing the method suggests that this could be a LMX motive.

Non-Compliant worker behavior. The survey asks; "would you rather not receive instruction" and 24.4% answered that they would not while 71.6 said no, they would rather receive instructions. Intuitively you would think the numbers would be reversed for people that change what they have just been shown. There are two possibilities for these findings, one is based upon Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2004) work on deviant behavior or "behaviors that depart from the norm of a referent group" (p 829),

Robinson and Bennett, (1995), define deviant behavior as "intentional behavior that departs from the norm" (p 556). Spreitzer and Sonenshein point out that "positive intentions do not always result in positive outcomes", (p833). The individuals that answered they would like to be shown or trained to a specific method are given a referent point to change from. The second possibility is deviant behavior that is initiated by the operator is exhibited to satisfy a need such as pleasure, greed, thrill seekers risk takers, etc. (Cullen and Sackett, 2003). Cullen and Sacketts' work strengthens Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2004) offering a reason why they changed the learning. In the first possibility presented here 71.6 knew what the norm was. The second possibility could apply to either or both groups.

The results of the supervisor survey initially do not appear to agree with the operator's survey. The Supervisors stated that they observed CL 98.1% of the time throughout their experiences working at their current company and 44.1% of the operators indicated that they did change the method. The Supervisors stated that 58% of the time they did not permit the operator to continue using their own method but 66.6% of the operators said they were allowed to continue. This difference could be explained by the fact that certain tasks must be performed a certain way and others may not. The operators are recalling the tasks that may not make any difference where the Supervisors are recalling the ones that do or simply making an error in their recollection.

The Supervisors said that CL was age specific (i.e., 53.3% answered the question "Yes") but the results of all the operator employees showed that CL was not age specific. The Supervisors answers are based on recollection or perception whereas the operator's responses are based on actual individual responses. The operators stated that their

method was better and they were permitted to continue using it but the Supervisor's results showed that 65% of the time the operator method was not better and 58.3% were not allowed to continue with their method. Considering each Supervisor has 10 to 20 operators under them the ratio of operators to supervisor's results makes it plausible the two survey results agree. It can be pointed out that when the Supervisors had to show the operator a second time a few stated that it cost 8-10 dollars. This cost probably represents one hour of time. The Supervisor found that 58.3% of the time it was necessary to re-demonstrate the task multiplied by one hour of wages represents a substantial cost.

The Supervisor results and the HR results do agree as far as disciplinary or terminations were used. HR stated less than five terminations occurred in the past two years, and 10% of the Supervisors state the disciplinary action was necessary while 1.7 % stated termination was necessary. It is possible that some disciplinary actions were not formal and not reported to HR. The differences between HR's recall and the Supervisor's recall are similar. The survey covered 55 of the Company's over 125 Supervisors but the HR's records were for the entire company not the only the 55 surveyed. The HR comments were similar to the Supervisors surveyed in that the number of terminations for rule infractions is very low.

Summary

The initial intent of this study was to explore if CL existed and how prevalent it is. To the extent of this study, the results suggest that CL is a phenomenon experienced in the workforce. The implications of this research in its present form would serve as a warning to trainers and managers that close to 50% of new hires will not do a task as they

are first shown. Four out of the five theories presented a theme that is common to each of them in that the operator is changing the learning for reasons of their self-interest.

Much of the work performed by these operators is prepared to present a particular look or style; although the grass can be cut or a bush can be trimmed, the outcome may not be the desired or required appearance. It is possible that the operator is not even aware what the finished product should look like they are simply told to do it in a particular way but not why implying, do it my way it will be easier on the both of us.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study contained several limitations that should be considered in future research. The study confined itself to study lower level line operators, machine operator, and their Supervisors in a golf course maintenance setting. The study was limited to approximately 387 individuals from various locations (depending on the locations' operating season) in the United States that can read English or Spanish, not all location managers chose to distribute the surveys due to workloads at the time the surveys were distributed.

Only one company and a very specific position (landscape maintenance) were investigated in the current study. The application of the results can only apply to this study as any inference to any other group is not appropriate. This type of work could be considered unskilled work and these findings could reasonably be extended to other unskilled operators. There is no way of knowing if there is something unique to this group of operators either because they work for this particular company, because of the

type of work they do (outdoors, pleasant surroundings) or for any other reason that might cause another study's findings to be different.

The instrument used was developed by the researcher and therefor the validity of this survey was not tested by a second party. The results of this study might not generalize to other companies or industries although it does suggest that CL exists at least inside this company. This study needs to be further validated with additional studies and scrutiny by other academics and the business community. Added studies are needed to confirm this study's results, CL does exist and how prevalent it is within the work force and the reasons for it.

Another potential limitation is that the answers of the respondents were dependent on their perception of the questions asked, their degree of willingness to participate and what context the survey was introduced. If this study was introduced to the employees as necessary or mandatory versus as a way that might improve their working conditions through improved training methods, this introduction could impact the findings either positively or negatively.

The survey was conducted during the operators break or at the end of their shift. The study had to be conducted during non-working hours (i.e. their break) because the operators do not work in one location. The researcher witnessed the surveys being administered first hand two times in the Chicago area and the operators seemed very enthusiastic about taking the survey. The atmosphere when the other surveys were administered could have been different. The operators could have seen it as taking away from their free time and the possible results of the survey would not have an impact on them directly this could give less than truthful responses. The presence of the researcher

could also give the study a degree of importance and the impact the operators perception in considering the loss of free time. The limitations that were present in this study can be reduced in the future as pointed out later in this paper.

The questions might have been confusing or perceived differently by the employees. This issue was not conveyed but based on some of the answers there might have been some confusion, primarily for the education demographic item. The error that was identified in the education demographic was that the respondent in some instances would enter the number one or two for their years of education suggesting that they were only considering education beyond high school.

The researcher expected some Hispanics with language problems but those Hispanic operators completed the English version with complete answers. Where the response was suspect the mean years of education was substituted. The demographics were only moderately impacted by raising the education levels for those individuals that did not finish High School or had minimal education. Based on the other answers these respondents gave the impact was less than 5% and would have no impact on the results.

Another limitation of this research was which version of the survey (Spanish or English) that was given to the operator was decided by the supervisor without giving the respondent a choice. Only the number of surveys specified by the supervisor probably based on employees' surname of each language version was sent. It might be reported that out of 50 Hispanic operators there were 18 Spanish versions returned. This might have produced some resistance by the respondent to complete the survey due to someone's assumption of his or her language ability.

A final limitation of this study that was discovered from the results was within the population surveyed there were only two women. Any new research should include a company or companies that have a significant percentage of female operators representative of the number that generally exist in the workforce if possible. The inclusion of females would give the new study a generalization of the workforce or it could depict CL as a male only behavior.

Future research should be conducted within other industries and occupations that have a similar level of repetitive tasks, limited discretion on method and moderate supervision as in the current study. This second study would attempt to verify that the current study is not unique. This new study should be similar to the first in its simplicity and scope of identifying if CL exists and to what extent. The distribution of the language versions could be controlled better by producing extra English copies and then the non-English speaking operators could be given a choice. This could also create a different problem with an individual taking an English version to keep from being embarrassed when they are actually not fully fluent in reading English thus re-creating the same problems of misunderstanding the questions. It is for this reason both versions of future surveys should be kept simple. Precautions should be taken to minimize this by creating a relaxed atmosphere with some degree of privacy when the operator selects their version of the survey.

To expand on the findings of the second verifying study a third study should be conducted to further focus on reasons for CL. Questions would be more specific to the identified most common theories. The theories listed as follows were the theories attached to specific questions as pointed out earlier. These theories are proactive

behavior, prosocial non-compliant behavior, workarounds, LMX model and positive deviant behavior. This study would have several questions tied to each question to narrow down the most common reasons for CL.

Response options for the items could be more complicated rather than simple yes, no answers. In the current study an operator was asked if they liked the method of performing the task they were shown and their answer was a simple yes or no. In a new study the same question could be asked but the answer could be on a 5-point Likert scale such as how strongly did you like the task you were just shown. This type of answer although a little more time consuming would better describe the degree or tendency the respondent has toward CL behavior. This third study should be conducted across several industries and occupations.

Future research could also include direct observations of the new operator performing a task. The observation could be repeated a short time later (less than 1 month) to see if the operator is performing the task as shown or have they changed it. There is the possibility that the supervisor could be the observer if instructed to check on a predetermined basis (1, 2 or 3 weeks). This would give the researcher a broader range of data to include in this portion of the study.

To expand further on the current research findings, this third study could also investigate the personality of the operator. A personality assessment could be used to determine if there is a trait common to the people that change the learning. In Chapter 2 it was pointed out that much of the research on employee personality testing was directed towards negative behavior or success factors.

In their research Greguras, and Diefendorff, (2010) discuss the proactive employee and life satisfaction. They point out that the proactive employee is motivated by life satisfaction. They go on to point out that the Big Five traits commonly used in personality tests do not capture the proactive trait. In their research Kim, and Crant, (2009), studied the proactive employee and creativity. They feel that the proactive trait generally leads to positive outcomes but they agree that this is not always the case. This is consistent with the findings in Chapter 2 in that a common personality trait that can be tested for may not always result in successful behavior for the company. A personality test that tests for traits such as the California Psychological Inventory could give an indication of CL when administered in conjunction with a CL survey.

The CL survey and the personality test could be administered at the same time or in two different stages; both could be anonymous but would have to be tied to each other with a corresponding number. This research would have to be in a more controlled setting where time constraints were not as much a consideration and questions that are more detailed could be asked in order to focus further on possible reasons for CL.

The people studied should be in another industrial setting to keep consistency with this and the previous study. Other industries or occupations where creativity is emphasized or encouraged are beyond the scope of this study where a new employee not being fully aware of the outcome of their actions changes the learning. In this type of industry CL could still be a problem if certain basic procedures are not followed (i.e. safety, hiring, accounting, etc.). There can be elements of the job where creativity is valued and other elements where procedure must be followed. Suggested additional settings to continue this research might include fulfillment companies, metal finishing

companies, printing companies, law enforcement or any light manufacturing company because the type of work requires the strict adherence to rules and a process.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Operator Survey

APPENDIX A

Operator Survey

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Our goal is to gain a better understanding of how often employees devise new methods for completing their job assignments and why these new methods are devised. This survey is part of a research study conducted by a student for doctorate degree in business administration. The survey should only take 10-15 minutes of your time to answer the questions, while you are on break or during the designated time set aside by your supervisor. By completing this survey, you are giving your consent for the principal investigator to include your responses in the research findings. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary, with no payment to you, and you may choose not to participate without fear of penalty or any negative consequences. Individual responses will be treated confidentially. No individually identifiable information will be disclosed or published, and all results will be presented as aggregate, summary data. All answers or responses given to us will be seen and observed only by the research investigators. Survey information obtained by the study will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at all times.

This survey is completely independent of the Company. If you wish, you may request a copy of the results of this research study by writing to the principal investigator.

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Operator Questionnaire

Sample Questions and Answers

A. Do you enjoy your work? (Yes) No

B. Do you have other outside interests? (Yes) No

C. Are you ever late for work? Yes (No)

D. Do you have any children? If so, how many? (Yes) No 3

---

1 Are you male or female? Male Female

2 What is your race? (Circle 1) White Black Hispanic Asian Other _____

3 What is your age? Year's _____

4 How long have you done this kind of work? Year's _____

5 How many total years of education do you have? Year's _____

6 When you started this job, were you told what to do? Yes No

7 When you started this job, were you shown how to do it? Yes No

8 If you were shown, how much time was spent showing you how to do your job? _____Hrs.

9 When you started this job, did you like the method that you were shown? Yes No

10 Did you have a better method of doing any of the tasks you were shown? Yes No

IF "NO" TO QUESTION 10, STOP HERE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

IF "YES" TO QUESTION 10, PLEASE CONTINUE

11a If Yes to Question 10, for which task or tasks did you have a better method.
(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

11b

- ☐ Setup
- ☐ Mowing fairways, rough, etc.
- ☐ Edging mulch banks
- ☐ Trimming bushes, etc.
- ☐ Edging sprinklers
- ☐ Other _____

12a When you started this job, did you do these tasks the way you were shown? Yes No

12b If **"NO"** to question 12a, did you use your method? Yes No

13 Why did you use your method? _____

14 Are you now using your own method of doing the task? Yes No

15 After you started, how long did it take you to change to your method? Days___ Months____

16 If you changed the method, for how long did you do the task your way? Days___ Months___

17 Did you have to go back and use the way you were first shown for the task? Yes No

18 Did they show you again how to do the task their way? Yes No

19 Was their method of doing the task better?..... Yes No

20 Are you still using their way of doing the task?..... Yes No

21 Have you done this kind of work somewhere else?..... Yes No

22 Did the last place you worked for have a better method for doing this job?.. Yes No

23 In general, would you rather figure a task out for yourself?..... Yes No

24 Would your supervisor appreciate it if you had a better way of doing a task?.... Yes No

25 Would you rather **NOT** receive instructions on how to do something?..... Yes No

26 Do you like to figure out a different way of doing things?..... Yes No

27 Do you enjoy improving a method that has been in existence for a while?..... Yes No

28 If you did not like the way a task was being done, would you change it? …… Yes No

29 Would you change the prescribed method, if you thought it would be a benefit to the Company? Yes No

Thank you very much for your help

APPENDIX B

Supervisor Survey

APPENDIX B

Survey Questions Supervisors

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The researcher is investigating why a new employee might change a method of doing a task after they have been shown how to do it, to a different method.

When a new employee is hired, the supervisor often demonstrates how they want a task to be performed and leaves the employee to do the work. Sometimes the supervisor returns to see how the new employee is doing and finds that the individual is doing the task differently than the way he or she was shown. When questioned as to why the employee responds with something like it is easier for them this way or I found a better way. Sometimes their method is better and sometimes it is not.

The researcher wants to find out why the employee changed the procedure without doing it in the established method. The researcher is asking several questions to find out if you have ever observed employees doing this and if so what you did or did not do about it afterwards. Please look at the example questions at the beginning of this survey and circle yes or no or the actual number (as in your age). Your name is not necessary and there will be no record of who took the survey. This survey is independent of the Company.

Survey Questions Supervisor

Example Questions & Answers

Circle or write in a number for your answers.

A Do you enjoy your work? (Yes) No

B Do you have other outside interests? (Yes) No

C Are you ever late for work? Yes (No)

D Do you have any children, if so how many? (Yes) No __3___

Questions

1 Are you male or female? Male Female

2 What is your age? Years _____

3 How many years of education do you have? Years _____

4 How long have you worked in this industry? Years _____

5 How long have you worked with your current company Years _____

6 Do you speak Spanish? Yes No

7 When you show a new employee how to do a task, have you ever experienced a time where they do the job differently from what you showed them? Yes No

IF YOU ANSWERED NO TO THE ABOVE QUESTION, STOP HERE, THANK YOU VERY MUCH. IF YES, PROCEED TO #8

8a How many times have you experienced operators changing what they have just been shown at The Company? (Circle 1) 1-5 times 6-10 times 11+ times

8b Have you ever in your professional career experienced a operators changing what they have just been shown? Yes No

9 How many months ago at The Company did you observe a operator changing a task that they have just been shown? _____ months

10 Is there an age group where this changing the method is more likely to occur? Yes No

IF YOU ANSWERED "NO" TO QUESTION 10, SKIP TO QUESTION 12.

11 In what age group are employees likely to change the method of doing a task?

Any Under 30 30 and over

12a. What was their reason for changing the method shown? Easier for me Better

12b. If neither of above, what was their other reason? _____

13 Was their new method better? Yes No

14 Did you allow them to continue with their new method? Yes No

If "YES" to question 14, STOP HERE.

15 If you did not allow them to continue, did you have to show them correct the method again? Yes No

16 Did their method waste time or cost money? Yes No

17 If time was lost (retrain, re-work, injury), on average how many hours per operator?

_____

18 If money was lost due to poor quality (reject, return, damage), on average how much money per operator? $_____

19 Was disciplinary action necessary? Yes No

20a Were any employees terminated? Yes No

20b How many were terminated? _____

APPENDIX C

Operator Questionnaire, CL Scoring

APPENDIX C

Operator Questionnaire, CL Scoring

Note Question numbers in bold are used for CL scoring

Sample Questions and Answers

A. Do you enjoy your work? (Yes) No

B. Do you have other outside interests? Yes (No)

C. Are you ever late for work? Yes No (○)

D. Do you have any children? If so, how many? (Yes) No 3

---

1 Are you male or female? Male Female

2 What is your race? (Circle 1) White Black Hispanic Asian Other _____

3 What is your age? Year's _____

4 How long have you done this kind of work? Year's _____

5 How many total years of education do you have? Year's _____

6 When you started this job, were you told what to do? Yes No

7 When you started this job, were you shown how to do it? Yes No

8 If you were shown, how much time was spent showing you how to do your job? ____ ___Hrs.

9 When you started this job, did you like the method that you were shown? Yes No

10 Did you have a better method of doing any of the tasks you were shown? Yes No

IF "NO" TO QUESTION 10, STOP HERE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

IF "YES" TO QUESTION 10, PLEASE CONTINUE

11a If Yes to Question 10, for which task or tasks did you have a better method.
(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

11b

☐ Setup	☐ Trimming bushes, etc.
☐ Mowing fairways, rough, etc.	☐ Edging sprinklers
☐ Edging mulch banks	☐ Other _____

12a When you started this job, did you do these tasks the way you were shown? Yes No

12b If **"NO"** to question 12a, did you use your method? Yes No

13 Why did you use your method? _____

14 Are you now using your own method of doing the task? Yes No

15 After you started, how long did it take you to change to your method? Days___ Months____

16 If you changed the method, for how long did you do the task your way? Days___ Months___

17 Did you have to go back and use the way you were first shown for the task? Yes No

18 Did they show you again how to do the task their way? Yes No

19 Was their method of doing the task better?..... Yes No

20 Are you still using their way of doing the task?..... Yes No

21 Have you done this kind of work somewhere else?..... Yes No

22 Did the last place you worked for have a better method for doing this job?.. Yes No

23 In general, would you rather figure a task out for yourself?..... Yes No

24 Would your supervisor appreciate it if you had a better way of doing a task?.... Yes No

25 Would you rather **NOT** receive instructions on how to do something?..... Yes No

26 Do you like to figure out a different way of doing things?..... Yes No

27 Do you enjoy improving a method that has been in existence for a while?..... Yes No

28 If you did not like the way a task was being done, would you change it? …… Yes No

29 Would you change the prescribed method, if you thought it would be a benefit to the Company?

Yes No

APPENDIX D

Consent Form

APPENDIX D

Consent form

Title of Study

Do it my way it will be easier on both of us: Changing the Learning

I have been asked to participate in a research study about how operators learn new tasks, there is no education requirement. I was asked to be a possible participant because I am an employee of The Company, Inc. One hundred fifty people have been asked to participate in this study. The purpose of this study is to better understanding of how often employees devise new methods for completing their job assignments and why these new methods are devised.

If I agree to be in this study, I will be asked to fill out a paper and pencil survey. There will be no video or audiotaping used. This study will only take 10-15 minutes to complete. The risks associated with this study are minimal to none; we are asking questions on how you learn a task. The benefits of participation are an understanding of how people learn a new task. I will receive no monetary payment for participating. This study is anonymous individual responses will be treated confidentially. No individually identifiable information will be disclosed or published, and all results will be presented as aggregate, summary data. All answers or responses given to us will be seen and observed only by the research investigators. Survey information obtained by the study will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at all times and solely William Fanizzo and Dr. Stephanie Marberry will have access to the records. The records of this study will be kept private. No words linking me to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. I have the right to get a summary of the results of this research if I would like to have them.

I understand that my participation is strictly voluntary. My decision regarding my participation will not affect my current or future relations with Argosy University or the Company. If I decide to participate, I am free to refuse to answer any of the questions that may make me uncomfortable. I can withdraw at any time without my relations with the university, job, benefits, etc., being affected. I can contact with any questions about this study.

The Investigator at	or
William Fanizzo	Dr. Stephanie Marberry, Dissertation Chair
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APPENDIX E

HR Questions

APPENDIX E

HR Questions

Introduction

Thank you for participating in this research. I am trying to discover the reasons why a new operator changes the method of doing a task rather than the method shown. I hope to draw a correlation between the results of the surveys with actual employment records. The information I am seeking is on operator only and everything is kept anonymous.

1. On the average how much time does the company allocate for training operator?
2. How many operators have been given written warnings for work rules infractions in the last two years?
3. How many operators have been terminated for work rules infractions in the last two years?
4. How many operators have been given written warnings for not following company procedures in the last two years?
5. How many operators have been terminated in the last two years for not following company procedures?

Thank you,

William J. Fanizzo