Sample Answers to Questions in the Text

# Chapter 2: Diversity and Individual Differences

## Thinking Critically

### Diversity in OB

1. Explain why a diverse work group might score higher on innovation, creativity, and productivity than a group made up of similar individuals.

Question Location: Page 40

*Answer: A diverse work group provides different perspectives and opportunities for creative input above and beyond a non-diverse group. Any time you can approach a problem from multiple points of view; it gives a greater range of possibilities and a diverse mindset to assess and implement varying options.*

2. Identify and list at least three surface- and three deep-level aspects of diversity that describe you. Then list three surface- and three deep-level aspects of diversity that describe one of your good friends. How do the similarities and differences between you and your friend affect your friendship?

Question Location: Page 40

*Answers will vary. Surface-level – age, gender, and race. Deep level – attitudes, values, and personality. My friend is a 22-year-old woman from China. She is positive towards others, values friendship, and is quick to laugh. Similarities help us understand and identify with our friends which subsequently deepens the relationship.*

3. Imagine that you work in an organization with a variety of people who differ from you in terms of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and physical or mental ability. Which diversity category would you find it most difficult to understand and bridge? Which diversity category would you find it easiest to understand and bridge? Explain your answer.

Question Location: Page 40

*Answers will vary. For me, I would struggle with someone of a different mental ability. Sometimes, it is difficult to identify these differences and people are hesitant to discuss how it affects themselves and others. I think the easiest to understand and bridge is gender. There is a lot of common ground to build connections and enhance understanding.*

4. What criteria would you use to determine the effectiveness of a workplace diversity training program? List at least three separate measurable variables that you could evaluate if you were conducting research in this area.

Question Location: Page 41

*Answer: I would do a pre-test to assess the level of need for the training and then compare that to a post-test to determine quality of training. One could measure attitudes toward diversity, understanding of diversity issues, and compliance with diversity training to assess effectiveness in diversity training.*

### The Importance of Individual Differences

1. Identify at least three types of individual differences related to each of the following categories: behavior, thought, and decision-making.

Question Location: Page 42

*Answer: Three types of individual differences for behavior could be personality, attitudes, and ability. Three types of individual differences for thought could be education, IQ, and work experience. Three types of individual differences for decision-making could include risk seeking, self-awareness, and feedback seeking.*

2. To illustrate your level of self-awareness and your awareness of others, imagine a scenario in which you are working under a tight deadline and a new co-worker stops by your office and asks for help understanding a key report she needs submit to her manager. How are you likely to respond given your stress level and overall personality? How would your response affect a new employee who didn’t know you well?

Question Location: Page 42

*Answers will vary. I would see if I could help with the question quickly, if not I would try to direct the co-worker to another resource to help with the report. I would try to always respond because my personality would want to acknowledge their need, but still finish my work. It is important to start a good understanding with new employees and effective communication is a good source for understanding.*

3. Briefly discuss your levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy. What sort of an impact do these factors have on your ability to meet school and job expectations?

Question Location: Page 42

*Answers will vary. My level of self-esteem has gone up consistently as I get older and get more experience. Also my self-efficacy has increased as well as I learn new and better ways to approach tasks. If I don’t know how to do something, there are many sources of information to increase my self-efficacy. These factors are important to meet expectations in life, because confidence breeds performance.*

### Nature Vs. Nurture

1. Describe your personality by listing 7–10 adjectives that illustrate your behavior and approach to life. Now imagine your opposite personality type by listing 7–10 adjectives that are diametrically opposed to those you listed for yourself.

Question Location: Page 43

*Answers will vary: My personality – introverted, logical, agreeable, conscientious, creative, affable, and calm. Opposite – extroverted, illogical, disagreeable, irresponsible, narrow-minded, grumpy, and anxious.*

2. If you were a researcher who believed that individual differences were primarily determined by nature (i.e. inherited and hard-wired) what common-sense arguments could you use to support your belief?

Question Location: Page 43

*Answers will vary: I would look at similarities between people and their parents and other family members. You can look at studies where twins are separated but have many of the same characteristics as their sibling.*

3. If you were a researcher who believed that individual differences were primarily determined by nurture (i.e. shaped by one’s upbringing and environment) what common-sense arguments could you use to support your belief?

Question Location: Page 43

*Answers will vary: I would look at similarities of how people are that spend a lot of time together. I would look at the how education and life experiences affects similarities with others. I would look at differences in family members based on differences in their environments.*

4. Argue for a middle ground to the nature vs. nurture debate. How would you support the belief that BOTH genetic and environmental influence personality and differences?

Question Location: Page 43

*Answers will vary: Obviously both nature and nurture play an important role for the source of individual differences. You can combine the best of both sides to show that people are similar to their family/ancestry and they also grow similar with exposure to new people and experiences. The influence of nature/nurture is different for everyone but we can get better knowledge of their distinctions by continuing to study them in isolation and together.*

### Myers-Briggs-type Indicator and the Four Temperaments

1. How might knowing a co-worker’s Myers–Briggs type help you to more effectively work with her or him? How might knowing a co-worker’s Myers–Briggs type might hinder your ability to work together?

Question Location: Page 46

*Answers will vary: It can provide a baseline of understanding of how that person may interact with others. It can be a negative as it may falsely categorize someone into a particular type when our personalities are very complex.*

2. What other preference categories in addition to energy, information, decisions, and lifestyle that you think could be helpful in typing personality? List at least two.

Question Location: Page 46

*Answers will vary: I think humor and self-awareness are helpful in typing personality.*

### The Big Five Model

1. Rank each of the Big Five dimensions of personality (Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Agreeableness) in order of importance to workplace performance. Then rank them in order of importance to getting along well with others. Provide an explanation and defense for the two sets of rankings and discuss the similarities and differences between the two.

Question Location: Page 50

.*Answers will vary: I would rank them for work as – Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Openness to Experience, Neuroticism, and Extraversion. I would rank them for getting along well with others as – Agreeableness, Neuroticism, Openness to experience, and Conscientiousness. At work, being responsible is very important as is being agreeable with those at work. Being open to new experiences is valuable to enhancing job skills. Neuroticism is good in some situations but not good in others. Extraversion has the lowest input on job performance because you can still excel at any job despite being an introvert. The main difference between job performance and getting along well with others is that conscientiousness is not as important – but still good and being emotionally stable is very key as well. Other facets are useful but not as necessary in getting along with others.*

2. Pick one of the Big Five dimensions of personality and describe a possible work scenario where an employee who rates high on the dimension you have chosen would be more effective at solving a conflict or problem than an employee who rates low on the dimension. Next, describe a different scenario where an employee rating low on the dimension would be more effective in solving a problem or conflict than an employee rating high on the dimension.

Question Location: Page 50

*Answers will vary: I think a customer service job in which an employee has to interact directly with the customer; an agreeable employee would be much more effective than a disagreeable one. I think a disagreeable employee may be more effective in matters of the law and enforcing punishment than an agreeable one.*

### Other Personality Attributes

1. Imagine your ideal co-worker based on where you fall on each of the dimensions of personality. Identify the dimensions where similarity would be most beneficial to an effective working relationship. Identify the dimensions where difference would likely benefit the relationship. Defend your answers.

Question Location: Page 54

*Answers will vary: My ideal coworker is risk-taking, Type A, proactive, high self-monitor, low Machiavellianism, and internal locus of control. Similarities in self-monitoring and Machiavellianism are important being misalignment can lead to bad situations. Differences in Type A/B and risk-taking are important to balance decision-making and provide multiple perspectives.*

2. What sorts of industries or types of businesses would most value workers rating high on each of the six dimensions of personality. What sorts of industries or types of businesses would most value employees rating low on the six dimensions of personality. Are there any dimensions where a particularly low or particularly high rating would be an obstacle to satisfactory work performance regardless of the type of industry or business?

Question Location: Page 54

*Answers will vary: I would think examples of businesses would include – race car driver (risk-taking), car salesman (Type A/B), customer service (proactive), model (self-monitoring), politician (Machiavellianism), and acting (locus of control). Being low in proactivity would generally be detrimental as would high in Machiavellianism.*

## OB in the Real World

1. What are some management behaviors that might result in treating everyone equally differently but that will still drive performance?

Question Location: Page 41

*Answers will vary: I think great communication and good inclusion practices are behaviors that treat people equally differently but still drive performance.*

2. What action did Ben Hubbard take to get the best out of his employees?

Question Location: Page 41

*Answers will vary: Ben treated each employee as they needed to be treated, but still in a fair manner.*

## Examining the Evidence

1. Why might it be important to consider the honesty–humility personality dimension in addition to the traditional Big Five dimensions?

Question Location: Page 51

*Answers will vary: I would think someone low on this dimension would be more likely to engage in negative or unethical behaviors at work.*

2. What are some possible implications of the research findings outlined above for managerial practice?

Question Location: Page 51

*Answers will vary: Implications would be to try to hire honest/humble employees and have some screening mechanism for those that are low on this dimension.*

## Thinking Critically about the Case of Laura Piece

1. Observe: What cultural and background differences do you observe among the existing staff (Abigail, Tony, Cheryl, and Joey) based on the chapter’s descriptions of these characters and Laura’s first-day interactions with them? How does Laura’s culture and background compare to the others? What individual differences do you observe among the existing staff and Laura? List at least three individual differences for each character.

Question Location: Page 56

*Answers will vary: Laura is from Tennessee, 28, black, female, middle-income, spontaneous, smart, and enthusiastic. Abigail is from Oklahoma, 60s, white, female, wealthy, poor judgment and decision-making, and passionate about theater. Tony is from Oklahoma, 47, Hispanic, level-headed, and creative. Cheryl is from Louisiana, 45, white, mother, conscientious, intelligence, and longest tenured. Joey is from Texas, 23, attendance problem, poor work ethic. Laura is younger and more energetic than most everyone there. There is a diversity of ages, genders,and backgrounds.*

2. Interpret: Based on the diversity and range of individual differences among the characters as well as the description of Laura’s first day, what types of conflicts is Laura likely to encounter at WTRT? What conflicts is Laura likely to cause as she tries to do her job?

Question Location: Page 56

*Answers will vary: I think she will conflict with Joey’s attitude and Abigail’s flamboyance. She may be unable to get a good understanding of Abigail and her needs for the job. She may conflict with Joey’s negativity and bad attitude in a way that reduces her energy and passion.*

3. Analyze: Laura seems to have managed to keep an optimistic perspective on the challenges her new job will bring, but provide your own analysis of ways she may be able to forge positive relationships with her new boss and co-workers despite her differences with them.

Question Location: Page 56

*Answers will vary: I think Laura needs to get to know each person at their own level and get a good understanding of why each individual behaves the way they do. Then use that understanding to guide future interactions with them. For Abigail, she can indulge her passion and personality and go to others in the office for important questions that Abigail seems to avoid. For Joey, she can try to find ways to get him excited about his work and put him in charge of something that would capitalize on his unique skills and perspective.*

4. Evaluate: Evaluate which colleagues Laura should approach first as she begins her work at WTRT. What are three things she could do to learn more about her job and have a chance to interact with her colleagues? What potential problems could arise as Laura begins to reach out to her co-workers in order to learn more about the organization in which she is working?

Question Location: Page 56

*Answers will vary: I think she should maintain a good relationship with Abigail initially and also seek out Tony for his creative ideas and Cheryl for a balanced perspective. She talk to Abigail about the big picture and overall direction of the theater. She can learn more about the theater and its productions and future from Tony. She can get a balanced perspective on the resources available to her from Cheryl. Potential problems include communication errors, ingrained attitudes, and misinformation.*

5. Explain: Choose the first action you listed above and explain how you, as Laura, would approach accomplishing this task. If a problem arose, explain how you would attempt to handle it.

Question Location: Page 56

*Answers will vary: I would start by getting off on the right foot with Abigail. Try to take her perspective on the situation and see what she believes the direction of the theater is. I would listen to her stories and indulge her in a way that endears her to me as an employee. Then I would at various times slip in some basic questions about strategy and vision to help align my efforts in the first few weeks. If a problem arose, I would try to get a better perspective from others about Abigail in order to have a diverse look at a unique character from multiple perspectives.*