Psychology at Work
What Do I-O Psychologists Really Do?

Name: Jenny M. Hoobler, PhD

Job Title/Company: Associate Professor, University of Illinois at Chicago College of Business Administration.

Job responsibilities: I teach human resource management, organizational behavior, labor-management relations, and organization development to undergraduate business majors, MBAs, and business PhD students.

My specific I-O interests: Research in the areas of work and family intersections, abusive supervision, and women’s careers.

A typical day at my job includes: Teaching one class, reviewing journal manuscripts, working on my own research papers, and maybe responding to a media inquiry on women’s careers (the glass ceiling, pay disparities, etc.)

What I like best about my job: The first correlation matrix after all of my research data is coded—that first glimpse of how my variables are interrelated AND seeing MBAs beginning to have words (psychological theory) to describe and understand social phenomena in their jobs—seeing the “light click on.”

Some of the challenges of my job: Furlough days! IRB red tape.

My career path/job history: I worked for the Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Traffic Safety doing state and national campaigns such as “buckle up your baby,” and “drive smart, drive sober.” Then after my MBA, I went to work in Purchasing and Training for State Farm Insurance Companies in Bloomington, IL. I’ve been a business professor now for 8 years.

My advice to future I-O psychologists: Don’t dismiss the business school as a potentially great employer. The business world needs psychological insights now more than ever—as employees’ psychological contracts have changed as a result of the economic downturn. There’s a new version of the employment relationship that can represent a painful change for the contemporary worker.

Why I-O psychology matters: Employees spend the majority of their adult waking hours at work. Listen to the conversation at any dinner party: People have the need to make sense of social phenomena on the job. I-O psychology fills this void.

Read the entire series at www.siop.org/psychatwork.aspx!