What are the advantages and disadvantages of work specialization (from the employees’ perspective)?

According to the textbook, work specialization is “the degree to which organizational tasks are broken down into separate jobs.” This means that businesses determine what tasks need to be done and how those tasks will be divided among employees. It is difficult to make generalizations about how work specialization affects employees because the advantages and disadvantages of specialization vary depending on the skill level required to do a task or job and the personality of an individual employee.

For unskilled employees, work specialization offers certain advantages. One is that a company may want to hire unskilled workers and train them to do a specific task. With practice, the employees can become highly skilled at their task. If pay is based on productivity, the workers will be able to earn more money. There are numerous disadvantages to this level of specialization. Some workers may become unmotivated if they do not associate their work with the company’s success. If workers become bored, they may produce poor quality work, not come to work at all, or burn out. Finally, employees performing a single task cannot expand their skill sets; if they lose their jobs, they do not have transferable job skills.

Work specialization offers advantages to skilled employees who want to have a job that is highly focused in one area. These employees have the opportunity to develop their specialized skills and become experts, which can result in higher pay and a high level of job security. These employees may also have autonomy and the ability to see how their work contributes to the company. Examples of fields that have highly specialized and highly focused jobs are science, medicine, and computer technology. Significant disadvantages of work specialization for highly skilled employees include lack of opportunity to develop managerial skills needed for promotions and employee burnout.