

Discussion Questions Week 4

The Human Resource Frame looks at the relationship between people and organizations; both having needs that influence one another and the effectiveness of the organization. In the context of higher education, what do undergraduate students need from an institution to succeed? What do institutions need from undergraduate students to succeed? What happens when these respective needs are not aligned?

There is a complicated relationship between institutions of higher education and the students that attend those institutions. This relationship is complex because while it's true that students need things from their institutions, and institutions need things from their students, it isn't often that the needs of both parties directly overlap, which can create tension. For example, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs states that physiological needs and safety must be prioritized before students can develop further (Bolman & Deal, 2017). At institutions of higher education, this means that students need to have satisfactory housing, they need to have adequate access to food, and they need to feel safe in their community (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Almost without question, both students and higher education officials would agree that these needs are a priority. However, institutions of higher education also need to continue to make money in order to stay competitive in attracting students. This competing need means that institutions and students might have differing perspectives regarding what it means to have those essential physiological needs met. This fall at IU, for example, many students have expressed concerns that their dining needs are not being met. The dining facilities on campus are severely short-staffed, and many are also significantly affected by supply shortages. This has led to inconsistent and unpredictable dining hours, and a lack of food options. One proposed solution has been to raise the wages of those who work for IU Dining in order to improve the staffing situation. However, this would be a very expensive change, and it seems unlikely to happen, despite IU's increased spending in other areas, because students' needs are technically still being met. Unless this issue begins to affect IU's enrollment, other needs are being prioritized.

Are any of the basic human resource strategies principles and practices more important than the other? Which of these principles and/or practices have you observed (more or less of) in your role as a Graduate Assistant, as a graduate student, or at your undergraduate institution? How was your development (professional or personal) affected?

There are pros and cons to all human resource strategies, principles, and practices, but I think that Argyris and Schön's concept of *espoused theories* as opposed to *theories-in-use*, as described in chapter eight of *Reframing Organizations*, is one that is particularly valuable for both self-reflection and analyzing group dynamics. According to these scholars, espoused theories are the "accounts individuals provide whenever they try to describe, explain, or predict their behavior," while theories-in-use can be described as the things that "people actually do" (Bolman & Deal, 2017). I think it's important for individuals to be able to acknowledge that their thoughts and actions may not always align, and that others' thoughts and actions may not always align, so that we can then be more intentional about choosing our words and behaviors

in our work environment. Throughout my time in undergrad, and in my time so far at IU, I've absolutely seen this conflict between espoused theories and theories-in-use occur. Argyris and Schön emphasize that it's a natural human reaction for people to place blame on others as opposed to themselves, or to think about their perspective as being more valid than opposing perspectives (Bolman & Deal, 2017). However, a big part of my development as a student and as a professional has been to work to examine my own thoughts, biases, and perspectives when interacting with peers, students, and other professionals, so I hope that this is a skill that I continue to develop over the next few years.

References

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2017). *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*. John Wiley & Sons. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>.