

# Reframing as a Tool for Moving Colleges Forward

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Bolman, I., & Deal, T. 2003. Instructors resources for reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership. Jossey-Bass.

# What is a frame?

- Mental map to read and negotiate a “territory”
- The better the map, the easier it is to know where you are and get around (a map of New York won’t help in San Francisco)
- Frame as *window*: enables you to see some things, but not others
- Frame as *tool*: effectiveness depends on choosing the right tool and knowing how to use it

# Framing and “Blink” process

- Well-learned and practiced frames facilitate “rapid cognition” – the capacity to quickly and accurately size up situations
- Qualities of rapid cognition:
  - Nonconscious (you can do it without thinking about it)
  - Fast
  - Holistic
  - Results in “affective judgments”

# Structural Frame

- **Roots:** sociology, management science
- **Key concepts:** goals, roles (division of labor), formal relationships
- **Central focus:** alignment of structure with goals and environment

# Human Resource Frame

- **Roots:** personality and social psychology
- **Key concepts:** needs (motives), capacities (skills), feelings
- **Central focus:** fit between individual and organization

# Political Frame

- **Roots:** political science
- **Key concepts:** interests, conflict, power, scarce resources
- **Central focus:** getting and using power, managing conflict to get things done

# Symbolic Frame

- **Roots:** social and cultural anthropology
- **Key concepts:** culture, myth, ritual, story,
- **Central focus:** building culture, staging organizational drama

# Structural and Human Resource Frames

<b>Frame</b>	<i><b>Structural</b></i>	<i><b>Human Resource</b></i>
Metaphor for organization	Factory or Machine	Family
Central concepts	Rules, roles, goals, policies, technology, environment	Needs, skills, relationships
Image of Leadership	Social architecture	Empowerment
Basic leadership challenge:	Align structure to task, technology, environment	Align organization and human needs

# Political and Symbolic Frames

<b>Frame</b>	<b><i>Political</i></b>	<b><i>Symbolic</i></b>
<i>Metaphor for organization</i>	Jungle	Carnival, temple, theater
<i>Central concepts</i>	Power, conflict, competition, organizational politics	Culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, heroes
<i>Image of Leadership</i>	Advocacy	Inspiration
<i>Basic leadership challenge:</i>	Develop agenda and power base	Create faith, beauty, meaning

# Expanding managerial thinking

<b>Traditional management thinking</b>	<b>Artistic thinking</b>
See only one or two frames	Holistic, multi-frame perspective
Try to solve all problems with logic, structure	Rich palette of options
Seek certainty, control, avoid ambiguity, paradox	Develop creativity, playfulness
One right answer, one best way	Principled flexibility

# Conclusion

- Narrow thinking → clueless managers
- Multiple frames improve understanding, promote versatility
- Multiple frames enable reframing: viewing the same thing from multiple perspectives