

A Better Way to Design General Education

AAC&U Workshop

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Agenda for workshop

- Introductions and Overview
- Practice as a Design Team
- Break
- Thinking Differently: Organization Theory
- Straight-up Advice
- Questions and Closing

Watching the Video *ABC News Nightline 07-13-99 "The Deep Dive"*

1. What are the identified rules of group work? (Fem Ad)
2. What are the main characteristics of how the work is structured?(Male Ad)
3. Which elements of IDEO's approach would work in an academic setting?
(Fem fac)
4. What aspects of this concept seem not to be transferable?(male fac)

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Design Team Directions

(Self selected small groups of 5 people; the person who traveled the least distance is group facilitator)

Your group task:

After introductions, take 5-7 minutes to determine by what rules or guidelines you will operate for this activity. Identify 3-4 rules you will follow as a team and write them a sheet of white paper so they can be read.

For the next 20 minutes, your charge is to design the curriculum for a 1 hour orientation for participants invited to present workshops at AAC&U conferences. (25 participants) What do you think is important to accomplish in the orientation and how might that happen? Use additional paper for your work.

BREAK

Applying Organizational Theory: Another specific tool for design

Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership* Jossey-Bass San Francisco 1999.

Bolman and Deal offer the concept of frames which are different vantage points and tools for action. They directly influence organizational decision making.

The 4 frames:

Structure

Organizations exist primarily to accomplish established goals; hierarchy, specialization and procedures

Human Resource

Organizations exist to serve human needs; advancement, careers, professional development

Political

Organizations are coalitions with differing values, information and perceptions of reality.

Symbolic/Cultural

Individual differences in understanding matter; how people understand what things mean

Organizational decision making is the essentially the identification of problems and the determining of solutions within an organizational context. (Daft, 2004)

How you proceed can be effected by the degree of problem consensus and the amount of solution knowledge.² Problem consensus is the degree of understanding and agreement about nature of the problem and which goals to pursue; solution knowledge refers to understanding and agreement about how, technically, to solve problems (Daft 2004:470)

		Problem Consensus	
		<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>
Solution Knowledge	<u>Low</u>	1	2
	<u>High</u>	3	4

(from Daft, 2004)

² See the work of Richard Daft, *Organizational Theory and Design*. 2004 South-Western Thomson Learning. See also Stephen L. Trainor "Designing a Signature General Education Program" *Peer Review* Fall 2004 AAC&U publication.

Advice

Specific recommendations for how to operate as a design team.

The hypothesis is that the more recommendations that are followed, the increased chances for success.

- Ask for input: know what you can know empirically
- Design Team operation: 5-7 “non-representative” members, intensive (summer if you can do it), rewarded, designated space
- Mission
- “Who’s gonna hate this?”
- No surprises, no surprises, no surprises.
- Group Think Check
(Illusion of morality, illusion of unanimity, mind-guarding, self-censorship, rationalization, negative stereotyping of outsiders)
- Embedded outcomes and assessment
- Steering Committee
- Teaching not tossing
- Dissemination: lobby, listen and count

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