

PLS 500 – Public Administrative Theory

Topic: Introduction

Designing Effective programs (Eoyang and Spencer 1996)

- Numerous poorly designed programs
 - Ambiguous goals, weak operational concepts, careless implementation designs, duplication and overlap with programs in other agencies (e.g., federal catfish research), inability to keep up with service demands (e.g., FAA)
 - See handout on public maladministration
 - Why the reading was assigned:
 - Get you to start thinking about the potential problems experienced by your organization get you started with the organizational analysis assignment
 - Want you to develop the philosophy that management matters and there are almost always ways to improve the performance or organizations
- Program design criteria
 - Identify who benefits and how they benefit
 - Prioritize beneficiaries
 - Validate the need (environmental scan)
 - Determine program scope and size
 - Inspire public confidence
 - Define and evaluate alternative methods of program delivery
 - Privatization, contracting, different policy tools, reengineering, changes in implementation structure, interorganizational partnerships,
 - Examine program compatibility
 - Assess its competitive advantage
 - Does it complement existing programs (how does it add public value)
 - Does it preserve administrative harmony (consistent with the organization's mission)?
 - Make the program a catalyst (fosters competition, empowers people or communities, etc.)
 - Assess cost-effectiveness and efficiency
 - Are there ways to improve organizational performance (e.g., productivity, efficiency, etc.)?
 - Ensure financial feasibility
 - What are the total life-cycle costs, annual budget requirements, risk of cost over runs, revenue generation, debt management, etc.
 - Are these costs feasible in current or future budget climate?
 - Determine implementation feasibility
 - Are there problems with the design of the implementation structure?
 - What about implementation problems such as accountability, resources, clarity of policy messages, relationships with implementation partners, etc.
 - Can the program be tested using demonstration projects
 - Provide program flexibility
 - Tension between flexibility and accountability

- Is the organization dependent on critical resources? Are the critical resources available?
- Institute performance measurement and program evaluation
 - Does the program have a way to measure performance or track inputs, work load, outputs, outcomes, efficiency/productivity, customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, service quality/timeliness
 - How costly is it to collect, store, monitor, and track performance data

Changing Public Sector (Denhardt and Aristigueta 1996)

- Changing nature of public management
 - Environment of public administration is becoming more turbulent, more uncertain, more complex, and more stressful
 - Public expects government to meet certain basic needs and the demand for delivering high quality public services is greater than ever
 - Revenues available to provide new or increased services have not matched demands and managers are increasingly being asked to do more with less
 - Somewhat contradictory pressure on governments to promote a sense of community (civil society) in a society that is marked by increasing diversity
- These changes require new ways of organizing
 - Traditional hierarchical organizations are often too rigid and respond slowly to these and other changes
 - Greater emphasis on service quality
 - Empowerment of lower level employees
 - Improve creativity and innovation
 - Efforts to encourage risk taking
 - Greater collaboration with other public, private, and nonprofit organizations
- These changes require new management skills
 - More effort to change organization's culture and less concerned with changing its structure
 - More skilled at empowering and facilitating and less concerned with controlling
 - More concerned with fostering change and innovation and less concerned with maintaining the status quo
- These changes also require developing new intrapersonal skills
 - *Interpersonal skills* include leadership, communication, and ability to motivate others
 - *Intrapersonal skills* include developing a personal vision, becoming more creative, being able to occasionally take well-calculated risks, being able to deal with ambiguity and change, and improve your sense of self
- Process of skill development
 - *Cognitive knowledge*: Understanding the basic technical skills that the discipline requires
 - EX: a correct golf swing, understanding the process of work motivation
 - But cognitive understanding alone is not enough – you need practice
 - *Behavioral skills*: through practice, you develop the skills to apply the technical skills on a consistent basis

- For the golfer this would be extensive practice on the range. For the manager, this includes developing interpersonal skills through workshops, simulations, case studies, and most importantly, experience
- Still not enough to avoid problems
 - Golfer may choke or musician may have stage fright
 - Public administrators may have the same problems when faced with complexity, uncertainty, stress, time pressures, etc. – Mistakes will happen
 - Having a certain moral and psychological grounding (intrapersonal skills) may help you to act more effectively in these situations

Four Intrapersonal Skills (Denhardt and Aristigueta 1996)

- Personal vision
 - Organizations benefit when their leaders and employees have developed a personal vision
 - A personal vision is strategic and is an expression of the values that inspire and motivate
 - *Self image*: what qualities do you want to have
 - *Tangibles*: What material things do you want to own
 - *Home*: what is your ideal living environment
 - *Health*: What is your desire for health, fitness, etc.
 - *Relationships*: What type of relationships do you want
 - *Work*: What is your ideal professional or vocational situation
 - *Personal pursuits*: Individual learning, travel, etc.
 - *Community*: What is your vision for the community in which you live
 - *Life purpose*: What is your purpose? What do you want your obituary to say?
 - *Other*: What else about your life do you want to create
 - Can your organization contribute to your success in accomplishing your vision?
 - Perhaps your vision can become part of your organization's vision?
- Being more creative and innovative
 - Creativity is often widely distributed in society but is often suppressed in bureaucratic organizations
 - By recognizing your creative capacities and encouraging their use, you can become more creative
 - 4 stumbling blocks to creative problem solving
 - *Constancy*: people are often wedded to a particular idea or approach – problems are then defined without considering the full range of alternatives
 - *Commitment* to a particular point of view or set of ideas may serve as a block to creative ideas – problems are defined in terms of past problems
 - *Compression* results when you look too narrowly at a problem and creative solutions are ignored
 - *Complacency* refers to the fact that we fall into poor thinking habits or are mentally lazy
- Dealing with ambiguity and change
 - People have different orientations towards change
 - *Tolerance of ambiguity* refers to the extent to which individuals are threatened by or have difficulty coping with ambiguous situations, rapid or unpredictable change, inadequate or unclear information, or high complexity.

- People who are entrepreneurial tend to have a higher tolerance for ambiguity
- *Locus of control*: people's attitudes about the extent to which they control their own destiny
 - An *internal locus of control* reflects a belief that you are responsible for your success or failure
 - An *external locus of control* reflects a belief that your success or failure is the result of someone else's actions
- This is not only an important for individual managers but is an important part of an organization's culture. Can often encourage through:
 - Job redesign
 - Employee involvement
 - Empowerment
 - Techniques for reducing stress (e.g., time management)
- Improving one's self awareness
 - Self-awareness and self-acceptance are strongly related to personal adjustment, interpersonal relationships, and life success
 - How can you improve your management skills or maintain your sense of well-being in turbulent times if you don't have strong self-awareness and are aware of your:
 - *Personal values* (well come back to in the motivation section)
 - *Cognitive learning style*: introverts/extroverts; how you learn and process information
 - *Interpersonal orientation*: how you tend to behave in interpersonal relationships
 - *Career anchors*: a self-perceived talent, motive, or value that guides, stabilizes, integrates, and sometimes constraints a person's career
 - Technical/functional competence, managerial competence, autonomy, security, entrepreneurialism, service, challenge, and lifestyle
 - *Self-disclosure*: requires that we interact with others and disclose ourselves to others. The information gained by these interactions helps us understand how we are perceived by others.

Some ways to develop your intrapersonal skills (Denhardt and Aristigueta 1996)

- Focus on learning from your administrative experience – become a “reflective practitioner”
- Keep a journal
- Talk regularly with members of a support group
- Watch how others deal with and manage change
- Strive for balance and insight
- Set and example