Summary: Speaker really focused on using Bolman and Deal’s Four Framework Approach to Leadership to talk about implementing change and innovation in one’s organization. One of the things you have to do to be an effective leader and implement your innovative practice is you have to learn to develop some frameworks for dealing with complex organizations, such as academic libraries. Kristi’s organization uses the Bolman and Deal’s Four Frames Approach to Leadership. It focuses on the big picture and helps us respond the challenges of institutional complexity. It provides you with diverse skills, strategies, and understandings that you need to operate in this complex environment. It also increases your personal power because when you come to understand the four frames, you learn how to more effectively work with everyone in your organization. You come to understand where the different interests are and what you need to do to move your innovations forward.

The Four Frames:

Structural - Focus on tasks that divide the work and coordinate all the different pieces. They focus on the rational analysis of providing the clarity they emphasize the normal roles. “What’s my job description?” Structural framing focuses on the relationship in the hierarchy in the organization. Problems arise for structural misalignment. If there’s a problem the Structurally-focused will ask, “What do I need to change structurally in my organization to fix this problem?” They analyze roles, rules, policies, procedures and lines of authority. If innovation is not work, they may ask, “Where is the structure are things falling down?”

Political – (high level managers and library deans might be high in this category), building coalitions, bargaining, negotiating, building coalitions, managing conflicts. Distributive justice and empowerment, it focuses on the allocation of power and scarce resources. Assumes that differences are enduring, resources are scarce and conflict is inevitable. Political framing focuses on alliances.

Human Resources – facilitate the alignment of individuals and organizational needs. “Where is there a good fit in our organization?” All about coaching people, getting people the skills they need to do their jobs. They tend to focus on people and caring for those people. Assumes that institutions and individuals need each other, the alignment between the two benefits both sides. Focuses on needs, skills, relationships and fit.

Symbolic- focuses on common meaning, building faith in shared meaning, hope and promise. It assumes that people interpret experiences in different ways and that making meaning is a central organizational process. Culture is the emotional and intellectual glue that holds you together. It takes a look at culture, ritual, vision, ceremonies, stories, and symbols.


If you do the assessment, you’ll see that there is a spectrum and there’s a tension between different frames (e.g., high in one and perhaps low in another; high in political but low in human resources). We all have bias toward one or more frames. But, in order to be a more effective practitioner, in the complex environment that we find ourselves in higher education, we can build our skills in these different areas. You can go to Bolman’s web site to do the survey:
Find out what leader you are by going here (about 10 questions):

Results will show where in the spectrum we fall into with the different frames. Most people fall into one or two categories. Many librarians are either Human Resources or structurally-orientated or both; we tend to be weak in the political and symbolic views and if we are going to work with our constituents on campus and work with each other in our organizations, those are areas that we may need to develop a little bit.

The Political Frame:

Some of us may have some negative connotations associated with one of the frames, such as the political frame. Kristi asked the audience, “What kind of connotations do you affiliate with Political?”

Manipulative
Overbearing
Scheming

They want to gather all the power for themselves!
An ability to “play” the system

Reframing the Political Frame for Innovative Practice:

- Positive ways of being Political: Kristi has had to reframe her framing of the political. Sometimes, in order to get things done and in order to be smart one must be political, but it does not mean that it has to be associated with those negative connotations. It can really be about, “Well, who are the people in my organization that I need to know in order to get this done?”, or “I just really like people, I should really know more about Suzy and her two kids; so when the time comes, I can ask her for something.”
- Conflict can teach you something: Also, in libraries, we may be afraid of disagreements, but in the political framework, conflict is a good thing. But, one way to think of it is, ”What can I gain from having someone disagree with me?” –provides me with more information on how to be more effective.
- Right people - forming Coalitions, Allies & Alliances: finding the right people to be on board with your ideas. Bring on people who are passionate, interested, committed and influence.

Effectiveness: The Right Diagnosis to get the job done.

What frame(s) do I need to be in order to make something happen?
Do I need a structure . . .such as form a charter? Do I need to coach people to get this done?

How do I practice being symbolic? Do I need to tell a story? Formula: “One formula is to tie things into your glorious past and talk about how we are a crossroads. Or there is a problem or a challenge that we need to face now and link into future those things that link back to those shared values. . .”

[Audience has a chance to practice a scenario]

Managing from the middle: learn how to use all four frames, improve diagnostic skills (how to look at each scenario from each perspective). “The frame that we don’t pay attention to is the one that is going to bite us.” Make time for reflecting, not just doing.

Everyone is a leader:

-Develop your toolkit for Innovation
- Know that you have a voice, power, and influence in your organization
- Teach young librarians coming in how to use this model
- Do homework
- Have Courage
- Know your values

**Context of Influence:**
Don’t just bring a problem to your boss, bring solutions and alternatives.
Put it in writing and be brief. Keep it short.
Focus on the big picture and think about the complexity of organization.
Have data to support your idea.
Top leaders have the responsibility to communicate. Bottom up leaders have the responsibility to ask!
Execute! Establish your rationale using the four frames and forming the winning coalition of people with a shared passion for accomplishing that goal.
Define what success looks like! Qualitatively and Quantitively.