

Module One Critical Thinking Questions

1. Within their first chapter, Bolman and Deal describe a fateful reframing strategy implemented by Bob Nardelli at Home Depot. Why did Nardelli's strategy fail? How can "seeing an incomplete or distorted picture as a result of overlooking or misinterpreting important signals" affect an organization?
 - a. Nardelli was only focused on the metrics and not the whole picture. This affected the organization's moral and "he seemed unaware or unconcerned that he had embarrassed his board, enraged his stakeholders, turned off his customers, and reinforced his reputation for arrogance and a tin ear." I'll have to use that "tin ear" line sometime. He took the family out of Home Depot and replaced it with unhappy people.
2. Do we educators have customers? Carefully explain.
 - a. I believe so. We have students that want the best education along with a fun and safe environment, parents that want great communication and reassurance, and communities that hope the schools are well maintained and, quite frankly, not disruptive. Educators are selling these ideas. Students are our income and parents are the middle men (people 😊).
3. What is the consequence, potentially, of misreading your world in education in the same vein as Lay and Skilling misread where Enron stood in the world?
 - a. I think this may be more of an ethics question rather than an ignorance one. It is implied that the rationale for these men was to "bend or break old rules when you're exploring uncharted territory." As teachers, rules are incredibly important and valid. Should I break a rule about MCA testing and let students have a "cheat sheet" in front of them? It would raise my test scores and most likely my paychecks. That would undermine the whole purpose of school. The purpose of school is to inspire a growth mindset and do what's best for the student and their learning.
4. "Reframing requires an ability to think about situations in more than one way" - Bolman and Deal, p. 6. To what extent do you believe this statement should apply to educational leaders? Explain.
 - a. Sometimes teachers differ. In one of my other Moorehead courses, a topic that has brought a lot of discussion is "What do we do with difficult teachers?" This topic engaged me as I find teachers to be passionate, steadfast, intelligent and a little anxious. They may be misconstrued as argumentative, stubborn, arrogant or defensive (respectively). As leaders, recognizing that teachers mean well can sometimes require a different perspective. I, for one, have yet to meet a teacher who didn't confuse or

surprise me in some way as a leader. Teachers are wonderful people and need to be reminded of that sometimes.

5. Explain and make educationally relevant “self-destructive intelligence syndrome” – page 7, Bolman and Deal.
 - a. I think of it as the one time a teacher swears in class. Oops! The teacher that works so hard and gets students to achieve so high, and all of a sudden they say or do something that brings 3 or 4 parents to contact the principal. Sometimes it’s a principal who claims “this workshop is one of the best I’ve ever been too,” yet the entire staff couldn’t help but be appalled at how condescending the presenter was to teachers (true story). Again, we will all make mistakes. That doesn’t mean we can’t learn from them.

6. “Managers who master the hammer and expect all problems to behave like nails find life at work confusing and frustrating” – p. 13. Where are you at in your journey to master several tools and recognize problems as unique to their respective situation? How important is this simple concept for you as you transition within K12 education?
 - a. This is why new teachers (under 5 years of experience) should not be leaders of any sort. The best, and most successful, way to be a leader is with experience and the willingness to ask, “Why?” As I stated previously, teachers can often be people who differ. Leaders must find a way to understand and help those teachers. This importance is crucial for leaders because there is more than one need that must be met for a cohesive and happy work place: “structural, human resource, political and symbolic.”