

## **Suggested lecture/seminar plan for Chapter 7**

Introduce lecture by asking students to write down 5 adjectives that describe the institution in which they are currently studying. Use answers to introduce the idea of metaphorical analysis. (10 minutes)

Outline the key differences between mechanistic vs. organic organizations. Ask students to consider which type best describes their learning institution. Ask them for examples to illustrate their point of view. (10 minutes).

Show and explain Burrell and Morgan's scheme for system's analysis. Ask students to use this scheme to analyse any one department in their learning institution, such as, for example, the library or the refectory. Encourage students to use as many of the scheme's subsystems as they can, but to leave out those subsystems that they are unable to accommodate in their analysis. Discuss findings and the usefulness of the scheme for analytical purposes (15 minutes).

Present Schein's typology and ask students to use it to analyse an organization with which they are familiar. Use examples from the chapter to help them understand the sorts of issues they should be considering (15 minutes).

Ask students to list the key differences between a functionalist and an interpretative approach to the study of organizational culture. Discuss their answers with reference to the ideas presented in Chapter 7 (10 minutes).

## Discussion question guidelines for Chapter 7

### 1. What is the value of organizational analysis?

- (i) It draws attention to those features of organizations that play a significant role in influencing employee behaviour. Bureaucracies, for example, encourage employees to rely on rules and procedures for problem solving, whereas more organic organizations encourage greater employee autonomy in decision making.
- (ii) It provides a useful way of understanding what organizations are and different analytical approaches draw our attention to different aspects of organization. An analysis of structure, for example, lets us see how the organization is designed and how its constituent parts are related together. It also gives us a feel for how different parts of the organization communicate or show us where blocks to communication might be occurring. A systems analysis, conversely, focuses our attention more closely on the relationships between different parts of the organization and how these relationships affect the way the whole organization responds to events that occur both inside and outside itself.
- (iii) Organizational analysis frames our understanding of the micro-processes of individuals and groups. For example, if we want to understand why employees are failing to respond positively to a job enrichment program, we may find that an analysis of organizational culture will help us. If we want to understand why two groups in the organization are in conflict, an analysis of the power bases in the organization may make this more explicable.

### 2. Organizations are far too complex to enable any single metaphor to be truly useful. To what extent is this statement true?

The focus in this answer should be on pointing out that different types of analysis facilitate the understanding of different phenomena and that it is probably true that there is not one metaphor that would allow all organisational phenomena to be adequately understood. A structural analysis, for example, is probably not particularly helpful for understanding why employees are opposed to a proposed structural change. However, a cultural analysis is probably not terribly useful for helping an organization to decide how to reorganise itself so as to more effectively compete in a highly competitive environment.

### 3. Is it possible to identify the difference between the values and attitudes that members of organizations say they have, and those they *really* have? Does it matter?

It is probably useful for students to begin this question by going back to the basics of chapter 2 and the idea that attitudes consist of cognitive, affective and *behavioural* components. This suggests that it is possible to identify the difference between actual

and espoused attitudes and values since individuals expressing one point of view while actually believing another, may well show behavioural contradictions. For example, many organizations express the belief that grass-roots employees are their most valued resource, yet contradict this belief by awarding senior executives huge pay rises (relative to those given to shop-floor staff) or by paying lip-service to the needs and desires of grass-roots staff.

The question of whether differences between actual vs. expressed values is important depends on the aim of the person wishing to establish this answer. For example, a manager wishing to increase productivity through employee empowerment, may be less concerned with whether employees truly are feeling more commitment to their organization than with whether productivity does actually increase. On the other hand, an organization wishing to stamp out racism, will need to be careful in examining the differences between actual and expressed attitudes and values.

**4. List some good consequences of conflict at the level of the individual, group and organization. How might attempts manage conflict interfere with these consequences?**

- Air grievances
- Enable different perspectives
- to be shared and understood
- Bring about changes that are
- negotiated and owned

If conflict is actively managed, by say, bringing two conflicting parties together, the parties concerned may not be motivated to resolve the problem and airing grievances at this stage may even serve to increase or exacerbate the conflict. Bringing third parties in to manage the process may lead to an unwillingness to air grievances because the conflicting parties may not want the third party to know what is going on, or may be unwilling to portray themselves in a bad light. If solutions are suggested by third parties, they may not be owned or believed in.