LEADERS AND THEIR LEARNINGS: WHAT AND HOW LEADERS LEARN AS THEY TRANSFORM ORGANIZATIONS

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Leaders and Their Learning: What and How Leaders Learn as They Transform Organizations

Archie Tinelli
(Abstract)

This study sought to better understand the learning of leaders who undertake the task of organizational transformation.

This inquiry, designed as a qualitative case study of two leaders and informed by a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, was guided by the following research question: When leaders undertake the task of organizational transformation, what can be discovered about what they learn and the process of how they learn?

The leaders learned about themselves and about how to transform their organizations. The leaders confirmed knowledge they already had about themselves (what motivates them) and they developed new understanding of themselves (their leadership style). In addition, they developed new strategies and tactics for transforming their organizations (for example, ways to deal with troublesome staff members).

The study also found that the leaders operated from a work-oriented mental model that dominated their thinking. The leaders’ learning was embedded in and inextricably
linked to their work; it was accidental, incidental, and tacit.

The leaders’ learning was heavily influenced by four factors: organizational context, the use of intuition to generate options and solutions, the use of daily prayer by both leaders (an unexpected finding), and consultation with a network of professional colleagues.

The data were collected throughout one year in which the leaders, who served as co-researchers, were observed six full days each (distributed across the year) and interviewed more than eight hours each. Interviews were also conducted with several staff members from each leader’s organization.

The data were analyzed during several iterative stages that included the researcher working independently as well as collaborating with each of the two leaders. Further, one long-time colleague of each leader from outside each of the organizations provided an additional perspective on the data.

This study also demonstrates the complex, rich, and dynamic nature of qualitative research by distinctively portraying the data, its analysis, and the research experience. Parallel (side-by-side) columns simultaneously present descriptions of the research experience and the analysis of the data. In addition, there are two sets of internal links encouraging the reader to alternate between the research experience and the analysis (in Chapter Four) and between the research method (in Chapter Three) and the researcher’s reflections (in the Appendices).
Practitioners and scholars may want to examine further the extent to which the factors identified in this study (the leaders’ mental model, organizational context, prayer, intuition, and consultation with colleagues) influence leaders transforming organizations.
Dedications

This study would not have happened without the encouragement, advice, and guidance of my sister, Linda Tinelli Sheive. As older siblings are wont to do, she took me under her wing and nurtured me until I succeeded. She was always available when I got stuck. She provided guidance and direction when I needed it without ever taking over or having me do it her way.

She will forever be an inspiration to me and stand as an example of what exceptional friends, teachers, and siblings do.

My sons, Christopher William Tinelli and Joshua Samuel Tinelli, are, and have been, my best teachers. They surprise and challenge me regularly. They serve as catalysts to reap lessons from and create meaning in my life.

My wife, Judy Downs Tinelli, encouraged me throughout, prodded me when needed, and forgave me the all-too-frequent early morning departures from the house to work on this document in a nearby coffee shop. Her love and support created the emotional environment that enabled me to persist.
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Several people merit thanks for their contribution to this study.

First and foremost are the two leaders who allowed me into their lives and their organizations and who spent innumerable hours sharing their stories, reflecting on their work and their learning, and analyzing and helping to shape the direction and outcome of this study. As co-researchers they are as instrumental to the findings and conclusions of this study as the researcher.

Bill LeClere and Linda Tinelli Shieve introduced me to the two leaders and, as long-time colleagues of the leaders, encouraged them to participate in the study. Without their efforts to recruit the leaders, there would be no study. In addition, they read and commented on the narratives, thereby providing an additional measure of accuracy to those sections.

Drs. Marcie Boucouvalas and Margaret Lichtman, as the chair of my committee and researcher, respectively, contributed invaluable insight and analysis to improve this work. They were patient and supportive of a fledgling academic.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Introduction

Organizations and their leaders perform important roles in American society. Organizations provide the jobs, services, and products that fuel our economy and organizational leaders influence the purposes that organizations fulfill and the manner in which those purposes are carried out. Their combined effect on the lives of Americans is pervasive; every person is affected every day by what organizations do.

Because of this impact, it is important to understand organizations and their leaders more fully. Several factors influence the study of organizations and their leaders in today’s society. The two factors explored here are change and learning.

Change is as old as life itself. No society, person, or organization is exempt from its effects. Grappling with the effects of change on an organization typically involves finding answers to such questions as: What’s going on?, What does it mean?, Where do we go from here?, and How do we get there? These questions are answered in various ways by each organization as it seeks to ensure its survival and to promote its development.

Leaders play an important role in answering these questions. They contribute their wisdom and eloquence as they understand, interpret, and explain what is going on in society. As Max DePree said, “The first job of a leader is
to define reality" (DePree, 1989, p. 7). Leaders also help to envision the future and empower others to move toward it. They provide vivid examples of what the future can be and provide guidance as to how to get there. They offer both a destination and a route.

The journey into the future envisioned by leaders inevitably involves learning. Learning is a fundamental tool that leaders employ to deal with change and to move their organizations forward. Learning becomes important because, as changes occur, members of organizations must continually learn to keep abreast of those changes and develop effective responses to the challenges and threats of those changes as well.

Leaders play important roles in the promotion of learning throughout their organizations. They help to establish the parameters within which the learning will take place and to make learning a vital, regular part of the workplace.

As leaders seek to ensure the survival of their organizations, their ability to deal with change and promote learning becomes critical to their success. However, the job of leading organizations, managing change, and promoting learning is not an easy one.

Background of the Study

To understand the challenges that leaders face, it is helpful to explore the issues of change and learning in more detail. In addition, it is helpful to explore the
literature on leadership because of the influence it has on how leaders grapple with change and learning.

The connection between leadership, change, and learning is not immediately obvious and requires an explanation. Leaders have the responsibility to ensure the survival and success of their organizations. However, organizations find themselves in environments that are continually changing, and, as a result, one of the tasks of the leader is to grapple with those changes.

To grapple with those changes, though, leaders must decide what to do and how and when to do it. Their decisions and actions are influenced by how they understand and interpret their role as the organization’s leader. And their understanding is influenced, in part, by the literature on leadership. For that reason, it is important to explore the leadership literature.

Finally, one of the strategies that leaders employ to deal with change concerns learning. They use learning as a means to enhance their organization’s ability to respond to change successfully. Their ability to promote learning is itself influenced by the leader’s experience with and understanding of learning.

Therefore, because of the importance of change, the literature on leadership, and learning, each of these factors will be reviewed briefly here.
Change and the organization

The landscape in which American organizations operate has dramatically changed in the last several years. Beginning with the competition from Japanese organizations in the 1980’s and with the recession that followed, organizations have continuously been challenged to become more competitive in order to survive. More recently, the globalization of competition for resources, manpower, and markets has continued the pressure on organizations to change. The technological explosion of the 1990’s has introduced such tools as faxes, cell phones, and the Internet into the daily operation of organizations. These, in turn, have led to internal changes in organizations that have altered the fabric of organizational life. The ability to work at home and to communicate instantaneously with customers, vendors, partners, and colleagues worldwide are just two of the internal changes.

The response of organizational leaders to these changes in the landscape has varied. Among the responses have been such internal cost-cutting efforts as downsizing, wage concessions by employees, and reductions in benefit packages. Other efforts have been structural, including restructuring of existing parts of the organization, selling off unprofitable or unrelated entities, and mergers with or acquisitions of similar companies. Another response has been the development of improved internal processes and procedures highlighted by initiatives for improved quality and customer service. These and other efforts have been undertaken to strengthen organizations so they continue to compete successfully in today’s marketplace.
The need to respond to change is constant and leaders are continually seeking to identify and implement effective responses. Their task is complicated by the varied literature regarding leadership that has developed in the United States during this century.

**Leadership literature**

The study of leadership in the United States has been extensive. According to Dubrin “About 30,000 research articles, magazine articles, and books have been written about leadership so far this century” (1995, p. 2). In addition, the exploration has occurred along several lines, which has produced an exceedingly rich and diverse literature. A few examples will demonstrate this diversity and richness.

Research regarding leadership has followed several avenues. Among the first lines of research in this century were those that dealt with the attributes of leaders. Several investigators sought to determine what traits leaders had (Ackerson, 1942, Brown, 1931, Gowin, 1915, Heath and Gregory, 1946, Jones, 1938, and Starch, 1943). These efforts focused primarily on biographical reviews or questions asking about the characteristics of good leaders. The intent of the research was to identify those traits common to leaders. Few common traits emerged, however.

Not only did the research fail to isolate common traits among leaders, but Bird (1940), Jenkins (1947), and Stogdill (1948) in their reviews of the available research at the time, concluded that traits were not the most important
factor in managerial success. Realizing that traits were not the complete explanation of leaders’ success, other researchers (Fleishman, 1973, Hemphill and Coons, 1957) looked at the behaviors that leaders displayed. Hemphill and Coons developed a Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire, which identified and organized leader behaviors into nine categories. Fleishman found that leaders displayed two kinds of behaviors; they initiated structure in groups and they demonstrated consideration of others.

Another area of research in leadership concerned the impact of the situation on the leader. Several models were proposed to explain how the situation influences leaders: Hersey and Blanchard (1988), House and Mitchell (1974), and Muczyk and Reimann (1987). In each of these models, the argument was that as the situation changes, so should the leader. Various styles were proposed to connect particular situations with particular styles of leadership. Styles of leadership thus became a familiar topic of leadership research. In the past few years, charismatic and transformational leadership are two styles which have received particular attention.

Charismatic leadership has had a long history. Weber (1922/1963, 1924/1947) introduced the definition of charismatic leadership and more recently Conger and Kanungo (1988) have written about it. Bass (1990) summarized charismatic leadership as involving two areas, what the leader was like and what the followers were like. The primary notion of importance in charismatic leadership is
that the leader is perceived as endowed with extraordinary skills and abilities.

The transformational leader has been the topic of recent research, too. Several definitions exist, among them those of Bass (1985), Burns (1978), and Tichy and Devanna (1986). While their definitions vary, they are similar in that they all are concerned with the transformation of the organization. The transformation of the organization means a restructuring of the organization in all its cultural levels.

Numerous other avenues have been explored, including the follower’s influence on the leader (Greene, 1975; Sanford, 1952) and the ways that leaders wield power (Lippett and White, 1968).

As these examples demonstrate, the study of leadership in the United States has developed along several lines. The amount and variety of research complicates the situation for leaders. How can they use the literature to guide their decisions when it is so rich and so varied?

Metaphors have often provided leaders with a framework for making decisions and for guiding actions. But even the use of metaphors is complicated. For example, Morgan (1997) has identified more than eight metaphors for organizations that leaders might use as they try to guide their organizations. Among the examples he provides are organizations as machines, organisms, brains, and psychic prisons. Given the range of possible metaphors that Morgan
has identified, it is easy to see how leaders would find it difficult to decide how to proceed.

The metaphors that Morgan speaks about emanate from several sources. Wheatley (1992) argues that our understanding of the universe and physical science influences our conceptualization of management. The metaphors that shape our thinking about management are influenced by our knowledge about science. She goes further, claiming that managers would be more effective if they employed principles of management that mirrored the principles of physics.

To summarize what has been discussed thus far, leaders find it difficult to lead when the landscape in which they are operating is constantly changing and when the literature base they might use to guide their decisions is rich and varied.

Faced with these circumstances, leaders explore new ways to make their organizations stronger. Within the past decade several new initiatives have been introduced into organizations on the assumption that they will strengthen them. These initiatives have included the emphasis on quality and the desire to provide excellent customer service. The intent of these interventions is to introduce values, procedures, knowledge, and skills that will enhance the ability of the organization to survive and thrive.
Learning

Another factor concerns learning and, in particular, its application in the learning organization. The argument supporting learning organizations is that as organizations face continual and accelerating change, the fundamental skill needed by their members is the ability to learn. Learning becomes fundamental because it enables the organizational members to acquire whatever is needed to survive and excel regardless of the circumstance. If organizations and their members can learn, they can adapt to any change.

The learning organization as an intervention to assist organizations has been widely discussed and implemented during the 1990’s. Among those who argue on its behalf are Burgoyne, Pedlar, and Boydell (1994), Garratt (1987), and Senge (1990). While their arguments are not identical, there are important similarities. They all believe that if organizations can be places where learning is fundamental, the organizations will be better off. They believe that it is the leader’s job to remake the culture of the organization so that it becomes a learning organization. And they each provide a description of what the learning organization looks like.

The dilemma of leaders

There is another, less positive, similarity, however. None of the authors inform us as to how the leader, the person responsible for remaking the organization into a learning organization, becomes skilled in and knowledgeable
about the process of learning. The dilemma is clear. How can a leader, responsible for developing a learning organization, be successful without personal knowledge about learning?

This dilemma, couched in terms of a learning organization, is representative of what organizational leaders are confronted with today. They are expected to strengthen their organizations by initiating efforts about which they have inadequate information.

This puts leaders into a deeper quandary. Not only is the landscape ever-changing and the literature of leadership varied, but the solutions they try to implement are incompletely understood. It is as if leaders are responsible for putting a puzzle together, but don’t know what the completed puzzle looks like and they don’t have a method for solving the puzzle.

A possible solution

What should be done? One approach is to start with one or two pieces of the puzzle that fit together and build from there. When the final picture of the puzzle is unknown, any pieces that fit together and make sense are better than none.

That logic is applied to this study. Given the complexity and richness of how leaders might transform organizations, an important first step is to decide which corner of the puzzle to begin working on. One line of
reasoning for deciding on what to explore, which pieces of the puzzle to try to put together, follows.

First, organizations will be expected to change even more in the future as knowledge increases, as technology continues to develop, and as markets emerge and evolve. The pressure from these factors will only intensify the need for organizations to change.

The distinction between change and transformation

Leaders will have to explore and find new ways to change their organizations, ways that are likely to include recognition and acceptance of the distinction between change and transformation. The distinction is fine, but important. Change implies doing familiar things better, whereas transformation suggests doing new things altogether.

In the natural world, when a butterfly emerges from a cocoon, it has fundamentally transformed its nature and how it functions in the world. In the world of organizations, transformation is similar. The nature of the organization is fundamentally different, and the way it operates in the world is different, too. With respect to the nature of the organization, that means new organizational purpose, mission, basic values, and operating principles. With respect to operations, it means new methods, procedures, structures, processes, attitudes, skills, and behaviors.

Given this distinction, transformation is a more appropriate term to apply to what many organizations will have to undergo because it defines more precisely the kind
of shifts that are required for organizations to survive in such a dynamic world.

Learning will play a larger role in the strategies used to foster organizational transformations. As Garratt (1987), Senge (1990), and Burgoyne, Pedlar, and Boydell (1994) have argued, learning becomes a fundamental skill when organizations are faced with continual pressures to adapt. Leaders and the members of their organizations will have to become more knowledgeable about and skilled in the process of learning. Leaders and their organizational members will both need to learn better, and leaders will need to learn how to encourage the learning of others. One aspect of learning that will need to be understood more fully is the learning of leaders.

Narrowing the focus

Using this argument, it is possible to begin to restrict the part of the puzzle to be explored by focusing on organizations undergoing transformations and the leader’s learning in those organizations. Admittedly, this concerns only one corner of the puzzle. However, the pieces it attempts to fit together are important for two reasons. First, the number of organizations that undertake transformations is likely to multiply in the future as the onslaught of challenges increase. And second, as learning becomes a more important and fundamental tool for organizational transformation, the learning of leaders is necessarily more important.
By restricting the focus to a particular kind of organization and to a particular task of the leader, the complexity of the problem is reduced, though not eliminated. It is helpful to highlight some of what we know about learning that is relevant to leaders. The following summaries establish a footing in the territory that will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two. Including them now helps to clarify pieces of the puzzle that will be put together later.

Learning from experience

The first area concerns what we know about how adults learn from experience. This area of learning is relevant since it concerns both leaders and the members of their organizations. The experiences that leaders and organizational members have, dealing with the changes in the environment, for example, can be instrumental to learning. Experience becomes valuable when it contributes to learning. However, this discussion begins to explore how experience can foster learning.

Several people have written about how adults learn from experience. Argyris, Putnam, and Smith (1985), Cell (1984), and Kolb (1984) have developed models to describe the process by which adults reap lessons from experience. And while they are not identical, there are important similarities. In all three instances, the processes they describe are cyclical and incorporate reflection as a key element in the processes.
None of them specifically applies the process to the learning of leaders, however. So, while we know that these adult education models describe how adults learn from experience, the authors do not apply the model directly to leaders. To find out about the learning of leaders, other authors need to be reviewed.

Mumford (1980, 1994) finds that leaders learn from experience, they do so in a haphazard and accidental way, their learning often is triggered by challenges and difficulties, and they do not understand clearly how they learn. Lindsey, Homes, and McCall (1987), McCauley (1986), and Smith and Morphey (1994) all confirm what Mumford had found, that workplace challenges lead to learning by leaders.

Juch (1983), Morris (1994), and Mumford (1995), offer models to describe how leaders learn from experience which are similar to those provided by Argyris, Putnam, and Smith (1985), Cell (1984), and Kolb (1984). The differences between the models have to do with the authors’ attempts to make the models more pertinent to the working lives of leaders. Juch (1983), Morris (1994), and Mumford (1995) expand upon the adult education models by incorporating managerial language, or barriers to learning, or the situation in their models. All the models provide a process for using experience as a key element to forge learning through some form of reflection.

The ways that reflection is understood in the models vary. Argyris, Putnam, and Smith (1985), Cell (1984), and Usher (1985, 1989) all identify two levels of reflection and
Kitchener and King (1991, 1994) identify seven. What is important to note at this point in the discussion is that regardless of the model considered, reflection plays a key role. As indicated above, when workplace challenges foster learning by leaders, reflection contributes to the learning. The ways that leaders who transform organizations use reflection is not clear. The research does not address whether reflection is triggered by the challenge of transforming an organization or what form of reflection leaders might use during that work.

**Self-direction**

An additional aspect of leaders and their learning is self-direction. Self-direction plays a key role in learning because it is an attribute that enables adults to learn.

Self-direction has been understood in many ways by such authors as Brockett and Hiemstra (1991), Candy (1991), and Danis (1992). Common among their definitions is the notion that self-direction is an attribute which contributes to individuals taking personal responsibility for their own learning. Thus, self-direction would contribute to leaders taking advantage of their experiences in order to learn. Yet, there has not been research done to determine specifically whether or how self-direction might be a factor with leaders who transform organizations.

**Gaps in the research**

Two ways to focus on part of the puzzle were noted above. They were to look at organizations undergoing
transformations and at the leader’s learning in those organizations. How do the models for learning from experience (which incorporate reflection and expect leaders to be self-directed) apply when restricted in those ways? There is no definitive answer, since there has been no research done to apply any of those models to leaders in organizations undergoing transformations.

The research that comes closest, McCall, Lombardo, and Morrison (1987), McCauley (1986), Mumford (1980, 1994), and Smith and Morphey (1994), identifies challenging and difficult tasks as the trigger for learning. But these efforts cannot answer the question since they only identify what types of situations influence when leaders learn, they do not help in determining how leaders learn in organizations undergoing a transformation.

There are additional difficulties with the research done on leaders and their learning. Most of the research on the learning of leaders has been done via interviews and surveys. This leads to two possible concerns.

First, since the research is done via surveys and interviews, it overlooks the information and insights that might be gathered about the learning of leaders that would result from a more in-depth qualitative approach. One of the distinct benefits of qualitative research is that by being in the situation, the researcher can understand more fully the factors influencing the leaders. It also allows the researcher to identify factors and processes of which the leaders might not be aware.
Second, it relies on what the leaders can describe. The leaders’ ability to describe what happens regarding their learning is limited. Attribution theory suggests that people attribute their actions to influences that may not be the fact. That is, they may explain their actions by what they believe to be the influence rather than what might actually be the case. Another area, tacit knowledge, also limits what leaders can describe. Tacit knowledge is knowledge that individuals acquire, but which they cannot put into words. There may be instances in which leaders learn, but which they cannot explain because it is tacit knowledge.

Given this discussion, what is the problem facing leaders of organizations today?

Statement of the Problem

What is the problem? As leaders undertake the task of organizational transformation, they are faced with the fact that the landscape in which organizations operate is ever-changing, the literature of leadership is extensive and diverse, and the knowledge about one of the key tools for leaders, learning, is incompletely understood. There is no easy answer or simple solution. Quite the contrary, the situation is complex, ambiguous, and dynamic.

Consequently, the nature of the situation makes it difficult for leaders to decide what actions to take to ensure the growth, and, perhaps, the survival of their organizations.
What should be done to deal with this problem is addressed in the next section, Purpose of the Study.

Purpose of Study

Where do we go from here? If organizations are to survive in a constantly changing landscape, leaders will have to be better prepared to transform organizations.

Since one tool that leaders employ in their efforts to transform organizations is learning, it is important that leaders are more knowledgeable about it. One way to help leaders become more knowledgeable about learning is by focusing on their learning, particularly as it occurs in situations which they are likely to encounter. By knowing more about their learning, they are better positioned to achieve their organizations’ purpose, and they can foster learning throughout the organization more effectively.

The purpose of this study is to learn more about the learning of leaders who undertake the task of organizational transformation.

Significance

Why is this important? There are two reasons why this is important. One has to do with preparing leaders for the challenges they undertake and the other concerns the need to foster learning in organizations.

First, as a society we rely heavily on our leaders and we depend on them to lead our organizations. We study what
they do and how they do it so that we can understand what led to their success and transfer what they have learned to others.

However, despite our extensive study of leaders and leadership, there are still aspects of leadership that we do not understand fully. In particular, we do not know much about the learning of leaders who undertake the task of organizational transformation. The more we understand about their learning when they undertake those challenges, the better we can prepare them for those tasks. Being forewarned is being forearmed.

Second, if we can better understand the learning of leaders, we can help leaders foster learning throughout their organizations. In an age when change is constant, learning becomes increasingly important as a fundamental skill for organizational success and survival. The more that leaders understand about their own learning, the more able they will be to foster learning throughout the organization.

Research Questions

The following questions guide this study so that it can accomplish its purpose.

When leaders undertake the task of transforming an organization, what can be discovered about:

The process of how they learn?
What they learn?
Definitions

As will be elaborated on in Chapter Two, education and learning can mean many things to different people. Therefore, it is important to establish the definitions for this study. This section will discuss and delineate definitions that apply to this study.

Cremin (1988) distinguished between education and learning. Education is planned and intentional and learning can be unplanned and unintentional. With respect to this study, it is the latter that has more relevance. The learning that accrues outside of formal instructional programs is the focus of this study.

Spaulding (1974) referred to a range of ways that institutions support life-long education. His six groupings fall along a continuum from formal to non-formal to informal. While he doesn’t provide definitions for these terms, he does describe the ends of the continuum. “At one end of the spectrum are the relatively selected, closed, and highly competitive institutions called colleges and universities... At the other end of the life-long education spectrum are the mass media, libraries, information centres, and other sources of information from which people choose according to their interests, and which generally are non-prescriptive, non-competitive, and non-selective in terms of who can use them” (Spaulding, 1974, p. 102). It is the latter that has relevance to this study, i.e., the end of the continuum that is labeled informal.
Drawing upon the work done by UNESCO, Cropley (1979) defined the terms formal, non-formal, and informal in his discussion of life-long learning systems:

The first is the formal system that includes schools, universities, and similar systematic and formal institutions. The second comprises experiences which are planned and deliberately “educational”, but which lie outside schools and related institutions. Such experiences include training programmes in factories or armed forces, evening classes, and even programmes arranged by zoos, museums, planetaria, and the like. Finally, comes the “system” of unplanned experiences through which people learn many useful things, although without necessarily seeking to learn, planning the learning experiences, or even necessarily being aware that they are engaged in learning. Pursuing a hobby, engaging in a recreation, reading a newspaper, watching TV, even talking with friends or carrying out one’s daily work are all elements of this latter kind of educational “system”.

(Cropley, 1979, p. 110)

It is the last of the three systems that Cropley describes, the informal system, that relates to this study. One of the differentiating characteristics of the various systems Cropley discusses is location. Where the learning takes place is important. When he writes about “carrying out one’s daily work,” he is referring to the location of this study.
The location where learning takes place was also discussed by Verner (1964) who differentiated between the learning that occurred in formal settings and that which occurred in natural settings. It is the natural setting of the workplace with which this study is concerned.

Thus far, the elements of a definition that pertain to this study are that the definition concerns learning, not education, that the learning is informal, not formal or non-formal, and that it occurs in the natural setting of work, not in other institutions or locations.

Marsick and Watkins (1992) further the discussion by their distinction between formal and informal learning. “Formal learning is institutionally sponsored, classroom-based or highly structured” (Marsick and Watkins, 1992, p. 12). Informal learning, while it may occur in institutions “is not typically classroom-based or highly structured, and control of learning rests primarily in the hands of the learner” (Marsick and Watkins, 1992, p. 12). This distinction is made on the grounds of where the learning occurs and who controls it.

Marsick and Watkins further distinguish informal and incidental learning from formal learning and from one another. Both informal and incidental learning differ from formal learning in that they are “predominantly experiential and non-institutional” (Marsick and Watkins, 1992, p. 7) and typically occur in non-routine circumstances with less predictable results than with formal learning and with greater control exerted by the learner than by the institution or educator.
Informal learning and incidental learning are not the same though. Incidental is a subset of informal learning. All the definitions that apply to informal learning apply to incidental learning with some modifications. Incidental learning “is tacit, taken-for-granted, and implicit in assumptions and actions” (Marsick and Watkins, 1992, p. 7) and therefore differs only by degree from informal learning with respect to intentionality.

A few examples, provided by Marsick and Watkins, may make this distinction clearer. Informal learning would include such activities as coaching, mentoring, and self-directed learning whereas incidental learning would include learning from mistakes and internalized meaning constructions about the actions of others, and hidden curriculum in formal learning. As Marsick and Watkins state, “Incidental learning is never planned or intentional, whereas informal learning can be planned or intentional” (Marsick and Watkins, 1992, p. 7).

Informal learning may be accidental. In the process of an activity, a learner may accidentally learn information (or skills, etc.) that was not originally anticipated but which occurred because of the learner’s intentional reflection. By reflecting on what transpired in the activity, the learner learned information, skills, or feelings that would not otherwise have been acquired or changed. Although unplanned, learning occurred because the learner reflected on the activity. The learning is accidental (in terms of what was learned) and intentional (in terms of how the learning occurred).
Incidental learning is never intentional, it is always embedded in other activities and is a “byproduct of another activity” (Marsick and Watkins, 1992, p. 7). Incidental learning may be tacit when the learning remains hidden and implicit.

Marsick and Watkins’ definitions of informal, incidental, and accidental learning contribute critical insights that influence the definitions of learning applicable to this study. For this study, the following definitions apply:

**Learning**: The way in which individuals assimilate, make sense of, organize, and adapt information, skills, attitudes, values, perspectives, and knowledge.

**Informal learning**: Informal learning occurs during the ordinary business of life. It is typically non-routine, experiential, controlled by the learner, and occurs in the natural setting of work. It may be conscious and organized or tacit and unorganized.

**Incidental learning**: Incidental learning is that aspect of informal learning that is tacit and unconscious. It occurs when individuals are not aware of what they learn, do not reflect on their experience, and cannot describe their learning.

**Accidental learning**: Accidental learning is unanticipated and opportunistic. It occurs when individuals learn something they didn’t expect. Typically, something
happens that triggers the individual to reflect and the reflection leads to learning.

**Leader:** An individual in a position of formal authority in an organization with the responsibility for overall organizational administration.

**Organization:** An existing, distinct formal institution with an expressed purpose.

**Organizational Transformation:** A restructuring in organizational purpose and practice that includes modified processes and structures, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions. This would necessitate a different organizational purpose, philosophy, system of values and beliefs, strategic plan, organizational structure, operational procedures, member roles and responsibilities, and required member knowledge and skills sets.

**Assumptions**

Two basic assumptions undergird this study. First, leaders, as well as all other workers, learn as a result of the work they undertake. Second, the process of learning is inevitable. Using the model outlined by Kolb, leaders will learn as a result of transforming their organizations. The likelihood of their learning is increased by virtue of the nature of the task they have undertaken and their conscious attention to learning. Adults are more likely to reflect on their experiences when there is cognitive dissonance, when what they experience conflicts with what they understand, or when what they undertake creates significant problems. The
task of organizational transformation is more difficult than typical organizational challenges because it deals with more factors, has a higher degree of uncertainty, and concerns fundamental organizational issues of purpose, form, and procedure. Therefore, the leader will be more likely to learn because of the difficulties or problems that must be overcome to complete the organizational transformation.

Organizations are complex human systems subject to the various dynamics of such systems. Changes in any system create unanticipated responses that make prediction problematic. Qualitative research is a messy business and this study is no exception.

The challenge is not to predict what and how leaders learn, but to use the study to find out more about the leaders and their learning as they transform organizations.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter provides a conceptual framework for the study and reviews the relevant literature. The chapter is organized into six sections. The first section will provide a historical foundation to this study. The definitions provided by key American adult educators will be discussed in order to identify the fundamental assumptions and beliefs that inform this study. The second section will develop the conceptual/theoretical framework for the study. Pertinent concepts that have embellished and operationalized the fundamental assumptions and beliefs will be discussed. The adult education framework for the study will be developed from these concepts. The third section will review and analyze the literature that concerns the environment and its influence on the learning of adults. Environment is important because it provides the context and conditions that can affect whether and how learning occurs. The fourth section will review and analyze the literature relevant to leaders and their learning. The fifth section concerns the environment in which leaders operate. The final section will draw conclusions and identify the research questions of this study.

The historical foundation

First, the legacy of American adult educators whose insights influenced this researcher will be explored by reviewing their definitions of adult education. In the course of this exploration, fundamental assumptions and
beliefs of adult education that inform this study will emerge.

Adult education is a complex field with a myriad of definitions. Among the definitions influencing both the field and this researcher are those which contend that education is not only coterminus with life, it is inextricably linked to all facets of life. The link between life and learning is forged by individuals who believe experience is a valuable resource for learning. Further, real life situations provide adults with specific opportunities to learn. To do that, however, they must develop tools that will enable them to turn the brick and mortar of experience into a house of learning.

The conceptual/theoretical framework

This section will develop the conceptual/theoretical framework for the study. Pertinent concepts that have embellished and operationalized the fundamental assumptions and beliefs will be discussed. From this discussion the adult education framework for the study will be developed.

Three concepts will be discussed, they are learner self-direction, the relationship between experience and learning, reflection.

The first concept is learner self-direction. The case will be made that learner self-direction is an attribute which, when acquired by adults, predisposes them to use their lives as vehicles for learning.
The second concept concerns the relationship between experience and learning. Using experience for learning has been approached from many perspectives. The discussion of how experience and learning are linked will begin with Kolb’s action research model and his thoughts on experiential learning and extend to others who provide other models and additional insights.

The third concept is reflection. Reflection is one of the primary elements in models that enable adults to learn from experience. Reflection can help take what is known implicitly and make it explicitly known. An important concept related to reflection is tacit knowledge. It plays a different role than reflection in the learning process. It makes transforming experience into learning problematic since it is a form of knowledge that individuals cannot put into words. Thus, while it may occur, it occurs outside of the level of conscious awareness.

This section will conclude with the adult education theoretical/conceptual framework developed from these concepts. The framework developed here will be used as the lens through which this study will be conducted.

The environment and its influence on adult learning

The third section will review and analyze the literature relevant to adults and their learning in light of the conceptual/theoretical framework. Several factors outside of the individual influence how adults learn. Two of those factors, the situation and organizational culture, will be discussed in this section. Learning does not occur
in isolation; it always occurs in some situation. Aspects of the situation that impact learning will be discussed. A second influence on learning is organizational culture. Adults do not live in isolation; typically they live and work with others. At work, organizational culture affects how adults learn. The relevant concepts having to do with organizational culture will be discussed, too. These environmental factors will be analyzed in light of the theoretical/conceptual framework.

Leaders and their learning

The fourth section will review and analyze the literature relevant to leaders and their learning. The literature reviewed in the preceding sections concerns adults as learners and the environment’s impact on learning in general. An important area of research that has not been reviewed, however, is the learning of leaders. Since not all adults are leaders and since this study concerns organizational leaders and their learning, it will be important to identify and discuss what is known about how leaders learn.

The environment in which leaders operate

The fifth section concerns environment in which leaders operate. The same two factors that are discussed about adults and their learning will be discussed again as they apply to leaders. The situation and organizational culture will be discussed in this section. Leaders come in various sizes and shapes; they do different things. Some leaders undertake the task of transforming their organizations.
This task will be discussed. In addition, in this section organizational culture will be discussed with respect to its impact on leaders and their learning.

Conclusions and research questions

The final section will draw conclusions from the literature and then identify the research questions of this study. The conclusions will flow out of the conceptual/theoretical framework that deals with adults and their learning. Then, the research questions will be developed.

The Historical Foundation

The legacy of other adult educators whose perspectives influenced this researcher will be explored in this section. Their definitions of adult education will be reviewed. In the course of this exploration, fundamental assumptions and beliefs that have become integral to the field will be identified and discussed. This section will thus provide a historical foundation to the study in terms of fundamental assumptions and beliefs contributed by selected American adult educators.

Cremin’s definition

Before exploring the fundamental assumptions and beliefs contributed, however, it is helpful to set the stage by defining education and learning from a wider perspective. Cremin, one of the premier historians of American education, has defined education “as the deliberate, systematic, and
sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, and sensibilities, as well as any learning that results from that effort, direct or indirect, intended or unintended" (Cremin, 1988, Preface, p. x). This definition incorporates under the term education the concept of learning that others, later in this discussion, separate. Education is deliberate and planned and learning can be indirect and unintentional.

Cremin also refers to “the wide variety of situations and institutions in which education has gone forward over the years” (Cremin, 1988, Preface, p. x). Education occurs in many situations; it is not restricted to some or a few circumstances. The boundaries around educational activities may be widely drawn. Education occurs in many institutions. This suggests that education may be limited to organizational settings, namely, institutions that plan for education may be the sites where education takes place. One interpretation of this is that the institutions in which education occurs cannot be restricted to those whose primary purpose is education. A second interpretation might be that education is the domain of institutions rather than of individuals. Institutions undertake educational activities for the benefit of individuals.

Cremin sees education as applicable to more than intellectual aspects of individuals. Education applies equally as well to “values, attitudes, skills, and sensibilities” (Cremin, 1988, Preface, p. x). Since education impacts all these aspects of a person, it is holistic.
Cremin’s definition includes concepts that pertain to this study. First, Cremin makes an important distinction between education and learning. Education is planned and intentional. Learning is unintentional and unplanned. Second, education is often the work of institutions. Third, education occurs in many situations. And fourth, education addresses the whole person. With this (Cremin’s) definition of education as background we begin the exploration of fundamental assumptions and beliefs contributed by American adult educators.

Lindemann’s contribution

Adult education, as a field of study in the United States, emerged early in this century. Eduard Lindemann’s The Meaning of Adult Education (1926) was one of the first published books in the field. In it, Lindemann introduced the phrase “adult education is coterminus with life.” The idea that adult education, regardless of its purpose or philosophy, is an integral, interactive, inevitable part of life has come to be accepted as one of the undergirding canons upon which the field is built. As a foundational belief, it continues to influence adult education today. It is one of several relevant concepts in the field that will be explored in this historical review.

Lindemann’s understanding of adult education resulted from his efforts to transform education “so as to become once more an adventure . . . we shall need to experiment with the qualitative aspects of education” (Lindemann, 1926, p. 4). The first of those aspects is an “initial assumption affirming that education is life—not mere preparation for an
unknown kind of future living” (Lindemann, 1926, p. 4). Lindemann railed against education controlled by experts who concentrated on conveying subject matter knowledge. He was concerned with both the what and the how of education. Education should not be lockstep, rigid assimilation of information organized by subject matter and controlled by those who tell students what they need to know. Instead, he said, “The whole of life is learning” (Lindemann, 1926, p. 4-5). Learning is part of everything that life offers.

Lindemann identified the second aspect when he stated that education “conceived as a process coterminus with life revolves about non-vocational ideals” (Lindemann, 1926, p. 5). Education was not to be restricted solely to work; rather it was to be applied to the complete person in order that meaning and purpose for people included all of their lives.

A third aspect Lindemann addressed was that “the approach to education will be via the route of situations, not subjects” (Lindemann, 1926, p. 6). This transforms education so that learning derives its impetus from life, not from the subjects that so much of formal education begins with. When the starting point is the situation, the balance of power shifts from subject area specialists to students. Starting with the situation also grounds learning in the reality of everyday life rather than in abstract concepts. Learning evolves out of what individuals experience. As Cremin indicated, unintended or indirect learning may accrue from planned education. Lindemann makes the case more strongly that learning results from and flows
out of the situations and circumstances individuals encounter in life.

To make sense of those real life situations and circumstances, however, individuals cannot go blindly through them. Rather, Lindemann suggests a process, like reflection, in which individuals experience a situation and then reflect on it to try to understand and make sense of it. In Lindemann’s words, “Intelligence performs its function in relation to actualities, not abstractions” (Lindemann, 1926, p. 6). Intelligence’s function is to make sense of situations and is similar to the role that reflection plays.

The fourth aspect that Lindemann identifies is the role of experience. He writes, “the resource of highest value in adult education is the learner’s experience” (Lindemann, 1926, p. 6). This reconfirms that meaning derives from life’s situations, and goes further to indicate that meaning develops as individuals grapple with life’s experiences. Meaning does not come from others; it is not conferred by experts; it is wrought out of experience.

Collectively, these four aspects position the individual as the one who uses life as the launching pad for the development of meaning and of learning. As life happens, individuals reflect on it and develop their own conclusions as to what it means to them and their lives. The individual manages the process of learning; the locus of control lies within the individual.
Of Lindemann’s four aspects, three are fundamental assumptions and beliefs that influence this study. They are: learning is life, adults learn in a more meaningful way from situations rather than from the study of subjects, and an adult’s experience is one of the best resources for learning. As this historical discussion proceeds, these become foundational to this study.

Other definitions of adult education

Many others have defined adult education in ways that are pertinent to this study. Some of the more notable definitions will be discussed here, namely, Bryson (1936), Grattan (1955), Knowles (1983), Liveright (1968), and Verner (1964). Once again, as is the case with the preceding discussion, fundamental assumptions and beliefs that these thinkers contribute that are pertinent to this study will be reviewed.

Bryson (1936) defined adult education as “All activities with an educational purpose that are carried on by people engaged in the ordinary business of life” (Bryson, 1936, pp. 3-4). Like Lindemann, Bryson argues that adult education is intimately tied up with one’s life; it is not separate from it. Life and learning are inseparable.

Grattan (1955) begins with Bryson’s definition and proceeds to contribute additional insights. For Grattan, the “real field of adult education” is “addressed to adults as adults and designed to assist them to live more successfully” (Grattan, 1955, p. 4, italics in original). To delineate the audience for adult education as adults
positions the field as distinct from education in general. Much of education (in general) is for those who have not yet entered the real world and are still preparing for it. Adults play different roles in society than do children or students. Consequently, adult education is different, too. That adults are different from children or students suggests that how they learn is also different. If adults are different from students, how they learn will necessarily be different. This insight is important because it forecasts processes that adults use to learn.

Grattan adds that adult education is planned for the purpose of helping adults live "more successfully." Grattan reviews a list of eighteen reasons why adult education ought to be pursued. Those eighteen reasons (provided by Ely and quoted by Grattan) provide examples of what living successfully might look like to various individuals. The various reasons support the contention that adult education as a field is complex and diverse. More to the point, it helps to establish that adults are motivated to learn for various reasons, and knowing what motivates them will be important to understanding why they learn.

Verner (1964) defines adult education as "those educational activities designed for adults" (Verner, 1964, p.1) and in so doing agrees, albeit implicitly, with Grattan that adults are different from students. And he agrees with Grattan and Bryson that education is planned. He writes, "Whatever its form, content, duration, physical setting, or sponsorship, an activity is identified as adult education when it is part of a systematic, planned, instructional program for adults" (Verner, 1964, p. 2).
However, Verner distinguishes between education that occurs in a natural setting from that which occurs in formal settings. Despite the fact that he sees adult education firmly in the second category (as occurring in formal institutional settings), his acknowledgment that education occurs in natural settings is important. It affirms what both Lindemann and Bryson claim: education and life are inseparable.

Liveright (1968) defines adult education as "a process through which persons no longer attending school on a regular, full-time basis undertake activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, understanding, skills, appreciation, and attitudes; or to identify and solve personal or community problems" (Liveright, 1968, pp. 3-4).

Adult education as a process is another fundamental assumption or belief of this historical foundation. Seeing adult education as a process allows adults to reap the benefits from the orientation reflected in the three concepts contributed by Lindemann. Merely believing that learning and life are integrated, that learning is approached through situations, and that experience is the best resource for learning is not enough for learning to occur. There must also be the means of transforming life, its situations, and its experiences into lessons. And that is what the process does.

In addition, Liveright seems to agree with Verner and Grattan that adults are different from others, namely
students, by referring to, “persons no longer attending school on a regular, full-time basis” (Liveright, 1968, pp. 3-4).

**Knowles’ contribution**

Knowles (1990) expands upon the idea that adults are different from students and children in his approach to learning called andragogy. He presents andragogy as a set of six assumptions that distinguish it from pedagogy. Pedagogy is an ideology that is “a systematic body of beliefs that requires loyalty and conformity by its adherents” (Knowles, 1990, p. 63). Andragogy is not an ideology; rather, it is “a system of alternative assumptions” (Knowles, 1990, p. 63). The distinction is important to Knowles since pedagogy “excludes the andragogical assumptions” whereas andragogy “includes the pedagogical assumptions” (Knowles, 1990, p. 63). In practice, this means that adult educators who subscribe to the andragogical model would be more flexible and practical in their work, not locked into pedagogical constraints and therefore better able to develop the most suitable and effective learning activities for the persons and situations involved.

The first assumption is the need to know, namely that adults want and need to know the importance of what they are learning. This contributes to their motivation since they see the benefits to what they learn or the negative consequences for not learning. The second assumption is the learner’s self-concept, which refers to the learner’s need to confirm and reinforce a sense of self-direction. This is partly influenced by the desire of individuals to make their
own decisions and is reflected in their desire not to have others make decisions that in their minds are their prerogative.

The next three assumptions are interrelated and have to do with experience. The third assumption is the role of the learner’s experience. Adults bring with them into the learning situation a set of experiences that enrich and enliven the learning and that distinguish each adult from other learners. In addition to these positive contributions, adults’ experience can form biases and prejudices that limit learning. The fourth assumption is a readiness to learn. Adults are ready to learn those things that will enable them to cope with life. As a result, timing becomes important. If an adult believes that what is to be learned is immediately applicable, greater motivation will occur. The adult will be ready to learn, without having to be told to do so or having to be persuaded to learn. The fifth assumption is an orientation to learning that revolves around life’s events, not subjects. The learning of adults tends to be concentrated on their lives as they experience them, not as knowledge bases that experts or teachers say they ought to know.

The final assumption is motivation. Adults are motivated more by internal pressures such as job satisfaction and self-esteem than they are motivated by external pressures such as promotions and income. Personal identity (and how one defines and maintains it) is more important to adults as a source of motivation than what others tell them is important.
Four of these assumptions are similar to the aspects of education that Lindemann described. The need to know, role of experience, readiness to learn, and orientation to learning correspond, although not exactly, with Lindemann’s aspect that education is life, not something separate from it. Like Lindemann, Knowles saw experience as the starting point and frame of reference for learning. Knowles made explicit what Lindemann may have implied regarding readiness to learn. Adults are ready to learn when there is something happening in their lives that surfaces a need to learn. While Lindemann did not state this directly, it can be concluded from his admonition that “learning is life.” These four assumptions support Lindemann’s thinking that began this historical discussion.

While there are some differences between the two, both Lindemann and Knowles see the adult holistically, although they may interpret this differently by virtue of the perspectives they bring to bear on the topic. Both of them broaden the range of issues with which adult education deals. Lindemann makes adult education more inclusive by making it applicable to all of life and extending it beyond only vocational concerns. Knowles adds humanistic components, thereby broadening the scope of adult education. They both unfetter adult education and extend its purview to all of adults’ experiences.

The fundamental assumptions and beliefs contributed by the American adult educators in the definitions reviewed above provide a historical foundation for this study. These will be expanded upon in the next section as they are reorganized to become the concepts that frame this study.
In addition to this, there is another reason why it is important to lay this historical foundation. Many adult educators come to the field after having been socialized in other professions. As a result they lack background in the field of adult education that they would have acquired had they entered the field at the beginning of their careers. Exploring the adult education concepts introduced in this section ensures that a historical foundation, as an element of professional socialization, is not overlooked.

What then are the adult education fundamental assumptions and beliefs that have been introduced in this section and which will be expanded upon in the next one? There are four.

1. Learning is life and life is learning; they are intertwined inseparably.
2. Adults learn from real life situations; the formal approaches to learning that divide it into subjects are arbitrary and unrealistic in adult life.
3. Experience is the best resource adults can use to learn from life; the way to reap the benefits and lessons of life is via the experiences adults have.
4. Adults use a process to reap the lessons from their experiences; it doesn’t matter whether the process is conscious or tacit, there is a process for learning.

The following chart (Table 1) displays how these four fundamental assumptions and beliefs are supported by the writings of the adult educators reviewed above. The names
in the column entitled Supporters indicate their support for the fundamental assumption and belief to the left.

Table 1
Fundamental Assumptions and Beliefs and their Supporters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fundamental Assumptions and Beliefs</th>
<th>Supporters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Learning is life.</td>
<td>Lindemann, Bryson, Grattan, Liveright, Knowles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Adults learn from real situations.</td>
<td>Lindemann, Verner, Liveright, Knowles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Experience is the best resource for learning.</td>
<td>Lindemann, Knowles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Adults use a process to learn from experience.</td>
<td>Lindemann, Liveright.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

Four concepts will be addressed in this next section. They are self-directed learners, the relationship between experience and learning, reflection, and the environment and its influencing on learning. These concepts will be explored and will provide the key elements to the conceptual/theoretical framework for this study.

The first concepts to be reviewed here will be those which focus on the individual. The discussion about these
concepts will relate the concepts to the fundamental assumptions and beliefs. Later, these concepts will also be discussed in light of the environment’s influence.

\textbf{Learner self-direction}

The first concept to be addressed in this section is learner self-direction. In the previous section, it was argued that life and learning are intertwined and that adults employ a process to reap learning benefits from life. In order for adults to do so, however, one line of reasoning suggests they must first be self-directed learners. It is only if adults are self-directed as learners that they will employ the appropriate processes to learn from life. In this section, the concept of self-direction will be explored to develop a fuller understanding of it and to begin to develop connections between self-direction and this study.

According to Merriam and Caffarella one of the forms of learning that occurs as “natural part of adult life,” (1991, p. 41) is self-directed learning, or learning on one’s own. It is a form of learning that Houle (1984) argues is a primary means for adults to learn. It is a form of learning in which the focus of attention is the learner and how the learner approaches learning.

Learning is a natural part of life as Lindemann and others have noted. Tough (1978) has determined the extent to which it is a part of life. He found that more than 90% of adults engage in at least one significant learning project per year, averaging 100 hours per project. Learning, it seems, is often wrapped around specific
projects that adults undertake in the course of their lives. The fact that adults learn as a part of life is not enough to explain learner self-direction, however.

Guglielmino (1978) has explored another aspect of self-direction. Her Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale helps adults to determine their readiness for self-direction. The scale is helpful from two perspectives. It identifies an issue that is pertinent to self-direction, namely, an adult’s readiness for it and it provides a means of determining one’s readiness for self-direction.

Another aspect is what adults did to learn, that is, the process they used to learn from life. Knowles (1975), Spear (1988), and Tough (1979) delineated how adults undertake learning projects. Each of them specified models for conducting learning projects. There are differences in what they identified and how they conceptualized what they found. Knowles delineated a five-step model, Tough identified key decision points, and Spear determined the principal components of self-directed learning projects.

The differences in their conclusions go beyond their models, though, since in each case their models reflect a particular point of view. The steps, or decision points, or key components in each of the processes they describe are logical, sequential, rational, and done in advance of the project. Adult learners do not always use a rational, planned process for their learning. Berger (1990) and Danis and Tremblay (1987, 1988) found self-directed learners follow a process that was non-linear, unpredictable, and full of trial and error. Merriam and Caffarella (1991)
conclude that the process probably lies somewhere between these two approaches and is dependent upon the interplay of the learner’s drive, the situation, learning skills, knowledge of and familiarity with the content, and luck. The process that self-directed learners use is not clearly understood, nor completely logical. It can be confusing and complex.

That adults may use different processes for learning and that those processes may or may not be rational identifies an underlying conceptual problem. Candy addresses this when he writes, “Whenever people speak or write about self-direction in learning, the images that they have in mind or that they conjure up in the minds of others may be quite varied” (Candy, 1991, p. 5). The variation in the uses of the term helps to contribute to the strength and weakness of the term. Because “self-direction is indeed a versatile term,” (Candy, 1991, p. 6) it appears to bring together people with seemingly disparate viewpoints. This strength can also be a weakness since “any term that can be used by such a diverse range of authors might also mask a certain conceptual confusion (Candy, 1991, p. 6).

Brockett and Hiemstra’s contribution

Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) attempt to overcome this conceptual confusion by clarifying the distinction between self-direction as an instructional process and self-direction as a personality characteristic. Self-direction as an instructional process “centers on the activities of planning, implementing, and evaluating learning,” (Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991, p. 28) and deals with the transaction
between teaching and learning and includes such concepts as "Needs assessment, evaluation, learning resources, facilitator roles and skills, and independent study" (Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991, p. 28). Self-direction as a personality characteristic "refers to characteristics of an individual that predispose one toward taking primary responsibility for personal learning endeavors" (Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991, p. 29).

Brockett and Hiemstra acknowledge that the two uses of the term self-direction contribute to ambiguity and confusion. Their solution to this problem is to offer a model that links the two terms within a broader conceptualization. First, they assign specific terms to the two aspects of self-direction noted above. They call self-direction as an instructional process, self-directed learning, and they call self-direction as a personality characteristic, learner self-direction. And they offer a term, self-direction in learning, as a broader conceptualization to link these two aspects of self-direction. The two aspects of self-direction, self-directed learning and learner self-direction, become dimensions of self-direction in learning in their model.

In their model, called the PRO Model (Personal Responsibility Orientation), personal responsibility is "the point of departure for understanding self-direction in adult learning" (Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991, p. 26). Personal responsibility means "that individuals assume ownership for their own thoughts and actions" (Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991, p. 26). Personal responsibility becomes the central
concept that integrates the two dimensions of self-direction.

Brockett and Hiemstra recognize the role that environment plays and disagree with the argument that self-direction is the ideal to which all adults must strive and which all adult educators must support. Self-direction in learning is not applicable in all situations perfectly. Rather, circumstances influence the extent to which self-direction is appropriate. “Thus, while the individual is the ‘starting point’ for understanding self-direction in adult learning, the social context provides the arena in which the activity of self-direction is played out” (Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991, pp. 32-33).

Brockett and Hiemstra create a vehicle, their PRO Model, to overcome the confusion and ambiguity which they see surrounding self-directed learning. Their model becomes a tool for organizing the concepts relevant to self-direction and to deal with the conceptual confusion Candy discussed above. In addition, by introducing personal responsibility as the starting point, they emphasize the individual’s role.

Danis’s contribution

Danis proposes a framework to unify the research into self-directed learning (Danis, 1992). Unlike Brockett and Hiemstra, she does not draw the distinction between self-direction as a personal characteristic and self-direction as an instructional process. However, the framework Danis introduces includes components that reflect both aspects of
self-direction. The components of Danis’ framework are strategies, phases, learning content, the learner, and the context. Each of those components is further distinguished.

Danis identifies two categories of strategies. First are those strategies “that are used directly in order to acquire or apply new knowledge” (Danis, 1992, p. 50). Second are those strategies, named meta-strategies, which apply “to the learner’s awareness of his/her own use of particular strategies” (Danis, 1992, p. 50). Both strategies have sub-components that further describe them.

Danis identifies six phases: reacting to a trigger event, seeking and selecting knowledge, organizing and structuring that knowledge, obtaining and integrating new knowledge, assessing the quality of the learning results and strategies, and applying what was learned. These phases organize self-directed learning as an instructional process. Within that process, adults learn different things and she organizes the content of that learning. The learning content falls into three areas: types of outcomes, levels of complexity, and links between existing and new knowledge.

Danis distinguishes between the individual learner and the collective learner and delineates five subcomponents for each: learning abilities and competencies, individual or collective identity, developmental factors, cultural and ethnic factors, and social factors. These components help to describe learners and the factors that influence their learning.
Lastly, Danis acknowledges that the environment also influences learning, but does not discuss it in much detail. In that regard, she is like Brockett and Hiemstra who also refer to environment, but do not deal with it to any degree.

Candy’s contribution

Candy’s contribution lies in two areas. The first deals with how to organize what is known about self-direction. Candy (1991) begins with the same distinction that Brockett and Hiemstra identified, that self-direction has been defined and used as a process and as a goal. Here, however, he differs from Brockett and Hiemstra who used an umbrella term to accommodate the differences between the two dimensions. Candy makes no such attempt. In fact, he makes further distinctions by referring to “four distinct (but related) phenomena” (Candy, 1991, p. 23).

With respect to self-direction as a personal attribute, Candy distinguishes between personal autonomy and self-management. Self-management is a subset of personal autonomy that pertains to the quality “of being self-directing within one’s field of constraints to free actions” (Candy, 1991, p. 20). This means that individuals are able to exercise control over their actions, but only as those actions are circumscribed by constraints inherent in the situation and the context. The area of influence here is narrow. Personal autonomy, on the other hand, pertains to the “quality of being self-directing to the extent that one is in control of one’s destiny” (Candy, 1991, p. 20) and not constrained (to the same degree) by situation and context. Here, the area of influence is greater.
Moreover, Candy distinguishes between the two ways that adults can pursue learning. The first is self-direction as a "mode of instruction in formal settings" (Candy, 1991, p. 23) in which learners exert control over aspects of the learning. However, the degree of control exerted by the learner is restricted by the institution or teacher. An example of this would be an independent study course in a university that provides the learners with a measure of control. However, the control is limited by the parameters imposed by the university. Self-direction in this sense is one of several modes of instruction that the university or teacher can choose from.

The second way that adults can pursue learning is via autodidaxy. In this case, the learner engages in individual, non-institutional learning activities. The learner exerts significantly more control over the aspects of the learning process than in formal situations. This is similar to what Knowles (1975), Spear (1988), and Tough (1978) addressed regarding learning projects. However, even here, the individual is not in total control. Candy addresses this aspect of learning in greater depth than do either Danis or Brockett and Hiemstra.

Candy begins with the same distinction that Brockett and Hiemstra do and creates further distinctions according to the situation and degree of control. Candy’s expanded distinctions are the first of his two contributions to the discussion of self-direction.
The second contribution Candy makes has to do with the role of environment. Environment was referenced by Brockett and Hiemstra and by Danis as elements that influence learning, but Candy explores this factor in greater depth. He argues that "four different strands of research converge to support the notion of situational variability in learner self-direction" (Candy, 1991, p. 301).

The first of these strands pertains to the degree to which learning is context-dependent. Learning does not occur in isolation from others, in fact, much of what adults choose to learn is influenced by social groups to which they belong. Families, churches, clubs, teams, communities, and businesses are all forms of social groups that influence adults' learning. Membership in any one of these groups and the "opinions and expectations of others" (Candy, 1991, p. 302) affect what an individual chooses to learn.

The second of these strands has to do with the socially constructed nature of knowledge. For example, "a large proportion of adult learning is concerned with attempts to appropriate and use bodies of knowledge for which there are public criteria in existence" (Candy, 1991, p. 302). In cases like this, adults necessarily rely on others' rules.

The third strand relates to the situated nature of cognition and learning. Learning only happens in a specific context or situation. The various aspects of the situation influence the learning such that "there is limited transferability of competence from one learning situation to another" (Candy, 1991, p. 307).
The fourth strand refers to the demands of the learning situation. The expectations for what should be learned are influenced by two factors. An individual’s personal experiences will lead to particular expectations. For example, if an individual has had numerous disastrous results in learning math, the expectations may be negatively affected when math is the content. In addition, the situation itself imposes expectations. For example, if the learning requires that an individual pass a test, the criteria imposed by the test impose expectations.

These four strands highlight the second difference between Candy’s framework and those of Brockett and Hiemstra and Danis. By discussing these strands, Candy corrects the imbalance that he sees in models that emphasize the individual’s ability to be self-directed. Candy explores the degree to which an individual ability to exert self-direction in learning is influenced by other factors.

Summary

Self-direction has been defined and understood as both an instructional process and as an attribute. Self-direction as a process has various strategies and phases. The context, or environment, also influences self-direction.

For this study, it will be important to determine whether the strategies and phases of self-direction, as discussed above, are used by the leaders being studied. Further, it will be important to explore whether or not the environment or situation has any impact on the leaders’ self-direction.
The relationship between experience and learning

The next concept to be explored concerns the relationship between experience and learning. Three of the writers whose definitions have been discussed above have referenced experience as a factor in adult education. Lindemann (1926) describes experience as “the resource of highest value” (Lindemann, 1926, p. 6). Experience is the material from which learning is constructed. Bryson refers to “people engaged in the ordinary business of life” (Bryson, 1936, pp. 3-4). The “ordinary business of life” can be interpreted to mean those experiences one encounters along life’s path. And Knowles refers to experience as an attribute of learners that differentiates one learner from another and that enriches their learning. In another sense, when Knowles states that the learner’s orientation to learning revolves around events, he is indicating that one’s experience becomes the starting point and resource for learning. In each of these cases, experience plays an important role. The following discussion, beginning with Kolb, will delve more deeply into experience’s role in learning. Kolb’s model for experiential learning will be the first of three ways of relating experience and learning to be explored in this section.

Kolb’s contribution

Kolb describes how to use experience as a source of learning and how to make the process applicable to a wide variety of individuals. Kolb (1984) argues that individuals
need to make better use of their experience because we “lost touch with our own experience as the source of personal learning and development and, in the process, lost that experiential centeredness necessary to counterbalance the loss of ‘scientific’ centeredness that has been progressively slipping away since Copernicus” (Kolb, 1984, p. 2). Kolb’s argues that we’ve “lost touch with our personal experience” because of our focus on scientific approaches. This is consistent with Guba (1990) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) who argue that quantitative, positivistic research methodologies have been dominant and incomplete in explaining and guiding good research.

Kolb identifies characteristics of experiential education as part of this argument to expand the awareness of and commitment to experiential learning. First, it “is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes” (Kolb, 1984, p. 26). The emphasis is placed not on what people learn, but on how they learn.

The second characteristic “is a continuous process grounded in experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 27). Learning is not hypothetical, ideal, or abstract. Rather, the anticipation of what is to come, shaped by one’s goals or objectives, is always being tested by actual events. “It is in this interplay between expectation and experience that learning occurs” (Kolb, 1984, p. 28). Experience, like the line attached to a kite, keeps the learner grounded.

Thirdly, “the process of learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world” (Kolb, 1984, p. 29). For Kolb,
learning is filled with tension created by competing modes of experiential learning, as outlined by Lewin (1975). The resolution of that conflict leads to learning. Alternating between concrete experience and reflective observation or active experimentation and abstract conceptualization is the dialectical process that culminates in integration and learning. The synthesis that evolves from this dialectical process can lead to creativity and personal development, too.

The fourth characteristic is that experiential learning "is an holistic process of adaptation to the world" (Kolb, 1984, p. 31). Experiential learning includes individual’s thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and behaviors. The whole person is included in the learning process. All stages of personal development and all environments or situations in which individuals find themselves are also subject to experiential learning.

Fifth, "learning involves transactions between the person and the environment" (Kolb, 1984, p. 34). Experiential learning is influenced by the context in which an individual acts. Learning is not isolated, or separate from, or theoretical, or hypothetical. It is "real" in that all of what occurs in a given situation becomes part of the experience and becomes fodder for learning. Learning occurs in situ.

Sixth, "learning is a process of creating knowledge" (Kolb, 1984, p. 36). Learning is not acquired, like a new shirt, nor is it deposited, like money in a bank. It is created through a dialectical, dynamic process during which
individuals engage their environment and use their experiences of it as the source for their learning. They construct their knowledge out of the resources provided by the environment; they manufacture their learning.

Kolb’s explanation of experiential learning, delineated by these six characteristics, strengthens the argument made by Lewin (1975) and Lindemann (1926) that learning is not the domain of experts or organizations. Rather, the learning process is controlled by the learner. In addition, Kolb reinforces the idea that learning occurs when individuals construct it, not when it is conferred, given, deposited, or conveyed. Learning is made, not transported, and it is made by individuals.

Experiential learning is holistic with respect to all aspects of an individual as addressed by Knowles (1990) and Lindemann (1926) as well as all circumstances in which individuals find themselves. Consequently, learning is not restricted to formal learning settings, experiential learning “pictures the workplace as a learning environment” (Kolb, 1984, p.4). The workplace can be a source of learning of ideas, behaviors, and feelings that pertain to all aspects of an individual. It is natural settings such as work that Verner (1964) may have been referring to as well. What one experiences at work may contribute to what one learns about one’s personal life, or one’s personal experiences may led to lessons applicable to work.

Kolb’s claim parallels Candy’s (1991) that context plays an important role in learning and that context cannot be separated from experience. Learning is not abstract; it
is situated in the context. Finally, Kolb’s notions about experiential learning provide detailed descriptions of what Lindemann may have meant when he said learning is coterminus with life.

Kolb developed a four-part experiential learning model called “action research” that operationalized his thinking about experiential learning and provides a process to enable learners to use their experience as the source of learning. The first of the four elements in his model is concrete experience, which provides individuals with the reference point from which learning emanates. In the course of their everyday lives individuals engage in activities that become the source of their learning. Individuals then engage in reflective observation when they look back on the events in their lives and describe what it is that they have experienced. Third, individuals use abstract conceptualization to draw conclusions and make judgments regarding the meaning of their experiences. Using the conceptualizations they have made, they engage in active experimentation to test the implications of those conceptualizations. Then, the active experiments they undertake lead to experiences which initiate another round of experiential learning. The process is repetitive and continuous.

Two important factors contribute to the value of Kolb’s model. The first is the role that feedback plays. By developing mechanisms of getting information about one’s actions’ impact on experience, the learner creates a feedback loop that strengthens the conclusions a learner can make. Empirical sources of information ground the process
of abstract conceptualization in data. The data have been generated for their relevance to the issue or question being addressed in the experimentation.

The second factor is reflection, an element common to many models. In this model, learning results from reflecting on one’s experience, not merely by absorbing data presented by another. Hence, it becomes the vehicle through which two results are created. Individuals become the initiators of learning; individuals begin the process via reflection rather than relying on someone else to tell them what to learn. Moreover, individuals control the process; they are the ones who determine what they will reflect on, what abstract conceptualizations they will draw, and what active experimentation they will undertake.

Action research guides individuals in reaping benefits from their experiences; it is a reflexive, repetitive process for learning. Within that process, the learner establishes purpose and function. Purpose and function are not the primary concern for Kolb, process is. The action research model uses experience as the basis for learning and builds into the process reflection and feedback as key factors. Action research contributes a specific, easily understood process to transform experience into learning.

Cell’s and Mezirow’s contribution

Cell (1984) provides another model of experiential learning that stems from the work of Carl Rogers. In his view, people move through four levels of change that are sequential and developmental, each succeeding and building
on the other. The four levels are response learning, situation learning, transsituation learning, and transcendent learning. Response learning concerns “learning in its most rudimentary form” (Cell, 1984, p. 41). It is change in the way we respond to situations. Response learning includes rote learning, trial and error learning, and respondent conditioning.

“Situational learning is a change in how we interpret a certain kind of situation” (Cell, 1984, p. 43). It is the form of learning that enables us to break the bonds of acquisition of unintentional or habitual interpretations, conclusions, values, and mental models that inform our sensing making in the world.

Transsituation learning occurs when we become conscious of and knowledgeable about how we go about changing our interpretations. In essence, it is learning how to learn, applied to a particular form of learning, situational learning.

And transcendent learning occurs when “someone modifies one or more of the available concepts or creates relatively new ones, thereby providing new possibilities—new tools—for interpreting individual situations” (Cell, 1984, p. 53). Transcendent learning is a rare occurrence, it includes the contributions to our collective thinking of such notions as Einstein’s theory of relativity, Freud’s notion of the unconscious, and Newton’s laws of physics. These rare and groundbreaking ideas influence how we see and interpret our lives and our experiences differently. They add insight that would not otherwise occur so that, as we interpret our
experience, we do so with intellectual tools, these ideas, which expand the range of our options for understanding.

Learning is more than a vehicle for responding to life’s events. Learning includes the development of improved analytic skills and more successful responses to life’s events. In the process of the four levels of change in the kinds of learning Cell outlines, another purpose is served, namely the development of one’s identity. As we experience our lives and learn and change, we are simultaneously developing our sense of ourselves. We are forming and refining our identities. In order to develop fully who we are, we must shed the constraints of interpretations that we’ve acquired from others which limit our development or which create dysfunctional forms of learning. Shedding those constraints is facilitated by paradigm transforming ideas, by transcendent learning, and by the ideas of individuals like Einstein, Freud, and Newton.

Cell’s model is psychological and geared toward the psychological development of individuals. Individuals must overcome the interpretations of others in order to become themselves. While not all interpretations acquired from others are hindrances, the influence of others’ interpretations is more detrimental than helpful in developing one’s sense of self. As a result, the need for autonomy becomes important in Cell’s model. Two forms of reflection increase that autonomy. The first of these is an “active reinterpretation of our situation that we make rather spontaneously as we are engaged in it” (Cell, 1984, p. 46). The second is “the reflective interpretation we
work out when we remove ourselves from the action to see more carefully and critically what has been happening” (Cell, 1984, p. 46).

The second form of reflection allows individuals to step outside the shell imposed by one’s habits of thought to develop new understandings. It is the vehicle through which interpretations are revised. Mezirow (1991) would refer to this process as transformative, although he would distinguish among two dimensions of transformative learning. The first is the transformation of meaning schemes. As individuals engage in the reflection on their lives and question the assumptions upon which they have solved problems, they change those assumptions and interpret their experience differently. This is a commonplace and normal form of reflection leading to the transformation of meaning schemes.

A more rare and dramatic transformation occurs when a disorienting dilemma triggers a degree of reflection that concludes in a revised sense of self that engages the world from a significantly different perspective. This transformation is atypical of daily life and is a social process, “others participate in the disorienting dilemma, provide us with alternative perspectives, provide support for change, participate in validating perspectives through rational discourse, and require new relationships to be worked out within the context of a new perspective” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 194).

The two dimensions are similar in that they both require reflection, although how it is applied differs.
With the transformation of meaning schemes, individuals reflect alone and are able to transform meaning schemes. With perspective transformation, others play an important role in reflection, and other factors, such as a disorienting dilemma, must also be present. The difference between the two dimensions of transformation is like the difference between learning a few new words and phrases in several languages and becoming fluent in one other language to the point of thinking in that language.

Cell and Mezirow both discuss changes in how individuals interpret experience. What Cell refers to as situational learning is comparable to Mezirow's transformation of meaning schemes. In both cases, assumptions are revised and experience is interpreted differently as a result. And, they both include a change in self-concept as a part of what occurs. However, for Cell, the development of the self occurs throughout every change an individual undergoes. The various changes an individual goes through and the development of the self are parallel processes. For Mezirow, a radically transformed self emerges from the perspective transformation process. It is like a butterfly emerging out of a cocoon, a singular life-changing event. The development of the autonomous self, for Cell, and of the transformed self that emerges from a perspective transformation, for Mezirow, both require that individuals unfetter themselves from socially imposed values. A more authentic self is someone who is self-made, through critical reflection, not someone who continues to deal with life out of the perspectives and interpretive models of others.
Self-direction in learning, in particular the psychological orientation in which “individuals assume ownership for their own thoughts and actions” (Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991, p. 26), is also related to the kinds of changes discussed by Cell and Mezirow. Being able to take control of their thinking and acting may be a necessary precondition for individuals to question and revise the underlying assumptions that others in society impose on us. Assuming personal responsibility for their thoughts requires that individuals question what they’ve accepted from others and decide for themselves what they will accept and believe. In this way, it is an attribute that contributes to the transformations, changes and learning discussed by Cell and Mezirow.

Argyris, Putnam, and Smith’s and Schon’s contributions

Argyris, Putnam, and Smith (1985) provide another approach to experience and learning in the form of action science. “Action science is an inquiry into how human beings design and implement action in relation to one another” (Argyris, Putnam, and Smith, 1985, p. 4). It is a “science of practice” (Argyris, Putnam, and Smith, 1985, p. 4) in which colleagues work interactively to understand fully what is happening in a specific circumstance and to confirm an applicable, relevant theory. As such, it requires a rigorous methodology that parallels empirical, hypothetical-deductive methods of investigation, but which also goes further. Action science deals with normative and interpretive claims and issues.
Action science (Argyris, Putnam, and Smith, 1985) uses double-loop learning to uncover and distinguish between theories-in-use and espoused theories. Double-loop learning is reflection similar to Cell’s reflective interpretation. Both seek to identify assumptions underlying patterns of thought. Action science goes a step further, though, by introducing the ideas of theories-in-use and espoused theories and the ladder of inference. Espoused theories are those models of thought which individuals use to describe and explain their actions and decisions. Theories-in-use, on the other hand, are those models of thought which inform action and thought but are unstated and implicit. A dilemma arises when there is conflict between the two, when individuals explain their behavior using an espoused theory when, in fact, they are operating out of a theory-in-use that is in conflict with the espoused theory. It is these two sets of theories that double-loop learning seeks to identify and analyze so that inconsistencies between them can be resolved.

Argyris and Schon (1974) also introduce the “ladder of inference” as an additional intellectual tool to analyze the conclusions individuals draw. The rungs of the ladder represent levels of inferences we make. Beginning with the lowest rung of directly observable data and moving progressively higher up the ladder, we make inferences that become increasingly broad and generic. The danger lies when we leap from one rung of the ladder to a higher one without sufficient data to justify a valid inference at the higher level. Argyris and Schon argue that too many high level inferences are made without adequate data to support them. Logical rungs are overstepped and claims are made that are
not justifiable. Double-loop learning helps to identify this problem.

Action science provides tools that extend the ability of individuals to analyze and interpret their experience. Double-loop learning, like Cell’s reflective interpretation, identifies the underlying assumptions that govern thought and behavior. Once identified, they can be analyzed and modified. It is in how that analysis of experience occurs that action science makes an important contribution.

The ladder of inference and the idea of espoused theories and theories-in-use provide tools for analyzing the interpretations individuals make when they seek to apply double-loop learning. Whereas Cell merely suggests that individuals analyze their assumptions, Argyris and Schon provide two intellectual tools to do so.

And by bringing the hidden, implicit assumptions of the theories-in-use to light, action science addresses the issue created by tacit knowing introduced by Polanyi (1967). Tacit knowing is knowledge we use skillfully as we perform daily work and which is hidden below the level of conscious awareness. Argyris, Putnam, and Smith argue that reflection “is a way of making explicit some of the tacit knowledge embedded in action so that the agent can figure out what to do differently” (Argyris, Putnam, and Smith, 1985, p. 51). Once we bring into the light of conscious thought and reflection those unstated, tacit forms of knowing, we can improve our practice. Of course, this must take into account that not everything can be brought into “ordinary”
conscious awareness. The literature on consciousness, while it is important, will not be addressed in this review.

Another contribution action science makes to this discussion stems from the fact that it "is directed toward knowledge in the service of action" (Argyris, Putnam, and Smith, 1985, p. 79). Action science is not about reflection only, it is about reflecting on action and then taking action again to extend the realm of experience so that there are additional, empirical examples of experience and proof to confirm or refine the theories that inform practice. Reflection in and of itself is not, according to Argyris, Putnam, and Smith, sufficient to prove claims or confirm theories. From an epistemological perspective, action science argues that knowledge is gained when action and reflection work hand-in-hand, when practice and theory are fused. Neither hypothetical-deductive reasoning nor practical, empirical evidence by themselves are enough. Action science provides the process to utilize both forms of proof. Action science merges exploration of alternatives with forms of evidence rather than separates them.

Other models for using experience as the basis for learning suggest a particular sequence in which first there is experience and then there is reflection. Whereas Schon describes it more as a "reflective conversation with the situation" (Schon, 1983, p. 163). Experience and reflection interact, engage, and become part of the same event. They are not separate, they are intertwined. Reflection precedes action, occurs alongside action (reflection-in-action), and occurs after action (reflection-on-action).
Action science is consistent with perspective transformation in that they both suggest that learning is triggered by a conflict between what is expected and what occurs. For Mezirow, it is a disorienting dilemma, for Argyris and Schon it occurs when the practitioner’s expectations conflict with what actually happened. As Marsick and Watkins note, “learning takes place under conditions of surprise” (Marsick and Watkins, 1992, p. 18). Learning is triggered when individual’s or groups’ expectations conflict with what happens. It is the need to resolve the conflict between the expectation and the reality that drives individuals’ learning.

Unlike Kolb and Cell, whose models were individual, action science, like perspective transformation, is a social process. Action science seeks to create a “community of inquiry” (Argyris, Putnam, and Smith, 1985, p. 34) in which colleagues consciously create the conditions in which they “can engage in public reflection on substantive matters of concern” (Argyris, Putnam, and Smith, 1985, p. 34). The creation of these communities fosters critical reflection. Without having a culture (community) conducive to the reflection, action science wouldn’t work.

Action science, like every model looked at thus far regarding experience and learning, and like every definition of adult education, deals with life, the real world. Experience is the stuff out of which meaning is made. Experience is taken a step further by action science’s intent to do more than create understanding and influence thinking, however. Its intent is clearly practical; it seeks to make a difference in what people do in their lives.
It intervenes through action. Thinking about and reflecting on life is not enough, action must be taken that changes life for the better. In that regard, action science is not a neutral agent. Rather, to the extent that it intentionally creates disequilibrium and upsets the current state of affairs, action science mirrors the critical school, like Habermas (1971), that suggests that adult education’s goal ought to be societal change. Granted, the outcome of action science may not be as widespread or as deep as societal change, but its purpose is clearly to create a different world nonetheless.

Summary

Various models use experience as the basis for learning. In general, the models are all cyclical in nature and use reflection as a key skill in the process.

Because reflection is a key skill, it will be important to determine in this study the impact it has on the learning of the leaders.

Reflection

Reflection plays an important role in learning in the models explored above. The ability to reflect enables adults to transform experience into learning. Without reflection, the resource of experience would remain untapped.

The earlier discussion about the models that create learning from experience introduced the theme of reflection,
but did not look at it in detail. This section will explore
two aspects of reflection in more detail. Those two aspects
pertain to when reflection occurs and the dimensions of
reflection. In addition, a related aspect, tacit knowledge,
will also be discussed.

**Reflection and timing**

The first aspect of reflection to be discussed deals
with the relationship of time to reflection and experience.
Many of the models that use experience for learning suggest
that the experience happens first and then the learner
reflects on it (Cell, 1984 and Mezirow, 1991). Used in this
way, reflection enables individuals to look back over what
happened, analyze it, and draw some conclusions. However,
reflection does not occur only after an experience, it may
occur beforehand.

Those who present a cyclical model, like Argyris and
Schon (1974) and Kolb (1984), suggest that reflection also
occurs prior to the experience as individuals use the
product of their reflection as the basis for future action.
Reflection, in this instance, serves a different purpose
from reflection after the fact. Rather than help to make
meaning, as when it occurs after experience, reflection
establishes the framework and direction for future action.
Reflection enables individuals to decide what action to
take. In cyclical models, then, reflection both comes after
and before experience, and depending upon when it occurs, it
performs different functions.
The dual purposes of making meaning and determining action may occur simultaneously, too. Schon (1983) introduces the term reflection-in-action to describe that situation. Reflection-in-action occurs when individuals, in the midst of an experience, are able to reflect on the experience as it is happening. Individuals are performing two functions at once. They make sense of the experience and determine action to take. This form of reflection allows the individual to combine the two purposes of reflection into one event.

The primary benefit is that individuals can shorten their cycle time, the time needed to analyze and make sense of experience, and then plan for future action. Since these two functions happen at once, as the experience is unfolding, individuals incorporate into the experience activities that would otherwise happen afterward or beforehand.

An additional benefit is that individuals can influence (and be influenced by) the event rather than having to wait to think about it. Many opportunities are lost when individuals are unable to evaluate an experience as it is unfolding and modify their actions to take advantage of it. The dual processes of sense-making and action-planning allows individuals to capitalize on opportunities as they arise. These two benefits may be hard to accrue, however, since the process of simultaneously attending to the event, making sense of it, and deciding upon a change of action is not an easy thing to do.
The dimensions of reflection

The second aspect to be explored in this section pertains to the dimensions of reflection. Cell (1984) and Argyris, Putnam, and Smith (1985) each describe two dimensions. Cell (1984) refers to active reinterpretation of the situation and reflective interpretation and Argyris, Putnam, and Smith (1985) discuss single-loop and double-loop learning as part of action science. In both of these cases, the dimensions are characterized by different ways of reflection. The process of reflection in each of the two dimensions, regardless of which model is considered, is qualitatively different.

Dimensions of reflection are not always limited to process. Usher (1985, 1989) draws a distinction between two dimensions of reflection, surface and deep, which are related to conceptions of learning and knowing. Surface reflection occurs when the individual conceptualizes learning as something to be copied, as when a student memorizes a passage, or acquires a body of knowledge. Experts determine whether the student is right or wrong; there is a clear line between the only two possible positions. Deep reflection, on the other hand, occurs when the student conceptualizes learning as an on-going process where context plays an important role. Knowledge claims are dependent upon one’s perspective and situation.

The distinction that Usher makes is based upon different perspectives about learning, unlike Cell (1984) and Argyris, Putnam, and Smith (1985). In Usher’s case, the
distinction is based on the assumptions about learning that an adult brings to the situation. The distinction that Usher makes is similar to the one made by Mezirow (1991). Mezirow distinguishes between the transformation of meaning schemes and of perspectives. The transformations are characterized by the kind of transformation that occurs, not by the kind of reflection that facilitates the transformation. In the case of both Usher and Mezirow, the process of reflection is not the characteristic that distinguishes between one dimension and another.

Argyris, Putnam, and Smith (1985), Cell (1984), and Usher (1985, 1989) each understand reflection differently. There is, however, one similarity they share. They all present reflection as having two forms. Kitchener and King (1991, 1994), on the other hand, expand the possible dimensions of reflection. They describe seven stages of reflective judgment that are sequential and developmental.

The first stage is one in which knowledge is certain, such as that which occurs in young children who know what they can see. The second stage occurs when individuals realize that certainty can be found, if the right source is identified to help ascertain it. In the third stage, certainty becomes somewhat problematic. Individuals can determine what is right in many instances, but there are some cases when certainty is not possible. In those instances, individuals can evaluate their feelings, but not much more. In the fourth stage, individuals recognize that certainty may not be possible. Those upon whom they formerly relied as authorities are now viewed with skepticism. In stage five, knowledge becomes dependent upon
context and perspective. No one position is right, certainty is not possible, relativity reigns. In stage six, individuals apply more rigor to their assessment of various positions using information available and the strength of arguments. As a result, they can develop a personal ranking among perspectives. In the final stage, individuals can make sound decisions based on a full and complete assessment of varying positions and arguments to determine what is best for this circumstance. While certainty is still not possible, it is possible to find the right (although not absolutely certain) answer to a situation.

As individuals move from the first to the seventh stage they progress from the absolutist position indicative of what Usher would call surface learning to an approach in which an individual’s claims are representative of one’s perspective and influenced by context, history, and the dialectic between individuals. The ability to reflect evolves and develops in concert with personal development. Development through the seven stages of reflection is purportedly sequential and unfolds as adults age.

The discussion regarding reflection overlooks an important issue, tacit knowledge, which will now be addressed.

**Tacit knowledge**

Tacit knowledge is knowing that exists without our conscious awareness of it. Polanyi (1967) was one of the first to identify tacit knowing as knowledge that occurs without individuals being aware of it consciously and
without being able to put it into words. Tacit knowledge is absorbed in the course of life’s events without individuals knowing that it is happening. Individuals do not learn everything they know through the processes mentioned above (Cell, 1984, Kolb, 1984). Some of what is learned is hidden from consciousness. Rather than being the result of a conscious process using reflection, it is unconsciously acquired. When individuals are asked to explain how or where they acquired the tacit knowledge, they are unable to do so.

Sternberg and Caruso (1985) suggest that tacit knowledge is knowledge which “metaphorically, is acquired through osmosis” (Sternberg and Caruso, 1985, p. 142).

Inkster (1987) helps to explain how such knowing might occur. When an individual’s attention and energy is drawn to one specific task or problem in a complex situation, other mental processes are taking place simultaneously. While one’s active attention is engaged in the task at hand, tacit knowledge is being acquired unconsciously at the same time.

As a result, individuals acquire information without being aware they are doing so and without being able to describe or explain what they have learned. Simosko (1991) agrees with Tennant and Pogson who argue “that a significant portion of adult learning takes place at an implicit level” (Tennant and Pogson, 1995, p. 57). Following this line of thought, much of adults’ learning (and hence professional success) may be attributable to tacit knowledge and not the result of the learning processes described above in which
experience is used as a resource to be transformed into learning by reflection. If this is the case, then the relationship between experience and learning is not as clear as described above. And further, the role of reflection becomes less clear as well.

Marsick and Watkins (1992) provide insight into this problem. There are times in the lives of adults when their tacit learning may be dysfunctional, when what or how they learn is influenced by social imprimatur or individual habits of mind that serve them badly.

For example, if a male learned tacitly as a child to be prejudiced against women due to family or cultural values, it is likely that as an adult his prejudicial behaviors indicative of those values would create problems. And as the degree and frequency of those difficulties increase, a disorienting dilemma may occur. That disorienting dilemma can trigger him to rethink the underlying values leading to the prejudicial behavior. If so, reflecting on those values may contribute to the unlearning of dysfunctional tacit knowledge. Reflection on and critique of the values one acquired as a child be brought to light, evaluated, and modified. In this way, tacit knowledge, when it is dysfunctional, can be changed through the process of reflection on experience brought about by a disorienting dilemma. However, this is only one possible explanation of how tacit knowledge and experience might be linked. Clearly, there is more to learn.
Summary

Reflection is important because it can help adults learn from experience. It can occur at different points in time relative to the experience (beforehand, during, or afterwards). And reflection can occur in different forms or at different levels. Not all learning is conscious and subject to reflection, however. Much of what adults learn is acquired tacitly. It occurs at a level that is not conscious. The precise way in which tacit knowledge is acquired is not clear. Further, whether or how reflection moves tacit knowledge into conscious awareness is not fully understood.

The following chart (Table 2) summarizes the connection between the three concepts discussed in the preceding section and the four fundamental assumptions and beliefs discussed earlier. An X in the column under the concept indicates that the concept incorporates the assumption or belief to the left.
Table 2
The Connection between Fundamental Assumptions and Beliefs and Concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fundamental Assumptions and Beliefs</th>
<th>Self-Direction</th>
<th>Experience/Learning</th>
<th>Reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning is life.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults learn from real situations.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience is the best resource for learning.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults use a process to learn from experience.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus far, the discussion of the conceptual/theoretical framework has addressed three concepts: self-direction, the relationship between experience and learning, and reflection (which includes tacit knowledge). They have in common the fact that they are all considered from the viewpoint of an individual. In each case, the primary focus is the adult as learner. For example, it is the individual who reflects on experience, or it is the individual who learns tacitly.

These three concepts will be used as the framework to guide this study. As the guiding framework they focus the attention of the researcher on factors and processes that may occur during the research.
Related Research

There are other factors outside of the individual that influence how adults learn, too. The influence of these factors will be discussed in the next section.

The literature discussed above comes from the field of adult education. In the following section, the literature comes from other fields. The related literature (literature not from the field of adult education) discussed here is included in the study because of its relevance to the questions being explored in this study.

The Environment

The discussion thus far has focused on ways that adults use experience to learn. However, that discussion fails to consider the extent to which the environment in which the individual exists influences learning. Earlier, Candy (1991) discussed various factors outside an individual that influenced an adult’s learning. This section builds on that line of thought by exploring two aspects of environment, the nature of the situation and organizational culture.

The nature of the situation

Individuals learn in situations, not separate from them. Simon (1960, 1967) found that leaders (as opposed to adults) categorize situations into those that are either routine or non-routine. He found that leader actions would vary according to how the leader categorized the situation.
For those situations that are routine, in which the preponderance of data is familiar, leaders respond in habitual, programmed ways. If there is nothing new in the situation, leaders respond in ways that have worked in the past and which have yielded acceptable results. However, when the situation presents new data, when it is non-routine, leaders respond in unprogrammed ways. They find new actions to take. It is the non-routine situation that has potential for learning.

When leaders run into a non-routine situation, they run into a dilemma. The non-routine situation is often a barrier to the achievement of organizational results with which the leader is charged. The dilemma presented by a new situation and the need to perform can lead to the disorienting dilemma that triggers learning.

The situation may be more complex than what Simon describes. Keen and Scott-Morton (1978) provide another way of looking at the situation. In their model, the situation is organized into three categories of tasks: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured. Structured tasks are those in which the data is overwhelmingly familiar and normal. Unstructured tasks are those where the amount of new data is such that individuals see them as new situations. Semi-structured tasks are those with a combination of known and unknown elements. The task becomes the critical element of the situation.

And the situation is more complex since there is more to differentiate routine from non-routine situations than the nature of the task. Keen and Scott-Morton argue that
the context also contributes to the non-routine nature of a situation. For example, an individual may be able to thread a needle, but ask that individual to thread a needle while standing on a six-inch-wide steel girder 30 stories above the street and it is no longer a routine task.

Thus, situations can be routine or non-routine according to the interplay of various elements. When the situation is viewed broadly, it is non-routine when the features and facts are combined into a situation that is unfamiliar. The situation can be dissected and each of three elements can be viewed separately. Those elements are the individual, the task, and the context. For example, from the viewpoint of the individual, the situation becomes non-routine when the individual experiences a situation for the first time. Others may have run into this particular situation, but it is new for this person. The situation becomes non-routine from the perspective of the task, if the task itself is unfamiliar. The situation becomes non-routine with regard to the environment when the task may be familiar, but the specific circumstance in which it exists is new (as in the case of threading a needle on a steel girdle 30 stories high).

**Summary**

The situation affects how leaders respond. In particular, the kind of task a leader undertakes influences learning. The situation can be viewed broadly, as an overall circumstance, or aspects of the situation may be concentrated on, for example, the individual, the task, or the context.
Organizational culture

The specific situation is one factor that can influence an individual’s learning. But even more pervasive is the organizational culture. Shein has defined organizational culture as:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (Shein, 1992 p. 12).

Shein focuses on the assumptions as the foundation for the culture of an organization. For him, there are three levels in an organization’s culture: basic underlying assumptions, espoused values, and artifacts. Basic underlying assumptions are “unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings” (Shein, 1992, p. 17). It is these assumptions that form the foundation of the organizational culture. The next level of culture is the espoused values, or “strategies, goals, philosophies” (Shein, 1992, p. 17) of the organization. These are ways that members talk about what the organization stands for and how it operates. The other level of the organization’s culture is its artifacts, the “visible organizational structures and processes” (Shein, 1992, p. 17). These are the most visible aspects of a culture that one experiences in that organization: the building, ways of talking, modes
of dress, arrangement of space, and printed brochures and annual reports.

Shein’s understanding of organizational culture is the definition used in this discussion. In the past several years, one particular form of organizational culture that has been widely discussed is the learning organization. It is to this area that the discussion now turns.

Garratt’s contribution

Among the first to write about the learning organization is Garratt (1987) who states that “organizations can only become effective if the people selected to run them are capable of two key skills – learning continuously, and giving direction” (Garratt, 1987, p. 15). Garratt argues that organizational leaders must overcome their natural inclination to restrictive thinking. Leaders rely on functionalist, narrow training when faced with complex problems and organizational issues. As a result, rather than think deeply and effectively, they fall back on their specialist training and resort to modes of thought that are inconsistent with the problems and issues at hand. If trained as engineers, for example, they approach problems from a purely technical (engineering) perspective and overlook other points of view that may be pertinent to the problem, such as marketing, or finance, or organizational development.

To deal with the failure of leaders to think effectively, he proposes an organization whose culture supports and encourages learning. He describes a learning
culture which leaders are responsible for creating. Culture is “the historically transmitted beliefs, behaviours, symbols and values of an organization” (Garratt, 1987, p. 112). Garratt describes four levels of organizational culture that leaders must influence.

Level 1 is the tribal culture of the specialist and functionaries. Within this level of culture, individuals establish their own rituals and procedures that separate them from others in the organization. Their language, symbols, and tools distinguish them from others and provide a sense of identity. Level 2 is the micro culture level that reflects the belief system of the organization. Organizational cultures, based on different beliefs of power, are translated into varying structures and processes that support those beliefs. For example, a bureaucratic structure of an organization is based on a belief that power ought to be distributed throughout the organization according to closely proscribed functions and responsibilities determined in a rational way by senior management.

Level 3 concerns mega cultures where national differences come into play. Leaders must be aware of and able to respond to the differences in culture that exist in organizations in other nations. One of the ways that leaders can respond to the differences in culture is to integrate them. And that is what Garratt proposes as Level 4, the meta level. In level 4, leaders learn how to integrate the three lower levels so that individuals who are used to operating at only one level of culture become capable of dealing with those from all the other levels.
In addition to understanding and managing these levels of organizational culture, Garratt argues that other things need to be done to overcome the tendency of leaders to get stuck in faulty thinking processes. He proposes three actions that leaders can take to foster their individual development. The first is that leaders must “let go of their specialist roles and come to accept the need to look upwards and outwards before integrating the whole” (Garratt, 1987, p. 117). This is a psychological issue, similar to Mezirow’s transformation of meaning schemes, which is best done through senior management team development processes.

The second action requires leaders to “rise above the ‘normal’ control systems of the business and create ones that give a true picture of the performance within and outside the business” (Garratt, 1987, p. 117). Garratt contends that there are systems and processes at work which leaders overlook because of their specialist orientations. Leaders must find those underlying structures and processes that include the whole organization. One way for that to happen is to create ratios that draw their attention of leaders to the connection between those parts represented in the ratios. He provides examples of some of those ratios from the General Electric Company of the United Kingdom: Profit/Sales, Sales/Capital Employed, Sales/Inventories, Sales/Number of Employees. By instituting these ratios, leaders will attend to the connections between departments which they otherwise would overlook.

The third action that leaders can take is to “get the top team into full debating mode” (Garratt, 1987, p. 120).
As a starting point, he suggests that leaders step outside their normal (specialist) routine and see things from a different perspective. Take time to read things not related to work, to travel to foreign locations, to explore hobbies and other interests, and to reflect quietly. These activities will reduce specialist thinking so that leaders will bring additional perspectives to their collective decision-making.

The three actions Garratt suggests require reflection to be effective. In that regard, Garratt supports the argument presented earlier that reflection assists learning. That is not his primary focus, though. Garratt’s primary emphasis is on the faulty thinking processes that inhibit leaders from engaging in the open dialogue and debate needed to address the problems faced by their organizations. His response is to create a culture that fosters interaction. Learning becomes a means to an end, and it is achieved via an organizational culture shaped by leaders. Leaders must broaden their views and incorporate a systems approach that draws their attention to the underlying cultural and organizational processes at work in organizational life.

Candy (1991) and Garratt (1987) argue that factors outside of the individual influence learning, although what each of them focuses on is different. Candy (1991) describes the various ways that factors outside the individual influence an individual’s learning and Garratt encourages leaders to construct a culture that will capitalize on the processes Candy describes. Their importance to this study is their emphasis on what occurs outside of the individual and how that influences learning.
That influence, namely, organizational culture, will be explored more in the section to follow.

**Senge’s contribution**

Garratt’s use of a systems approach is extended by Senge (1990) who offers a different understanding of a learning organization. Senge defines the learning organization as “an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future” (Senge, 1990, 14). The elements of a learning organization’s culture are presented as five disciplines: mental models, team learning, building a shared vision, personal mastery, and systems thinking.

By focusing attention on mental models, members of learning organizations develop the habit of seeing problems as emanating from the habits and structures of thought leading to action. It is only when organization members recognize that individual and organizational success stems from the mental models that undergird action that a learning organization can be fully created. Awareness of mental models is the beginning point for the development of a learning organization.

Once individuals become aware of those models, they can work to manipulate them. That is where team learning comes in. Team learning allows individuals to join in collective dialogue and practice double-loop thinking so that old habits of mind and procedural obstacles are overcome and new insights developed. However, just being able to do this is
not enough; individuals must want to do so, which is the role of building a shared vision.

Building a shared vision allows individuals to commit themselves to a common future whose appeal pulls them through to a new level of emotional investment in which motivation is internal. Energy for the work of forging a learning organization and overcoming the many hurdles that must be overcome in the process comes from the motivation emanating from a shared vision.

Personal mastery “is the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively” (Senge, 1990, p. 7). Senge borrows from Eastern spiritual traditions which promote the belief that all change begins within and that individuals must look inward and make personal changes before anything can happen in the world. This discipline is similar to humanist traditions that concentrate on personal growth and development as a goal of education. Senge appeals to the desire for personal growth and seeks to merge it with organizational development.

Finally, systems thinking occurs when individuals are able to see the complete set of relationships, actions, and structures that contribute to an organization’s success. Systems thinking pulls the four other disciplines together into an intertwined set of disciplines that collectively forge a learning organization. Systems thinking is the overriding value and practice that brings the other four
disciplines together in the creation of a learning organization.

Senge argues that a learning organization is created when there is a collective metanoia or shift of mind for everyone in the organization. One interpretation is that he is asking that members of an organization undergo a common perspective transformation in which their fundamental mental models having to do with organizations and learning change. In such cases, the culture of the organization would dramatically and irrevocably be transformed.

He identifies what leaders of those organizations ought to be like. They should be designers, stewards, and teachers. Designers are aware of the underlying principles of successful organizations and ensure that the appropriate principles are built into the relationships between the organizational elements of roles, structures, and procedures of the organization. Leaders are stewards of vision; they shepherd the organization and its members along a convoluted path toward its idealized future. Like Joseph in the Old Testament, leaders bring their people forth from the bondage of Egypt (where the organization is now) to the glory of the Promised Land (where the organization will be in the future). Leaders achieve that by being teachers who inculcate a new way of being in each member of the organization. Leaders model, instill, and teach the five disciplines of the learning organization.

There are some parallels between a learning organization and some of the ideas that have been discussed above. First, a learning organization is a culture in which
there is widespread acceptance of the individual attribute that Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) call learner self-direction, albeit on an organization basis. Senge wants everyone in an organization to be personally responsible for and committed to learning. The difference is that Senge extends application of the attribute to the organization. He makes the attribute the overriding element of the organizational culture rather than being merely an attribute of an individual.

In addition, where others (Argyris, Putnam, and Smith, 1985; Cell, 1984, Mezirow, 1991; and Schon, 1983) use reflection as the key to learning and discuss it at length, Senge builds it into the learning organization without much discussion. Senge provides vehicles for learning through the requirement for team learning, mental models, and personal mastery, all of which require reflection, but without spending much time discussing reflection itself.

There are differences between Senge’s arguments and those of Garratt. Senge (1990) spends a great deal of time discussing and explaining a systems approach to organizational change, whereas Garratt refers to it but does not go into detail. Garratt identifies actions that can be taken to foster the kind of learning among senior executives that he believes are required for an organization to become a learning culture. Senge assumes that leaders will model how to learn, but does not describe or suggest how the leaders develop the ability to learn that he expects them to model.
Senge is not alone in discussing organizational learning. The discussion of organizational learning is continued below.

**Burgoyne, Pedlar, and Boydell’s contribution**

To Burgoyne, Pedlar, and Boydell (1994), the focus is on the company because it is the company that can provide a much-needed response to “people’s needs for meaning, identity and purpose” (Burgoyne, Pedlar, and Boydell, 1994, p. 2). Where Senge identified five disciplines, they identify eleven characteristics of their learning company:

1. a learning approach to strategy;
2. a high level of participation in policy making by organizational members and stakeholders;
3. use of information technology for sharing knowledge and mutual awareness;
4. accounting and control processes which give feedback helpful to understanding the effects of action, to learning and decision making;
5. internal ‘customer/client’ relationships feeding mutual adjustment and adaptation;
6. reward systems consistent with an employment philosophy which included the incentivization of learning;
7. forms of structure which both enabled learning and could shift, adapt and accommodate change resulting from it;
8. boundary workers, those people working at the formal boundaries of the organization, collecting and passing on ‘environmental’ information gathered from stakeholders that can help to improve organizational processes;
9. willingness and ability to learn with and from other organizations and companies;

10. a culture and climate which encourage responsible experimentation and shared learning from successes and failures;

11. mechanisms and employee relationships which encourage and support self-development (Burgoyne, Pedlar, and Boydell, 1994, pp. 3-4).

These characteristics demonstrate a more detailed expression of how members of the organization can learn and the organizational structures and processes that must be created for the learning company to become a reality. Burgoyne, Pedlar, and Boydell (1994) reflect a practitioner orientation to organizational change that is grounded in a belief that these eleven characteristics are driven by “a process linking company policy, company operations, individual thinking and individual action in a process of flowing ideas and information that allow directed purposeful mutual action which is coherent, flexible, involving all of the people concerned” (Burgoyne, Pedlar, and Boydell, 1994, p. 3-4).

By linking the need for organizational learning to the operations, strategies, processes, and structures of a company, Burgoyne, Pedlar, and Boydell (1994) extend the reach of their concept, the learning company, to those who need to see a practical connection between the world of ideas and concepts to their everyday working world. The model they provide to link policy, operations, ideas and action is called “the ‘energy flow’ model” (Burgoyne, Pedlar, and Boydell, 1994, p. 5). It depicts the four
activities along two continua of collective-to-individual and vision-to-action (see Figure 1). An important contribution the flow model makes is to demonstrate the extent to which organizational culture includes processes. It is the processes that take the static elements of the culture (such as policy, operations, etc.) and create a dynamic, living organization.

Figure 1. Burgoyne, Pedlar, and Boydell’s energy flow model.


In both Senge's learning organization and Burgoyne, Pedlar, and Boydell's learning company, characteristics of the culture of the organization are presented along with the key values of those cultures which need to be inculcated. In the case of Senge (1990), the key value is systems thinking. In the case of Burgoyne, Pedlar, and Boydell (1994), it is that processes are important to organizational
change and they must be consciously modified to foster learning.

In addition, while both of these models seek to foster learning in the workplace, the authors say very little about the leaders of the organization. Senge (1990) makes passing reference to the need for leaders to model what the organization seeks to become, but says little else about leaders' learning. Despite the fact that learning is such an important attribute, one that is the defining value of both the learning organization and the learning company, the authors do not address the leaders' learning. Given their purpose, to foster the development of a particular kind of organization or company, it is understandable. And yet, it is almost as if the authors of both texts assume that the leaders will naturally assume the characteristics and attributes of the organizations to be created. Garratt (1987) does look at the learning of leaders, but only as a means to break out of the trap of faulty thinking. The three suggestions he makes concern only what leaders can do to broaden their perspectives.

What neither Senge (1990) nor Burgoyne, Pedlar, and Boydell (1994) address is the question of how the leaders of the organization or company become convinced of and competent in the attributes they will be expected to foster. It takes vision and effort for organizations to become learning organizations or companies, and someone (or some group) must provide leadership. None of these authors discuss in any detail how leaders accept and become skilled in the characteristics that they are expected to develop in their organizations and companies. Their failure to do so
is not because they do not recognize the influence that leaders play in organizational success. Burgoyne, Pedlar, and Boydell readily acknowledge that organizations are shaped by three forces, one of which is “the current ideas and vision of the people ‘running’ the organization” (Burgoyne, Pedlar, and Boydell, 1994, p. 2). However, their focus is on the culture of the entity they want to create, be it an organization or a company, rather than on those who bear the responsibility for creating it.

Summary

Organizational cultures influence how people learn. Leaders have the responsibility to shape organizational culture in order to foster learning. To fulfill that responsibility, leaders must first understand what an effective learning organization looks like. Three models of organizational cultures that promote learning have been presented. Leaders can use any of these models as the basis of the culture they may choose to create. What a leader focuses on and takes action on will vary according to which model the leader uses. Further, leaders can take specific actions to break out of their own restrictive, technical thinking.

For this study, it will be important to determine the degree to which organizational culture influences the learning of leaders.
Conclusion to conceptual/theoretical framework

What conclusions can be drawn from the above discussion?

1. Adults learn from life. If they acquire the attribute of self-direction and use the processes allied with it, they approach life with the attitude and skills to reap learning benefits from their experiences.

2. Learning does not have to be haphazard and erratic, adults can develop and use a conscious process to make their informal and incidental learning more effective.

3. Reflection plays a critical role in any process that adults employ to learn from experience. The form of reflection and its impact on learning can vary according to how it is employed.

4. The particular tasks that adults engage in influence their learning. In addition, the culture of the organizations in which they work also influences their learning.

These conclusions, drawn from the above discussion, form the basis of the conceptual/theoretical framework for this study. They reflect the literature that has been discussed concerning adults and their learning.

Table 3 summarizes the connection between the five concepts discussed above and the fundamental assumptions and beliefs discussed earlier. The first three concepts (self-
direction, the relationship between experience and learning, and reflection) have to do with adults in general. The second two (the situation and the culture) have to do with environmental factors that influence the learning of adults. An X in the column under the concept indicates that the concept incorporates the assumption or belief to the left. A pair of question marks (??) indicates that it is unclear how the concept reflects the fundamental assumption or belief.

Table 3
A Summary of Concepts and Fundamental Assumptions and Beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FA &amp; B*</th>
<th>Concepts Introduced</th>
<th>Additional Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Direction</td>
<td>Experience/Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA&amp;B #1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA&amp;B #2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA&amp;B #3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA&amp;B #4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* FA & B # 1 refers to the Fundamental Assumption and Belief # 1: Learning is life.
* FA & B # 2 refers to the Fundamental Assumption and Belief # 2: Adults learn from real situations.
* FA & B # 3 refers to the Fundamental Assumption and Belief #3: Experience is the best resource for learning.
* FA & B # 4 refers to the Fundamental Assumption and Belief # 4: Adults use a process to learn from experience.

The conceptual/theoretical framework above concerns adults and their learning in general. This study, however,
is concerned with the learning of a specific group of adults, leaders that has not been discussed in detail thus far. The next two sections will explore the literature pertaining to the learning of leaders and to one particular environment in which they operate, namely, organizations being transformed.

Leaders and Their Learning

A major premise of this study is that experience is a resource for learning. Several people have argued that learning from experience, while it may seem like a natural phenomenon, is not as common as might be believed. Mumford found that “few managers go through a careful, reflective, analytical process to establish what they have learned” (Mumford, 1980, p. 114). This argument contrasts with what has been argued above, that adults can use their experience to learn if they apply a conscious process to it like that provided by Kolb and others.

Mumford continues, “For most managers, planned learning from a job experience is a rare phenomenon” (Mumford, 1980, p. 114). It is not that Mumford suggests that managers should not learn from experience, rather that his studies demonstrate that planned learning from experiences on the job is not the norm for most managers. He identifies several reasons why learning opportunities are missed. They include: not being aware of a need to learn, not being motivated to learn, not having support to learn, and not identifying opportunities as learning opportunities due to learning style differences.
He discusses other factors that influence this result. Many opportunities that might contribute to learning are missed at the time or in retrospect. This may be due to the fact that managers may not see or evaluate the experience as something from which they might learn. Contributing to this is that “many managers see task achievement and learning as not merely different but separate processes” (Mumford, 1980, p. 116). If managers separate learning from real life, then it is difficult for them to use experience to learn.

Mumford writes, “They also have the problem that an activity they have always thought of in one way is difficult to perceive in another way. It is not necessarily easy for them to see that an activity can be undertaken to achieve a main purpose (task achievement) but also meet a secondary purpose (learning)” (Mumford, 1980, p. 117).

Mumford found that when managers do learn, it is not the result of a planned, thoughtful process. Instead, their learning is more likely to be unplanned, solitary, and erratic.

Further, he found that when managers learn from experience it tends to happen in certain cases in which job challenges contribute to learning. Mumford states it as follows, “managers asked to talk about the events or processes from which they have learned will often highlight new situations or experiences—sometimes a new job, sometimes a new task added to their existing jobs” (Mumford, 1980, p. 121).

Mumford recommends four actions managers can take to transform experience into learning, three of which deal with
how managers perceive learning. He suggests that managers must see experience as an opportunity for learning, must recognize that learning and work are not necessarily separate activities, and must realize that setting learning objectives increases learning. The fourth action was that managers assess and align resources to assist in learning from experience.

Mumford found (1995) that most learning for managers is accidental and unstructured and that they did not understand learning well. In another work, he argues that while managers may not be clear about the learning process, they learn most from on the job experience. He writes, “for most managers most learning will occur — or not occur — on the job” (Mumford, 1994, p. 17). One reason he offers for why managers don’t learn has to do with differences in how managers learn. He contends that “we have ignored the reality that different managers actually learn differently from the same process” (Mumford, 1994, p. 14).

Learning for managers is not as simple a process as it might appear. Three efforts to make sense of managerial learning will be reviewed to demonstrate how the authors modified the model provided by Kolb (1984) so that it applies to the real world in which managers live. The first to be discussed will be the work of Honey and Mumford (1986, 1989, 1990).

Honey and Mumford (1986, 1989, 1990) turned their attention to the differences in how managers learned. They argued that job experience could be better utilized as a vehicle for learning, if only we understood and took
advantage of learning styles. They further concluded that Kolb’s (1984) model was insufficient to the task of transforming experience into learning because it did not address the question of learning styles. They expanded upon Kolb’s model (Honey and Mumford, 1986, 1989, 1990) by delineating four learning styles related to it. Each style equips managers for a particular stage in Kolb’s learning cycle.

In stage one, having an experience, the learning style that applies is called the Activist. Activists learn best from new, active, engaging experiences with high visibility. In stage two, reviewing the experience, the learning style is the Reflector. Reflectors learn best from activities in which they are expected to observe, think, and review. In stage three, concluding from the experience, the style is the Theorist. Theorists learn best when they can engage in structured, methodical activities that require making connections and associations. And in stage four, planning the next steps, the learning style is the Pragmatist. Pragmatists learn best when they are expected to solve practical, real world problems in the here and now with direct, instant feedback.

In their view, learning preferences matter because they influence how managers learn and whether or not they learn. One of the reasons that managers don’t learn, according to Honey and Mumford, is that there is a disconnect between the manager’s learning style and the learning experience. Their solution is two-fold. First, teach about learning styles, and then make learning a more explicit activity that takes those styles into consideration.
Honey and Mumford are not the only ones to expand upon Kolb’s model in order to make it more relevant to managers. The second effort to be discussed is provided by Morris. He offers another model based on Kolb that expands the model in another direction. For Morris (1994), the problem is that Kolb’s model is not grounded in the reality of organizational life. He offers a model in which the organization plays a greater role. The model Morris offers (see below) grounds the learning process in the situation and uses classical management functions (plan, monitor, review, and form a purpose) to connect the learning to the organization’s work.

![Figure 2. Morris' model.](image)

Since Morris believes that "work seems to drive out the awareness of learning" (Morris, 1994, p. 175) he bridges the differences between work and learning by connecting the learning process to what managers do on a daily basis. His model puts learning into terms and actions that are familiar to managers. By linking work and learning in this way, he also modifies the learning process described by Kolb so that it includes elements beyond the learner. It attempts to bridge the gap between an individual (and the individual’s learning) and the situation in which the individual works (and learns).

Juch offers the third effort to modify Kolb’s model as it relates to managers. Juch (1983) acknowledges that Kolb’s cyclical model for learning has value, but argues that it is much too simple a model. He states “that any learning model remains a gross simplification of the very complex learning processes in Man’s brain and body” (Juch, 1983, p. 26).

He modifies and expands upon Kolb’s model. One of his modifications is to rename Kolb’s four stages: thinking (instead of reflective observation), addressing (instead of conceptualization), doing (instead of active experimentation), and sensing (instead of concrete experience). This serves to make the model more general and pertinent to actual events.

Of particular relevance to this study is Juch’s expansion of Kolb’s model in two particular ways. First, he places the self at the center of the learning process. Kolb’s model does not address the self as one of its
elements. Juch begins with the self as the starting point for his model. This contribution is similar to Morris' expansion in that it inserts into the model an element to make it more relevant and realistic. By including the self in the model, Juch ensures that the process of learning does not become isolated from the person who learns.

Second, he introduces barriers between each of the four stages in his learning model, which learners must overcome in order to progress to the next stage. He gives a name to each and describes how they affect learning.

The Window occurs between the doing and sensing stages. This barrier “regulates what a person is perceiving, what he takes into his world” (Juch, 1983, p. 39). It is also the barrier that is most significant to managers because it “symbolizes a person’s mental state of openness” (Juch, 1983, p. 39). This is particularly important to managers because if managers do not perceive something as important, they will not include it in their mental processes, it will be excluded.

The Skin occurs between the sensing and thinking stages. This barrier “is a filter within an individual’s inner world, thus rather elusive, imperceptible. Yet it can constitute a very important barrier to learning. It is the barrier that determines whether the empirically sensed data which passed through the window are considered to be relevant” (Juch, 1983, p. 42). The Skin functions like “a protective layer around the personal opinions we hold dear” (Juch, 1983, p. 42).
The Gate occurs between the thinking and addressing stages. This barrier represents the “opening through which an individual goes out mentally into the outer world” (Juch, 1983, p. 43) and entails one’s taking on the public responsibility.

The Rubicon occurs between the addressing and doing stages. This barrier is “the point where a follow-through, a commitment is required, or inversely where people can opt out, may desert the plan” (Juch, 1983, p. 44). Once individuals overcome this barrier, they go through with the plan they announced when they came through the gate.

This contribution, of expanding Kolb’s model so that it includes barriers between the stages, is important because it helps to explain why managers might not learn. Mumford (1995) offered possible reasons as to why managers might not learn and Juch takes that thinking further by providing specific barriers to explain how this might happen.

These three efforts provide specific suggestions for expanding Kolb’s model to make it more relevant to the life of managers. However, there is more that can be looked at that pertains to how leaders learn.

Mumford’s confirms and refines some of what he had found earlier. First, Mumford (1995) found that leaders are unaware of learning processes and do not see opportunities for learning. This is partly due to the mindset that leaders have that focuses their attention on problems, not learning.
Second, the reason why managers learned was because there was a problem or difficulty to overcome or because of a change in jobs or in job responsibilities. These occurrences trigger the manager’s learning.

Third, organizations really don’t help managers learn. Despite the talk of management development being an activity that supports the learning of managers, little support is provided by organizations for managers to learn from challenging tasks, changes in jobs or in job assignments, or problems and difficulties. For all intents and purposes, managers in those situations are left on their own.

Mumford (1995) provides a parallel argument to the one offered by Morris (1994). Morris developed a model for learning that uses common managerial terms and activities to make the model more relevant. Mumford compares the learning cycle to the task cycle to show the similarity between the two cycles thereby making it easier for managers to link learning and work (Mumford, 1995). Whereas Morris uses the daily terms and actions in his model, Mumford merely refers to the similarity. Morris’ linkage between work and learning is closer than Mumford’s.

Mumford’s recommendations parallel those discussed in earlier sections concerning the role of reflection in the process of learning. Mumford (1995) argues that the way to make the learning more effective is to move from a retrospective to a prospective approach. When one thinks about learning is important, and learning can be improved if managers think about what they want to learn in advance. Mumford’s recommendation provides one example of the idea,
by Schon (1983) and others, that reflection can occur at different points in time. Adults can reflect on action (after the fact), in action (during the experience), or prior to action (beforehand). Mumford contends that if managers think about what they want to learn beforehand, their learning will improve.

Mumford 19950 found that the content of what managers learned fell into three areas: knowledge, skills, and insights/generalizations. This finding was confirmed by others who also looked at what leaders learned and how they learned it.

Lindsey, Homes, and McCall (1987) observed that major firms often used job rotations and job assignments to develop managers, but that there was little research to support that strategy. They studied 86 executives to find out about how job assignments affected managerial learning. The results of their study were organized into two general areas: the key events and the lessons of experience.

Regarding the key events, they found that most of the developmental experiences, those that led to learning, dealt with job assignments that challenged the managers and required them to learn to meet the challenge. These included such things as being challenged to fix a problem, manage a task force, have a change in scope of job responsibilities, build something from nothing, and switch from a line to a staff position.

There were other sources of lessons for managers, though they occurred with much less frequency. These
include hardships, such as a business failure or a demotion, other people, such as role models, and an eclectic group of other events, such as coursework or personal reasons.

The lessons that leaders learned clustered in five areas: setting and implementing agendas, handling relationships, basic values, executive temperament, and personal awareness.

McCauley reviewed the research of earlier studies and his conclusions generally supported the findings of Lindsey, Homes, and McCall (1987). McCauley (1986) found that managers’ assignments influenced their learning in terms of what they learned and what contributed to that learning. First, the studies that McCauley reviewed suggested categories into which the learning fell. Most of the lessons fell into the category of managerial skills (planning, coordination, delegation, etc.), while others fell into categories such as personal skills (listening, self-insight, etc.), technical skills, and business knowledge. These categories, while not exact replicas of those by Lindsey, Homes, and McCall (1987), are similar.

Others support these findings regarding what managers learn from experience. Bennis (1989) claims that leaders learn about their strengths and abilities, they clarify and confirm their values and beliefs, they develop a purpose for their lives, and they become more self-reflective and self-aware. Smith and Morphey (1994) found that the content of managers’ learning dealt mostly with personal insight.
Second, McCauley (1986) concluded that the more challenging the job assignment, the more likely the leader would move beyond existing skills and knowledge and therefore be required to learn. This is consistent with Lindsey, Homes, and McCall’s finding that most of the managerial learning resulted from challenging assignments and with Smith and Morphey (1994), who found that the vast majority of managers’ learning came from challenges, and that successes did not contribute to learning.

Smith and Morphey (1994) explore how tough challenges affect the learning of managers. Their findings are important because they apply directly to the subjects of this study and reinforce what has been described above. First, they found that the vast majority of managers’ learning came from challenges. Second, they found that organizations and bosses do not provide much support for learning for those undertaking challenges. Third, the content of their learning dealt mostly with personal insight. Fourth, for most of the managers, learning was a solitary and lonely activity. And fifth, reflection after the fact contributed to their learning.

Mumford (1995) drew one other conclusion that will be addressed in this discussion; context influences learning. The fact that context influences learning is addressed by others who are concerned about its influence on leaders.

Kotter (1990) confirms what Merriam and Caffarella (1991) have indicated, namely that experiences and the environment influence what leaders. Some organizations are more encouraging of leader’s learning than others. Three
factors contribute to leaders reaping learning benefits: other members of the organization look for and seek to develop leaders, there are networks to support leaders, and people are expected to lead.

Kotter’s idea that fellow leaders can support one another’s learning is similar to what Garratt (1987) suggests when he proposes actions that senior leadership teams can take to increase their learning. In both instances, it is the colleagues of the leader(s) who foster learning. Both Kotter and Garratt provide suggestions to encourage leaders’ learning that involve others. One reason for their approach may be that they both believe that leaders need the support of others if they are to learn effectively. Or perhaps they think that several factors contribute to learning and they want to provide specific suggestions regarding one of those factors. Irrespective of the reason for their suggestions, one thing is clear. Kotter and Garratt propose actions to foster the learning of leaders through the use of supportive collegial networks.

Collectively, these studies and works provide an understanding of learning as it applies to the lives of leaders and managers, those who are the subjects of this study.

**Summary**

Managers’ learning from experience is rarely planned. When it does occur it tends to be unplanned, lonely, and erratic. Reflection typically occurs only after the fact. When leaders learn, it generally is triggered by work-
related experience that demands a change in the leader’s work. New jobs, job challenges, hardships or failures, new challenges and the like are the kinds of things that trigger learning. And, when they learn, the kinds of things they learn also tend to revolve around work: knowledge having to do with new work, skills to deal with changes in work responsibilities, and personal insights that enable them to be more productive.

Leaders face several difficulties that limit their learning from experiences at work. Their attention is directed to tasks. In addition, they see tasks and learning as separate, not something that can be accomplished simultaneously. Further, they tend to be unaware of their learning preferences. As a result, they do not take into consideration differences in how they might learn from experience to better take advantage of their experiences in order to learn. Finally, organizations, which may be supportive of leaders in general, are not supportive of leaders in their learning.

Given these difficulties, it will be important in this study to determine if the factors identified here affect whether and how the leaders learn.

The Environment in Which Leaders Operate

Earlier, in the discussion about what adults learn in general, it was found that two additional concepts (situation and organizational culture) had to be added to make the framework more complete. Similarly, in the preceding section on the learning of leaders, it is also
appropriate to explore the same two areas. The following section will discuss the environment from the perspective of the situation and organizational culture.

The situation: undertaking a task of transforming an organization

The next topic to cover in this literature review pertains to the specific task that the subjects of this study will undertake, namely the transformation of an organization.

Leaders do many things. One of the most important is to ensure that societies and organizations survive (Gardner, 1990). As argued in Chapter One, American society needs leaders who can transform organizations so they are capable of fulfilling their role in society. To do that, however, we need leaders who are unlike those we’ve had in the past. This discussion deals with that new form of leader, the transformational leader.

Who are transformational leaders? According to Pierce and Newstrom (1995), the transformational leader represents “a style of leadership that may be capable of navigating organizations through chaos and into the 21st century” (Pierce and Newstrom, 1995, p. 195). Transformational leaders “bring about positive, major changes in organizations” Dubrin (1995). In general, transformational leaders are those individuals who bring about significant changes in an organization’s direction, purpose, structure, size, and processes. The leader’s job, as a transformational leader, is to change the organization.
If that is what they do, how do they do it? Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1990), in their review of literature on transformational leaders, synthesized the behaviors from the studies they analyzed into six key behaviors: identifying and articulating a vision, providing an appropriate model, fostering acceptance of group goals, high performance expectations, providing individualized support, and intellectual stimulation. Gault, Wachner, Walsh, & Johnson (1992), Kanter (1992), Reich (1994), and Sherwood & Hoylman (1993) include actions to reduce the size of the organization, revise procedures and processes, empower employees, foster teamwork and communications, and continue technological improvements.

All of these approaches to organizational transformation imply an understanding of organizations that is essentially mechanistic. The organization is seen as an object upon which the leader takes some action. That is not the only way to view organizations, however. Other viewpoints describe organizations more as organic entities. When organizations are viewed as organisms, organizational culture plays an important role.

Howard, Nadler, and Gerstein (1992) see leaders as architects of organizational change who strive, among other things, to transform the organization's culture. Bass and Avolio (1993) instruct leaders to change culture by revising the organization's vision and transforming its shared values and norms. Shein (1992) provides even more guidance to leaders who want to become more literate in reading their organization's culture and changing it. He suggests looking
at underlying, unstated assumptions and managing the contradictions of stability, learning and change. These are like the earlier discussion in which attributes of learning organizations were identified. Organizations are seen as a composite of individuals who collectively, as the organization, hold a certain group of values and beliefs.

In addition to these collective values, there are individual ones, too, that are identified with respect to organizational transformation. Sandroff (1993) suggests that a new attitude is critical for everyone today; an attitude of positiveness and flexibility enables us to deal more effectively with the changes in society and in organizations. Attitude changes requiring flexibility, innovation, and adaptiveness are part of several of the cultural changes expected in organizations.

Most authors discuss what leaders must know or what steps they must take to lead their organizations through changes; a few begin to look at how the leaders must be. Kouzes and Posner (1987) argue that leaders need to model the way to change. Kanter (1992) outlines six certainties for CEOs one, of which is the requirement that leaders lead through learning. For her, not only must the organizations be learners, so must the CEOs. Leaders are individuals who lead by example. The question that arises, however, as documented in the above argument is, how do the leaders learn what they have to model.

The literature on organizational transformation supports the conclusion that leaders bear the primary responsibility for initiating and managing changes in
organizations and to foster learning and adaptation by organization members. However, the predominate emphasis in this body of writing is on what the leader must do to transform the organization and its members or what the organization and its members will be like once the transformation is complete.

The leader is the agent of transformation; the organization and its members are the subjects that are transformed. Little mention is made of the need for leaders to change. What references are made (Kanter, 1992; Kouzes and Posner, 1987; and Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter, 1990) refer only to the need for leaders to model the way and demonstrate those behaviors that leaders expect of others.

Others have suggested, although not with regard to transformational leaders, that leadership is not top-down. Greene (1975), Sanford (1952), and Yukl (1971) all provide support for the role that followers play on leadership styles. Chaleff (1995) suggests that the initiative comes from the followers who are courageous enough to confront their leaders. For these authors, the process of leadership is not a one-way, top-down, leader dominated relationship. And while they all argue that leadership is an interactive process, only Chaleff provides specific suggestions for ways that followers can influence leaders.

Factors other than the follower influence leadership, too. Pierce and Newstrom (1995) suggest that the situation influences the leadership process as well. Leadership is not a stand-alone, cut-and-dried process. Rather, it is
heavily influenced by the situation. Several frameworks have been offered to help in determining appropriate styles of leadership, given the changing circumstances: Fiedler (1972); Hersey and Blanchard (1988); House and Mitchell (1974); and Kerr, Schriesheim, Murphy, and Stogdill (1974). Their models have in common the fact that specific factors, one of which may be the follower, must be evaluated before the leader selects the appropriate style of leadership. Leaders ought to choose the way that they lead depending upon what the situation is like. As the situation changes, so should the leader.

As these writers document, the process of leadership is influenced by both followers and situations. What has not been done, though, is an analysis to determine whether any of the processes they outline are applicable to transformational leaders. Dubrin (1995), Fetter (1990), Pierce and Newstrom (1995), and Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman (1990) describe what transformational leaders ought to do or be like. But very little is known about the possible changes the leaders might experience as they undertake organizational transformation. Therefore, this study will begin to explore the possible learning that might occur to leaders who undertake such a task.

The organizational culture

The task of transforming an organization is only one aspect of the environment. Another aspect of the environment is organizational culture. In the earlier (more general) discussion regarding organizational culture and the learning organization, it was argued that culture influences
learning. This discussion will address how organizational culture influences the learning of leaders.

Representative of the thinking in this area is the contribution made by Donnithorne. Donnithorne (1993) argues that West Point, the university that prepares U.S. Army officers, is designed and operated expressly to teach one thing, leadership. Everything West Point does is consciously planned to forge leaders and shape them into the mold the Army has created. The Army identifies activities for individuals to engage in that are designed to help the individuals learn how to be leaders. It is a learning culture whose content is clearly proscribed and whose methods are consciously planned to lead to a predetermined outcome.

Donnithorne’s description of West Point’s approach to leadership development provides detailed support to some of the ideas noted above. First, organizations do influence a leader’s learning and in the case of West Point the culture of an organization contributes directly to what and how emerging leaders learn. What and how West Point cadets learn is carefully planned. Second, West Point incorporates into the program for leadership development specific activities (experiences) from which particular lessons are to be learned. It creates experience from which leaders learn.

This use of experience has been addressed by Tennant and Pogson (1995) who provide a four-part model for organizing the various ways that experience has been understood by adult educators. The first way is to link
what the adult educator is trying to teach to previous experiences of the learners and the second is to link the lesson to current experiences. In both cases, the adult educator uses the learners’ experiences as a means to gain rapport and increase relevance. Effective teachers do this all the time.

A third way is to create experiences that then become the basis of learning. The extensive use of such techniques as role-plays, simulations, games, case studies, and outdoor/adventure education are examples of what has become known as experiential learning. Among the advantages of this use of experience is that it provides the learners with a common experiential foundation upon which learning can be built.

The fourth use of experience is to use learners’ experiences as the basis for learning. Tennant and Pogson (1995) reduce the many models for using experience in this way to the following:

“The first task is get people to talk about their experiences.

The second task is to analyze those experiences individually or collectively.

The third task is to identify and act on the implications of what is revealed”


West Point serves as an example of the third of these methods, namely, of creating experiences from which individuals will learn. If Donnithorne (1993) is accurate
in his portrayal of West Point, the sole purpose of the institution is to provide consciously planned experiences so that its corps of cadets will learn certain prescribed lessons. As such, it provides one example of how leaders create a learning culture.

Unlike West Point, few other organizations have been designed to develop leaders. Quite the contrary, organizations exist to fulfill other purposes: build roads, teach students, sell TVs, assist the needy, etc. Developing leaders is secondary, at best, for these organizations.

Summary

An organizational culture can support the learning of leaders in situations where it has been consciously organized to do so. In most organizations, however, the purpose for which they exist is not the development of leaders, and as a result, leadership development is not a high priority.

The primary consideration for transformational leaders is the task of transforming the organization. Transformational leaders have been described according to the attributes they have or the activities they undertake. They focus on getting others to change; they do not focus on what they should or could be learning. The nature of the leadership process includes the influence that subordinates have on it. That is, subordinates play a role in triggering learning for leaders. This reciprocal aspect of transformational leadership which might assist them to learn has not been addressed in the literature. So, this study
will explore the relationship between the transformation of the organization and the leader who undertakes that task.

Conclusions and Research Questions

Given the above review and analysis of the pertinent literature about leaders, what conclusions can be drawn? First, the conclusions delineated earlier having to do with adults as learners will be presented, then modifications of them will be made in light of the above discussion concerning leaders.

1. From earlier: Adults learn from life. If they acquire the attribute and use the processes allied with self-direction, they approach life with the attitude and skills to reap learning benefits from their experiences.

   Leaders learn from life, too. But they tend not to associate learning and their work lives as closely as the adult education literature suggests. They tend not to see themselves as learners and as a result don’t acquire the attitude or skills of self-direction.

2. From earlier: Learning does not have to be haphazard and erratic, adults can develop and use a conscious process to make their informal and incidental learning more effective. One way they plan to learn is by developing and applying a process that enables them to capitalize on life’s experiences to learn.
Leaders tend not to use a conscious process to learn. What learning they experience tends to be haphazard, lonely, erratic, and after the fact.

3. From earlier: Reflection plays a critical role in any process that adults employ to learn from experience. The form of reflection and its impact on learning can vary according to how it is employed.

Reflection for leaders is not a common or frequently used skill. Their attention is on solving problems and getting the job done unless they run into problems.

4. From earlier: The particular tasks that adults engage in influence their learning. In addition, the culture of the organizations in which they work also influences their learning.

Tasks play a major role in the lives of leaders. As long as things go well, tasks do not represent experiences from which leaders learn. It is only when they have major challenges, hardships, disappointments, or changes in their work responsibilities that work experiences lead to learning.

The conclusions highlighted in Italics above lead to the following questions.

When leaders undertake the task of transforming an organization, what can be discovered about:

The process of how they learn? What they learn?
CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

Introduction

There is limited literature pertaining to leaders and their learning as they transform organizations. The connection between the task of transforming an organization and the learning that results is not clearly understood. An investigation of a few leaders in depth sheds light on the phenomenon of leaders, their efforts to transform an organization, and their learning in the process. [click to go to page 433] The intended outcome of this exploration is an identification of factors and processes to understand the phenomenon better.

Sites and Subjects of Study

The sites for this study were two non-profit, organizations currently undergoing transformation. One organization, The International Center for Work (a pseudonym), is an international non-profit agency providing job training and related services to individuals overseas. The second, Starburst (a pseudonym), is an educational agency providing educational services to school districts and students.

Both organizations were undergoing transformations initiated in response to anticipated reduction in income from primary funding sources. As a result of the funding threats, the agencies decided to transform themselves to ensure their survival. Their transformations included a fundamental reorientation that addressed such things as
organizational vision, basic assumptions and underlying principles, overall strategies, organizational structure, operational procedures, and member roles, responsibilities, knowledge, and skills.

The organizations were similar in that both faced the loss of long-standing, primary funding agents and each decided voluntarily to transform. They were dissimilar in that they were located in different parts of the country; had different purposes, structures, and processes; served different clientele; and had separate and unique histories.

The financial threats to the two organizations, while similar, were not identical. In the case of The International Center for Work, the federal agency that had been its primary source of income informed the center in early 1996 that as of September 30, 1998, the existing funding program would end. The agency had two and one-half years to find new sources of revenue. The organizational transformation, concentrating on the development of new sources of revenue, had a definite deadline. In the case of Starburst, one of the two primary sources of funding, the state’s Department of Education, under the direction of a new Commissioner of Education appointed by a cost-cutting governor, had sent strong indications that funding would change significantly. No definite endpoint threatened Starburst. Instead, Starburst faced a continuing, evolving threat initiated and supported by the newly elected governor.

These organizations were the sites for the study; the leaders of the two organizations were the subjects of the
The leaders of these two organizations were Mary and James (both pseudonyms). Mary was the Director of Starburst and James was the Chief Executive Officer of the International Center for Work.

These subjects were selected because they met several selection criteria. First, the study was restricted to leaders in organizations undergoing transformations. Organizations undergoing transformations create dynamics and issues different from other organizations. Consequently, the conditions in which the leaders operate and the forces influencing the leaders are also different. Therefore, the study explored how those conditions and forces created by the transformation of the organizations influenced the leaders’ learning.

Second, the literature on leadership and organizational change has been studied at some length (see Chapter Two). However, the literature concerning leadership and organizational transformation is less rich. These sites and subjects provided an opportunity to contribute to a body of knowledge that is less fully developed.

Third, both leaders undertook the challenge of transforming the organization willingly and energetically thereby reducing the effect on them of factors that might otherwise limit their effectiveness (for example, resistance to change or reluctance to engage in the work).

Fourth, both leaders were identified by reliable third party sources as individuals skillful in organizational change. The intent of this study was not to focus on the
strategy, skills, and techniques of transforming organizations. The study might have been conducted with individuals who were leading their organizations through organizational transformations, but who were not seen as skilled in the process. Their learning would be different. Leaders who didn’t know how to transform organizations would, in the process of their work, develop techniques, strategies and skills to do so.

This was a problematic decision. By choosing subjects already skilled in organizational transformation, their learning was potentially restricted to areas they did not know about. The leaders already skilled in organizational transformation may learn other lessons or learn differently from leaders not skilled in organizational transformation. In either case, the study was influenced by the selection of the leaders.

The decision to restrict the study to leaders identified as skilled in organizational transformation is problematic for another reason. The assessments by the third party sources can be questioned. As Bass argued, the process of defining, recognizing, evaluating, and developing leadership is difficult, in part due to the “unpredictable and uncontrollable elements in the real-world performance of leaders” (Bass, p. 898, 1990).

Third-party assessments are one of many methods Bass (1990) identifies as means of evaluating leaders. The two third-party sources in this study (one for each leader) are professionals trained in leadership development. Despite their skill and experience, their assessment of the leaders’
ability to transform an organization is neither comprehensive nor complete.

Fifth, both leaders agreed to participate in the study. Access is one of the first issues with which qualitative researchers must deal (Lofland and Lofland, 1984; Punch, 1994). In the course of seeking research sites, seven other sites were considered. Five of these sites were for-profit businesses; the other two were non-profits. None of the leaders in those organizations agreed to participate, however.

Finally, both leaders accepted responsibility for key aspects of the research: to provide access to the organization and its members and to participate in interviews at the beginning and end of each day of observation. In essence, the leaders agreed to be co-researchers.

This is a qualitative research study and must be situated within that tradition. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) provide a five-part model of the research process used here as an outline for the method: the researcher, interpretive paradigms, strategies of inquiry, methods of collecting and analyzing empirical materials, and the art of interpretation.

The researcher

As a researcher, I bring to this study a set of characteristics that influence how I engage in it. To begin, I am a middle-aged, white, college-educated, American
male. A brief discussion of each of these descriptions will identify some of the biases and predispositions that I bring to my research efforts.

As a middle-aged person, I bring with me an experience of history different from that of other generations. Born in 1945, I share the experience of growing up in a world in which the threat of nuclear annihilation has always been present. This contributes to a belief that life on earth is fragile and should be protected and preserved. Being a young adult during the sixties and seventies contributes to how I see the world, too. The assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and of Martin Luther King contribute to the belief that brutal acts can shatter trust in political and social activism. The Viet Nam war and the Watergate scandal contribute to a skepticism regarding the actions and motives of American presidents and government officials.

As a white person, I know life only from the position of a culturally privileged class that does not have to struggle for voting-, housing-, or employment-rights or to confront the various other expressions of racism. I never had to deal with racism directed at me. As a result, I tend to diminish the significance of racism and bigotry in American society.

As a college graduate, I benefit from the social prestige and economic benefits that such an accomplishment provides. I have worked in well-paying (much higher than the national average) jobs unavailable to those without college degrees. My education contributes to my beliefs about education that others in society may not have; I
believe that education is the ticket to economic and social advancement. This belief affects how I interpret the actions of those who do not share my beliefs about education; I question the logic of those who reject formal education as a means of advancement.

As an American, I take pride in my country's military and economic accomplishments. The extensive public discourse and press reinforces the hegemony of the United States in world affairs. As a result, I sometimes under-emphasize or fail to recognize the contributions, values, and histories of other countries.

As a male, I see the world through the eyes of the half of the population that has dominated the written history of western society. I am only beginning to recognize the impact of that circumstance and to grapple with its meaning. I am unclear about the difficulties and differences that women have in establishing their careers and maintaining their lives in our society. I do not fully understand the distinctive ways that women understand or the ways that their understanding can further influence society.

Throughout my career, I have become increasingly aware of these biases and predispositions. There have been times when they have influenced my work negatively. I have learned to compensate for them by delineating them in writing so that they may serve as additional criteria to evaluate my work. During work projects, I regularly review my work in light of my predispositions to determine whether they influence the work or not. If they do, I take action to reduce their influence.
Further, I ask colleagues and clients whether or not they see any of these biases or predispositions influencing my work. If they do, we look for ways to compensate for their influence.

Regarding this study, I employed the same process. I regularly evaluated my work in light of these biases and predispositions and asked others to do so as well. Specifically, I periodically asked the two leaders (the subjects of this study) if they had any concerns about how I conducted the study. No concerns were identified.

I also asked the two colleagues who recommended Mary and James (pseudonyms for the subjects of the study) for feedback on how I conducted the study. Their feedback as to the findings of the study is addressed later.

These attributes and predispositions influenced me in a general way as I undertook the research. Two other factors directly affected how I approached and conducted the research: my career as an educator and my work as a consultant.

As a career-long educator, I bring with me a deeply ingrained belief in the value of education both as a means to an end and as an end in itself. I approach life as an educator. When I interact with others, I forge a role for myself as a teacher. Consequently, as I approached this study, I did so with a particular predisposition. I asked: (a) What is there to be learned here? (b) What are the
lessons? (c) How can I assist others to learn from this opportunity?

My background and experience in education are an advantage and a disadvantage. The advantage is that it enabled me to see, focus on, and understand the process of learning more easily and more fully than someone who does not have this experience. The disadvantage is that I look through an “educational lens” that filters what I perceive and how I interpret data.

Further, I see life as a series of lessons to be learned. As a result, I continually strive to identify and understand what those lessons are. One particular experience in my life demonstrates this perspective. Several years ago, my former wife announced that our marriage was over. As far as she was concerned, she was divorced and the legal process to verify it was a mere formality. The feelings I had ranged widely and triggered a level of reflection that I had not experienced before. I reviewed and analyzed what had happened with several close friends and relatives. With their help, I crystallized my thinking about what had happened and reformulated what was important in my life.

I drew several conclusions from my divorce. First, I reaffirmed by belief that life offers lessons we can learn from if we pay attention to them. While going through a divorce was not enjoyable, it provided me with experience from which I learned. It demonstrated firsthand that life provides lessons, if we pay attention. In addition, I concluded that major challenges and problems in life trigger
analysis and rethinking. When individuals experience significant difficulties in their lives, they are more likely to analyze it. Lastly, I concluded that talking with friends and relatives helps. Their insights and perspectives improve analysis and understanding.

These conclusions influenced this study by shaping expectations I had for the leaders. I expected the leaders to approach life as I did: experience would trigger reflection leading to lessons.

Another expectation concerns my role: I expected to be an important external catalyst for reflection by the leaders. In the same way that my friends and relatives helped me to understand what was happening in my divorce, I could help the leaders reflect on their experiences.

Being a consultant influenced this study, too. My work deals primarily with organizational change; I coach leaders who want to change their organizations. In the course of that work, I collaborate with leaders to find practical solutions to problems they face.

My work influenced this study in a variety of ways. First, it served as motivation. Because my work deals with leaders and organizational change, I am interested and experienced in the world I studied. I undertook this study because I wanted to learn more about that world.

My work experience was an advantage in conducting this study. My reputation and experience as a consultant in
organizational change helped me gain access to and acceptance in the two organizations. The leaders and the members of their organizations shared their insights with me because I am knowledgeable about issues they care about.

Further, how I conduct my consulting influenced the methodology of this study. In my work I collaborate with my clients. I don’t bring preconceived solutions to their problems. Rather, I discuss with them what is going on in order to develop a mutual understanding of the problems and issues they face. Once we have clarified what is happening and where we want to go, we work together to build solutions that work for them. We test the solutions and compare the results we get to the goals we have established.

I don’t impose my solutions on my clients. I use what I know to become their partner in producing results that matter to them; we discuss and implement the actions we think will move us closer to the solutions we have identified. After a while, we look back at what we have done to assess what happened and determine what modifications are needed. By alternating between action and reflection, we gauge our success and refine our actions as we proceed.

This study employed a similar process. The leaders and I worked together in two ways. First, we discussed and agreed on how to conduct the study. Second, we talked about their learning regularly. One important difference exists between my work and this study. My work concerns organizational change; this study concerns the learning of leaders.
Finally, as a consultant I believe that work can be improved by thoughtful analysis that leads to practical action. When I look at situations, I look for opportunities to make a difference. I am predisposed to take action to improve the situation. This bias for action causes me to ask other questions: (a) What can I do here that will make a difference? (b) What merits change here? (c) What is a reasonable and valuable possible improvement? (d) What is the best way to implement the changes?

A bias for action had advantages and disadvantages during this study. It was an advantage in that I was motivated to finish what I started. It was a disadvantage because I tended to shift my attention from the learning of the leaders to the task of transforming the organization. To overcome this tendency, I reminded myself of the purpose of the study.

Taken together, my general characteristics and work experiences predispose me to see situations and events in particular ways. I frame problems using the value systems that inform these characteristics and experiences. These values also influenced the observations I made and conclusions I drew. This study emanates from who I am; it is not separate.

Knowing about the researcher is just a beginning, however, in clarifying the method for this study. The next area to explore concerns interpretive paradigms for researchers.
Interpretive Paradigms

Bateson (1972) argues that the researcher is constrained by a web of epistemological and ontological premises that become partially self-validating. It is with such premises and assumptions that this section deals. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) provide a useful model for organizing what they refer to as interpretive paradigms. Their model identifies four interpretive paradigms: positivist and post-positivist, constructivist-interpretive, critical, and feminist-poststructural. These paradigms are broad categorizations of research approaches.

This study is constructivist-interpretive in that as a researcher, I subscribe to the three criteria that Denzin and Lincoln (1994) identify. First, ontologically, I believe that there are multiple realities, not just one objective or absolute reality. This applies to the meaning making aspect of our lives, not the physical aspects of our existence. That we live on the planet Earth in a particular solar system is not in question. Rather, how we make meaning of our existence is subject to personal interpretation. As individuals, we see and understand things differently. No one of us has "the answer."

Second, epistemologically, I believe that as knowers we interact with subjects to create understanding. Truth (or knowledge) is not "out there" to be found by a perfectly objective knower (or researcher). The interaction between the knower and the known is a complex process that includes social and linguistic constraints that affect how we engage
in that process. Knowledge is developed and created, not conferred or decreed.

Third, methodologically, I believe that naturalistic procedures yield richer data. Entering a culture and becoming a part of it (in varying degrees of participation) provides the researcher with data that positivist or post-positivist methods do not elicit. The researcher can understand and take into consideration the perspectives and beliefs of the subjects of the study in ways not available to researchers using quantitative methods.

These three criteria apply to the broad categorization of the constructivist-interpretive paradigm. This study can be further defined as constructivist in the manner outlined by Guba and Lincoln (1989). In addition to what is identified above, constructivists argue that reality is constructed in the minds of those who seek to understand. Reality, and in particular the meaning we ascribe to it, is a product of the human mind. Meaning exists in the mind and is a byproduct of its work.

Moreover, constructivists argue that the researcher cannot be separated from what is observed. Unlike positivists who say a researcher is separate from what is observed, constructivists believe that the process of observation changes the situation. Regardless of the degree of detachment, the researcher affects the culture. Culture is not separate from or unaffected by a researcher. The researcher changes the culture by the process of observation.
Finally, constructivists argue that the results of those seeking to understand are products of mutual inquiry (Schwandt, 1994). The researcher does not stand alone and aloof, making judgments without input and influence from others. Rather, the researcher engages in discussions with members of the culture to inquire into, analyze, assess, and draw conclusions about the culture. The interaction contributes to the researcher’s understanding. What others see, hear, feel, and think by their words and actions influences the researcher. The researcher is not the only person affected, though. The members of the culture also see, hear, talk, feel, and think differently as a result of their interactions with the researcher.

As a researcher who subscribes to this constructivist interpretive paradigm, this study is influenced in the ways described above. Were I to subscribe to another paradigm, this study would have been different.

Strategies of Inquiry

Qualitative researchers use many strategies of inquiry. Janesick (1994) identifies eighteen strategies for inquiry available to the qualitative researcher. Case study and action inquiry are the two of those that will be used in this study.

First, this study is an instrumental case study as defined by Stake (1994) in which “a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of a theory” (Stake, 1994, p. 237). The researcher uses the case as a backdrop to understand the area under study, i.e., the
issue or theory. In this study, the area of interest is the personal learning that occurs when leaders undertake the task of organizational transformation.

It is important to distinguish an instrumental case study from a representative case study. A representative case study represents a larger population of cases and is used to make generalizations applicable to a larger population. An instrumental case study is not undertaken to advance grand generalizations or build new theories. Rather, the case study, as used in this study, is “of value in refining theory and suggesting complexity for further investigation” (Stake, 1994, p. 245). This study suggests complexity for further investigation by identifying factors and processes influencing the learning of leaders undertaking organizational transformation.

The two cases in this study constitute an example (limited to two cases) of what Stake calls the collective instrumental case study in which more than one case is studied. The similarity and dissimilarity among the cases provides for better understanding. The comparison provides for what Stake refers to as “redundancy and variety each having voice” (Stake, 1994, p. 237). The two cases in this study provide the researcher with more than one avenue to explore and compare.

Reason (1994) identifies three forms of participative inquiry: co-operative inquiry, participatory action research, and action science and action inquiry. Co-operative inquiry occurs when individuals join together to become co-researchers to manage and undertake the research
as co-subjects to engage in the activities being researched. Co-operative inquiry typically includes four phases: (a) propositional knowing when the co-researchers agree on a subject of inquiry and develop propositions, (b) practical knowing when co-researchers apply these ideas to their lives, (c) experiential knowing when they become fully immersed in the activity, and (d) propositional knowing when the co-inquirers return to the original propositions and reexamine them in light of their experience (Heron, 1981).

Participatory action research produces knowledge and action directly useful to an oppressed group so that they will become empowered. Identifying and applying specific research methodologies that constitute participatory action research is not as important as including and involving participants in processes of collaboration and dialogue that empower them. The methodologies are secondary to empowerment and may vary significantly from one situation to another and may include quantitative and qualitative approaches (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1981).

Action science and action inquiry have a common purpose; they are “concerned with the development of effective action that may contribute to the transformation of organizations and communities toward greater effectiveness and greater justice” (Reason, 1994, p. 330).

Action science occurs when, “The agent, confronted with a complex, puzzling, and ambiguous set of circumstances, draws on tacit knowledge to frame the situation and act. The consequences of this action generate information about the situation and about the suitability of the framing and
action of the agent. The agent interprets this information, again drawing on tacit knowledge... This reflection may or may not lead to a reframing of the situation and a new sequence of moves” (Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1985, p. 51). The key elements of action science are hypothesis testing by a group that seeks to improve a particular situation.

Action inquiry includes reflection on cognitive models as action science does and goes further in two ways (Torbert, 1991). First, action inquiry uses a four-part model of territories of human experience to describe the complete organization. The territories are mission, strategy, operations, and outcomes. These territories provide a framework for data collection and analysis that is more precise than action science.

Second, action inquiry is directed specifically toward the development of collaborative, reflective communities of inquiry. Whereas as action science uses reflection and collaboration as the means to accomplish its ends, action inquiry seeks to develop these characteristics as outcomes of the process. Action science may contribute to organizational transformation; action inquiry transforms by developing reflection and collaboration in communities of inquiry.

This study constitutes a form of action inquiry in that it builds on action science’s inquiry into practice and the cognitive models that influence it, uses the four-part model of territories of human experience to describe the organization, and seeks to instill reflection and collaboration as attributes of the communities.
However, this study differs from action inquiry as described by Torbert (1991) in the following ways. First, the cognitive models that will be addressed in this study pertain to learning from experience. One such example is Kolb’s model (1984) for using experience as one element is his four-part, cyclical process for learning from experience. Thus, the cognitive models discussed and developed are restricted to the learning of leaders from their experience.

Second, this study, unlike action science and action inquiry, is not concerned with organizations or the transformation of organizations. The organization provides the context for the study, not the subject of it. The focus of this study is the learning of leaders.

Third, the four-part model of territories of human experience in action inquiry, mentioned above, is not among the models analyzed in the dialogues between the researcher and the subjects. The contribution of this model lies in the assistance it provides in developing rapport and establishing credibility with the subjects. As with all qualitative research, one of the critical early issues the researcher must grapple with in the process is the ability to gain access (Lofland and Lofland, 1984; Punch, 1994).

In this study, the ability to gain access is assisted by the ability of the researcher to demonstrate knowledge of and competence in organizational leadership and change. It is in the discussions of organizational leadership and change that the model of territories of human experience
will come into play. The researcher’s ability to use the model in discussions with the subjects contributed to building rapport and credibility with the subjects.

Fourth, this study is not concerned with the development of communities of inquiry, but rather with the development of dialogues of inquiry. The researcher and the two subjects of the study engaged in one-on-one dialogues. The outcomes are similar in both forms of inquiry (communities of inquiry and dialogues of inquiry); experience is analyzed and factors influencing learning are explored. However, the forum for achieving those outcomes is different. Communities of inquiry were not developed in this study, instead, dialogues of inquiry were.

These strategies for inquiry, along with the interpretive paradigms and knowledge of the researcher, lay the groundwork for the actions taken to collect and analyze data.

Methods of Collecting and Analyzing Empirical Data

The methods selected for collecting and analyzing data in this study were determined by the purpose of the study. As a qualitative study, the methods must meet two important criteria.

First, as Maxwell (1996) suggests, qualitative research must provide for generalization. However, he distinguishes between two forms of generalizations: internal and external. “External generalization refers to its generalizability beyond the setting or group” (Maxwell, 1996, p. 97) and
provides for generalization to a larger population. As Maxwell argues, external generalization is not the province of qualitative research. Rather, qualitative research deals with internal generalization. "Internal generalizability refers to the generalizability of a conclusion within the setting or group studied" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 97). He continues, "the generalizability of qualitative studies usually is based, not on explicit sampling of some defined population to which the results can be extended, but on the development of a theory that can be extended to other cases" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 97).

This study seeks internal generalization. As an exploratory study, the purpose is not to generalize to a larger population, as does external validity, but to inform theory by identifying factors and processes that may emerge in these settings with these leaders. The methods used to collect and analyze data in this study were selected to meet this criterion and to provide for internal generalizability.

Second, the methods for collecting and analyzing data must provide for validity. Once again, Maxwell (1996) provides a starting point by defining validity. He writes, "I use validity in a fairly straightforward, commonsense way to refer to the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of account" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 87). He cautions that validity in qualitative research does not provide for any objective truth, rather he argues that "all we require is the possibility of testing these accounts against the world" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 87).
Maxwell (1996) suggests a variety of methods that researchers can use to test the accounts, descriptions, conclusions, or interpretations. Among them are searching for discrepant evidence, triangulation, feedback, and member checks. Miles and Huberman (1994) provide similar suggestions. Among the methods they suggest are checking for researcher effects, triangulating, checking out rival explanations, and getting feedback from informants. These suggestions, by Maxwell (1996) and Miles and Huberman (1994), were followed in selecting the methods for collecting and analyzing data for this study. Following the recommendations of Maxwell (1996) and Miles and Huberman (1994) ensures that methods are used to enhance validity in this study.

Issues regarding internal generalization and validity were addressed by the methods used in this study for collecting and analyzing data. More must be said, however, about the methods used for collecting and analyzing data.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Maxwell (1996), and Miles and Huberman (1994) agree that qualitative data analysis cannot be separated from data collection. The two processes occur simultaneously. As Miles and Huberman write, “qualitative data analysis is a continuous, iterative process” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 12). Data analysis is a dynamic process occurring in repetitive phases and includes engagement with the data at several points in time. They developed an Interactive Model to portray their conclusion that includes data collection, data reduction, data display and drawing and verifying conclusions.
Analysis and collection of data are not separate processes. However, researchers can (and should) distinguish between the processes in their texts even though they do not separate the processes in the course of their research.

In this study, the methods for collecting and analyzing data follow the guidance of Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Maxwell (1996), and Miles and Huberman (1994) to employ the methods iteratively. Moreover, while the methods are discussed separately, they occurred simultaneously.

Two additional issues must be addressed before delineating and explaining the methods for collecting and analyzing data. Both concern the collection of data.

The first issue pertains to the amount of information known about leaders transforming organizations. Little is known about the learning of leaders undertaking the task of organizational transformation (as discussed in the literature review). Thus, the methods for collecting data must support the exploratory nature of the study. In this case, the methods had to uncover factors affecting the leaders’ learning when there was scant guidance from previous studies. The methods to collect data were chosen because they elicited (and expanded upon) factors and processes influencing the learning of leaders.

The second issue pertains to how previous studies were conducted. Previous studies on leadership relied heavily on interviews as the means of collecting data. As noted above, the literature on leaders’ learning as they transform
organizations is not rich. The reliance on one method of data collection, interviews with leaders, limits the data to be collected. To overcome these limitations, the methods for collecting data in this study included more than interviews with leaders; observations of the leaders were made and interviews with staff members were conducted.

In summary, the methods for collecting and analyzing data in this study were chosen because they accomplished several purposes. They provided for internal generalization and validity. The methods employed an iterative, interactive process that acknowledged and accommodated the inseparability of data collection and data analysis. They employed methods consistent with an exploratory study to uncover and describe factors affecting the learning of leaders. Finally, they expanded the array of methods used, thereby eliminating the reliance on one source of data collection used in other research on leadership and learning.

The following section identifies and explains the methods for collecting and analyzing data in this study. Each will be discussed in turn.

Methods Used to Collect Data

Two methods were selected to collect data in this study: interviews and observations. The distinctive combination of interviews and observations used in this study provided effective means of exploring the learning of leaders while meeting the demands of rigorous research.
Interviews

Interviews were conducted with two sets of individuals: the two leaders (called co-researchers) and selected members of their staffs. The number and purpose of the interviews varied for each group.

Interviews: with leaders

The interviews with the two leaders spanned a nine-month period beginning in the summer of 1997 and ending in spring 1998. Mary was interviewed a total of thirteen times and James eleven. These totals included one preliminary interview to review the purpose of the study and the method for conducting it and a follow-up interview to review the findings. The remainder of the interviews, eleven for Mary and nine for James, took place during the days when observations occurred. Mary was interviewed for a total of sixteen hours and James thirteen.

In general, an interview was conducted at the beginning and the end of each day of observation, although that schedule was modified at times to accommodate the leaders’ schedules. In some instances, interviews occurred during the day rather than at the end.

There were two primary purposes for interviewing the leaders. First, it was important to ascertain the leaders’ perceptions of and insights into their learning. This is similar to the use of interviews as reflected in the literature on leadership in which leaders were interviewed to ascertain their views.
Second, the leaders contributed as co-researchers by helping to identify, explore, and analyze factors influencing their learning. This is an expanded use of interviews. The leaders were not mere respondents to the researcher’s questions. They suggested ideas, recommended staff members to interview, discussed preliminary conclusions, and analyzed factors and processes. They helped shape the direction and outcome of the study. More will be said about the leaders’ roles when the methods for analysis are discussed.

The interviews with the leaders were not the only interviews conducted. Interviews with selected staff members of the staffs were also conducted.

**Interviews: with staff**

Thirteen interviews were conducted with staff members: seven from Starburst and six from The International Center for Work. The interviews took place during all but two of the days of observation; they varied in length from thirty to ninety minutes in length; and they were conducted in the offices of the interviewees.

The leaders and the researcher selected the interviewees together. First, the leader suggested staff members to the leader. Then the leader and the researcher discussed the suggested staff members and decided which of them to interview.
The criteria for selecting staff members was the potential they had for contributing valuable insights regarding the leader’s learning. In the course of selecting staff members, several factors were considered: how long they had known the leader, the nature of their relationship with the leader, their positions in the organization, and their openness and candor. In combination with these factors, interviewees were selected to represent a broad range of experiences with and relationships to the leaders.

The Tables 4 and 5 identify the interviewees for each of the two sites and categorizes them according to job and responsibility in the organization.
Table 4

Interviews with Staff at International Center for Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (pseudonym)</th>
<th>Title/Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dottie</td>
<td>Director of Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible for Center finances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Nadim</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible for one federally-funded program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Jane</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible for management of one program overseas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Dave</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second-in-command to James.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ivan</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible for management of one program overseas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Nicole</td>
<td>Program Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reports to Ivan, provides support to program overseas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

Interviews with Staff at Starburst

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (pseudonym)</th>
<th>Job/Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gwen</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible for program management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. John</td>
<td>Director of Strategic Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible for agency planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Jack</td>
<td>Controller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible for agency finances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Phil</td>
<td>Site Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible for management of satellite office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Janet</td>
<td>Public Relations Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible for agency communications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Harold</td>
<td>untitled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retired minister responsible for special projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Dorothy</td>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mary’s assistant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of interviewing the members of the staff was to collect data concerning the leaders’ learning not available from the leaders. Staff members understood and interpreted the leaders’ actions differently than either the leaders or the researcher. They provided an additional source of data about the leaders’ learning and expanded the range of perspectives included.

Including staff members as interviewees was one way to follow the guidance of Maxwell (1996) and Miles and Huberman
(1994) who recommend getting feedback from members of the organization and triangulating the data sources.

All of the interviews, whether with leaders or staff members, presented obstacles that had been identified prior and that had to be addressed in the research plan.

**Anticipated research obstacle: leader unresponsiveness**

Two research obstacles were determined before the study began. The first obstacle concerns leaders’ responses to direct questions about their learning. This obstacle was identified in the course of preliminary interviews conducted by the researcher with organizational leaders.

In preparation for the study, the researcher conducted preliminary interviews with five organizational leaders to test the ability of the researcher to ask questions that would elicit valuable data. During those interviews, the researcher found direct questions, such as, “What did you learn as a result of changing the organization?” did not elicit useful responses. The interviewees answered with statements such as, “Nothing,” or “I didn’t learn anything.”

Fearing that the leaders in this study might respond similarly and that, as a result, their responses would not provide valuable data, it was important to deal with this obstacle. First, the possible reasons contributing to the obstacle were identified.

One reason to explain why some direct questions did not work concerns trust. The researcher may not have developed
sufficient trust with the leaders to foster openness and candor.

A second reason to explain the lack of responsiveness by leaders in preliminary interviews concerns leaders’ self-perceptions. As Mumford (1980) found, leaders do not see themselves as learners and dissociate learning from leadership. A research strategy was employed to address this obstacle.

**Strategies to deal with anticipated research obstacle**

The first strategy to deal with this obstacle concerned time. The study took place over several months and included several days of observations and interviews. By lengthening the duration of the study and by increasing the number of interactions in the study, the leaders had more time and opportunity to develop rapport and trust with the researcher. The regular continued presence of the researcher enabled the leaders to learn about and become comfortable with the researcher. As rapport and trust developed, the leaders became more open and forthcoming in their responses.

Second, the researcher analyzed data collected during observations and interviews and selected those pertaining to the leaders’ learning. He then shared his findings with the leaders in subsequent interviews and asked them to react to what he found. The leaders considered and commented on the findings presented by the researcher. This strategy intentionally led the leaders into topics they would not have entered otherwise and reduced the likelihood of leaders
responding with terse statements. This strategy represents another example of the constructivist paradigm described above.

This approach is a modification of what Tough (1982) developed with regard to intentional changes. Tough concluded that the interviewees in his study had to be educated about the definitions of intentional changes. He developed four documents he distributed to assist interviewees. The documents helped the interviewees to understand and interpret Tough’s questions, to understand his definition of intentional change, and to provide examples of intentional changes so the interviewees could understand precisely what he meant by his definition. In this way, he educated interviewees.

This study adapted Tough’s approach. Both studies faced similar dilemmas; often interviewees do not provide thoughtful and complete responses to questions posed by researchers because they have different definitions and understandings of the concept being discussed than the researchers. Tough educated interviewees through the use of predetermined definitions in documents he provided; the researcher in this study informed interviewees through the use of preliminary findings in examples he selected from observations and interviews. The strategies are similar, in both cases the researchers provided information to interviewees to overcome research barriers.

These two strategies, extending the study over several months and using preliminary findings to encourage leaders’
reactions, combined to reduce the impact of this anticipated research obstacle.

**Anticipated research obstacle: staff unresponsiveness**

The second research obstacle concerns staff members’ unresponsiveness or inability to answer questions about their leader’s learning. The concern includes both the lack of trust and an inability to answer direct questions.

Staff members may be unresponsive to the researcher’s questions due to a lack of trust. If the researcher is not trusted, the staff members may choose not to answer the researcher’s questions or to answer evasively.

Staff members may also be unable to respond to the researcher’s questions for a similar reason the leaders in preliminary interviews did not respond; the staff members’ perceptions of learning. The staff members may not see the leaders as learners and may dissociate learning from leadership.

**Strategies to deal with anticipated research obstacle**

Two strategies addressed this obstacle. First, the interviews were begun in a non-threatening, informal manner. For the initial several minutes of the interviews, the topics of conversation were limited to the weather, sports, current events, or other common interests. This strategy immediately engaged the interviewees in a dialogue and put them at ease.
Second, the researcher provided a brief explanation of the study and allowed the interviewees to ask questions about the research. This strategy allowed the interviewees to direct the conversation and to inquire about areas of interest. They were able to control the conversation and get answers to questions about which they might have concerns.

This strategy introduced the primary topic of the interview, avoided the use of potentially difficult or uncomfortable questions early in the conversation, and got the interviewees talking about the interview topic. The dialogue continued and the interviewees became more comfortable talking with the researcher.

A second aspect of the research barrier affecting staff members concerns their inability to answer direct questions about the leaders’ learning. No preliminary interviews were conducted with staff members as had been done with the leaders. The leaders in preliminary interviews responded with terse comments when asked direct questions about their learning. That staff members would respond similarly was anticipated; the staff members would answer with short, closed responses to direct questions about the leaders’ learning.

To address this concern, the same strategy, a modification of Tough’s (1979) approach, was used with staff members as with leaders. The researcher shared observations and preliminary analyses with the staff members to inform
them of the topic and to encourage their insights and observations.

These strategies reduced the anticipated research obstacles regarding the development of trust and rapport with the leaders and their staff members and regarding their possible inability to answer direct questions about the learning of leaders. The strategies proved successful in developing trust with leaders and staff members and in overcoming leaders’ and staff members’ inability or unwillingness to answer direct questions.

The combination of repeated interviews with the leaders and individual interviews with numerous staff members was an important but not sufficient means of collecting valuable data in this study. A second method of collecting data, observation, was utilized to strengthen the means of data collection.

Observations

The purpose of the observations was to collect information not available through interviews, the most commonly used method of conducting research on leaders. Two major problems occur when interviews are the sole means of collecting data.

First, people report in interviews only what they attend to, not necessarily what actually happened. As attribution theory contends, what we attribute our actions to and what is actually the case are not always the same.
Observation provides an alternative to interviews that reduces the effect of attribution on the reported data.

Second, as was noted earlier, leaders do not see themselves as learners and do not recognize learning as critical to what they do (Morris; 1994; Mumford, 1980). As a result, they may fail to report actions that involve learning but which they do not recognize as learning. Observations provide a means of identifying instances of learning or factors contributing to or inhibiting learning that would go unreported otherwise. Providing a method for identifying learning factors is particularly important in an exploratory research study.

The observations occurred throughout the workday and over a several month period. The two leaders were observed during six workdays each during a six-month period. The length of the day varied and was determined by the schedule of the leaders. For example, early morning meetings or evening activities were included in the observations.

All of the leaders’ activities were observed unless the leader specifically requested otherwise. The leaders were observed in several settings and circumstances, in different kinds of activities, performing different roles, and at different times of the day and days of the week.

In Mary’s case, the kind of activities included, but was not limited to:

1. A luncheon meeting with other agency directors;
2. An evening board meeting;
3. Breakfast meeting with one agency director;
4. Four committee meetings led by other staff;
5. Two coaching sessions with staff;
6. Three individual conferences with staff.

In James’ case, the kind of meetings included, but was not limited to:

1. One luncheon board meeting;
2. An all-staff strategic planning session;
3. A meeting with Asian country representative;
4. Five individual conferences;
5. One birthday and one resignation party;
6. Two small group problem-solving sessions.

The range of observed activities ensured that one or two isolated events did not dominate the findings. Moreover, the wide range of observed activities provided more sources of clues to the leaders’ learning.

The combination of observation, repeated interviews with leaders, and individual interviews with staff members provided three sources of data about the leaders. Each means of data collection by itself is insufficient to the challenge of this exploratory study. The array of methods cast a wide net over the activities of the leaders studied. As a result, a great range of data was collected. In addition, the variety of sources ensured that triangulation occurred. Data from one source was compared and contrasted to data from other sources.
The combination of these three methods reduced the limitation of previous studies in which there was reliance on interviews with leaders as the only means of collecting data. As a result, a wide array of data was collected and the richness and depth of the data was enhanced.

Methods Used to Analyze Data

The methods of collecting data did not stand alone, however. As noted earlier, the processes for collecting and analyzing data are not separate. The methods for analyzing data, while not separate in practice, can be discussed separately. In the following section, distinctions will be made regarding timing, participants (those who engaged in the analysis), and method of analysis. Figure 3.1 presents these distinctions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>During Interviews and Observations</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Between Observations</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>During Interviews with Leaders</td>
<td>Researcher and Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>After Draft is Written</td>
<td>Researcher, Leaders, and Colleagues*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Colleagues of the Leaders
The four stages of analysis identified in Table 6 are explained below.

The first stage of analysis

The first stage occurred as the researcher conducted interviews and made observations. In the course of these activities, analysis took place when questions stemming from the research questions arose and were considered by the researcher. This approach is consistent with what Bogdan and Biklen (1992) and Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend.

For example, as an observation took place, analysis was prompted by such questions as: “Why is she doing that?”, “What does that mean?”, “How does that relate to learning?”, “Is there anything else happening now?” Similarly, as interviewees responded to questions, analysis was prompted by other questions such as: “What did he mean by that?”, “How does that relate to what he said earlier?”, “What else might that mean?”, “Is that all?”

The analysis occurred as other activities were taking place, in response to others, and alone. As a result, the analysis was responsive, simultaneous, and solitary. The analysis was responsive because the actions and remarks of others (not the researcher) triggered it. The researcher responded to an observed action or elicited remark by thinking about and analyzing the actions and words.

The analysis was simultaneous because in the middle of one activity, either observing an event or conducting an
interview, the researcher also reflected on the event or interview. Simultaneity is a two-edged sword.

On the one hand, simultaneity and immediacy enhanced the analysis. Because no time lag existed between the event and the analysis of it, no loss of recall occurred. Events and experiences were analyzed before they could be forgotten and while the experience was occurring. The events were fresh and vivid.

On the other hand, simultaneity constrained the analysis. Because two activities occurred at the same time and the primary one was observation or interview, analysis was secondary. The analysis of the events and experiences could not be as thorough as when analysis was the primary and sole activity. The researcher could only allot a portion of his attention to the analysis. The amount of time and attention was limited by the need to concentrate on the primary activity of the time, either interviews or observations.

This method of analysis was solitary. The analysis occurred silently and mentally while the researcher was interviewing or observing.

The second stage of analysis

The second stage of analysis took place during the time between observations and interviews. The analysis occurred as the researcher reviewed the notes taken during observations and interviews and drafted a daily summary.
The daily summary

The daily summary of the day’s events and experiences was a key element in this research process. Within twenty-four hours of the completion of each day’s observations, the researcher wrote a daily summary. The summary served as the primary method of recording data and was organized into three sections: What did I see?, What did I think?, and What did I feel?

The three sections divided the daily summary into areas of focus as suggested by Wolcott (1994), who distinguished between description, analysis, and interpretation as methods of transforming data, and Bogdan and Biklen (1992), who encouraged researchers to write about their feelings as they conduct research.

Wolcott (1994) claims that many researchers are unclear about the meanings of the terms description, analysis, and interpretation and use them in imprecise and confusing ways. For Wolcott, description communicates what the researcher sees, hears (or otherwise senses) during the course of research. Description is a replaying of what is observed.

The first section of the daily summary, What did I see?, was for describing the daily events and experiences. The description was written without analysis or interpretation in order to maintain the distinction that Wolcott prescribes.

The second section of the daily summary, What did I think?, included analysis and interpretation of the events
and experiences of the day. This section did not maintain the separation between analysis and interpretation suggested by Wolcott. It did, however, allow the researcher to reflect on what happened soon after it happened. This approach follows the recommendation by Bogdan and Biklen to “write memos to yourself about what you are learning” (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992, p. 159).

The purpose of their recommendation is to “provide a time to reflect on issues raised in the setting and how they relate to larger, theoretical, methodological, and substantive issues” (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992, p. 159).

Their recommendation for reflection in writing is combined with Wolcott’s distinction between analysis and interpretation. In this study, analysis and interpretation occurred in the writing of this part of the daily summary.

The third section of the daily summary, What did I feel?, provided an opportunity to reflect on the emotional component of the experience and to consider how emotions influenced the researcher and the research process.

As Ellis and Bochner (1996) have indicated, the researcher is not separate from the research process, and Bogdan and Biklen (1992) recommend researchers to write about their own feelings. This section, What did I feel?, follows those recommendations.

The daily summary had two major advantages. First, the daily summary was written while the events were recent. As a result, the events were still fresh in the researcher’s
memory. The events were available and vivid in his memory. Thus he could write about them with a clarity and vividness unaffected by the passage of time.

Second, the daily summary format fostered a discipline on the researcher that assisted in the capture and categorization of data. The existence of the daily summary as a format or template increased the researcher’s commitment to completing the daily summary after each day of observations and interviews. The daily summary served as an important reminder. In addition, the division of the daily summary maintained distinctions suggested by Wolcott (1994) which contribute clearer analysis. The distinctions established in the daily summary by the three questions (What did I see?, What did I think?, What did I feel?) encouraged the researcher to refine his thinking and writing so as to conform to the distinctions. This helped in later efforts to analyze, interpret, and present the data.

The major disadvantage was that the daily summary relied on the memory of the researcher to capture the events and experiences and was subject to the difficulties related to reliance on memory. The reliance on memory for describing what happened was a result of the decision not to record the observations and interviews. Some of the observed events were individual conferences, some were public meetings with people from outside organizations, and some were internal problem-solving sessions. The leaders did not want these sessions recorded.

The leaders gave two reasons for not recording the interviews and observations. The first reason concerned
confidentiality. They did not want individuals or other organizations to worry that the content of private meetings might be made public. The second reason concerned candor and openness. The leaders did not want recordings during the interviews with members of their staffs. They believed their staff members would be more open and candid if they were not recorded. The leaders were particularly concerned that interviewees would feel reluctant to be critical of their superior, and thus temper their remarks, if the conversations were recorded.

The daily summary provided a practical, albeit imperfect, solution to the need to capture what happened without recording the events. The problem with relying on the researcher’s memory (even when aided by the daily summary) is whether the researcher has accurately captured the events of the day.

Two additional steps were taken to mediate this problem. First, many of the events and experiences were discussed with the leaders the same day. These conversations provided an opportunity to review and confirm what happened.

Second, the final descriptions of events and interviews was reviewed and approved by the leaders and colleagues. More will be said about this later when the methods for analyzing data are discussed.

These two steps moderate the concern regarding accurate description of events and interviews resulting from reliance on the researcher’s memory. The steps cannot, and do not
intend to, address fully those concerns, however. Rather, these steps follow Miles and Huberman’s admonition. They write, “we need to find out what qualitative researchers actually do when they assemble and analyze data from the field (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 5). The steps outlined above seek to identify clearly what this researcher did so that others can judge it on their own terms.

The primary method of analysis in this stage of analyzing data was influenced by van Manen (1990) who stated, “we can take three approaches toward uncovering or isolating thematic aspects of a phenomenon in a text:

- the holistic or sententious approach;
- the selective or highlighting approach;
- the detailed or line-by-line approach”

In this study, the second, or selective/highlighting approach was used to identify the factors and processes that affect the leaders’ learning as they transform organizations. Using this approach, the researcher read and reread his daily summary section on What did I see?, and asked, What statements or phrases seem particularly essential or revealing about the phenomenon or experience? These were highlighted. The highlighted words and phrases were noted and reflected upon to determine common themes or factors. This section of the daily summary became the text that was analyzed using the selective/highlighting approach.

In the section of the daily summary titled, What did I think?, the researcher reflected on the highlighted words
and phases and identified emerging themes and factors. His written analyses and interpretations led to preliminary conclusions or questions that he explored in the next day of observations and interviews. The themes and factors emerging in this section informed the next round of observations and interviews: factors and processes to explore were identified for the next round of observations and questions were written to direct the next round of interviews.

The sequence repeated after each day of observations and interviews. Writing the daily summary allowed the researcher to capture and review the events of the day and to plan for the next day of research. This cycle continued throughout the study.

The analysis in this stage differed from the analysis in stage one during the interviews and observations. In stage one, the analysis was secondary to other activities. In this stage, between the days of observation and interviews, the analysis took precedence. As a result the researcher concentrated on the analysis without having his attention diverted by other activities. He had ample time to reflect on, explore, and write about the events.

The analysis in this stage was solitary, reflective, and iterative. The analysis was solitary because the researcher conducted the analysis alone. It was reflective because the researcher read, reread, took notes, drew conclusions, and reviewed his conclusions. There was time to review and think about the data.
The analysis was iterative in that it occurred several times during the course of the study. After each day of observation (during which interviews were conducted), this stage of analysis took place. Thus, this stage of analysis occurred six times for each leader.

The third stage of analysis

The third stage of analysis occurred during interviews with the leaders as the leaders and researcher analyzed the data from observations and interviews and discussed the conclusions and thoughts emanating from the analysis in stage two.

The researcher initiated the analysis in this stage by posing questions stemming from his analysis and preparation in stage two or by sharing impressions and reactions to that day’s observations and interviews.

Together, the leader (the researcher met with only one leader at a time) and the researcher discussed, questioned, probed, suggested, considered, evaluated, and assessed factors and influences on the leader’s learning. Their mutual exploration was a vital element in the design of this study as the following example demonstrates.

During the course of interviews with the leaders early in the study, the researcher discussed with them his frustration regarding the apparent lack of data he had found. In his first two days of observations and interviews, the researcher had not found much data supporting the cyclical models of adult learning by Argyris,

The leaders and the researcher tried to understand the differences between the models and the data. They tried to make sense of what the researcher was finding. After their mutual analysis, they concluded that the models of adult learning and self-direction had shaped the researcher’s expectations. He expected the data to support the models. He anticipated and looked for the data to corroborate the cyclical models of learning and the models for self-direction and reflection. When the data did not do so, he became frustrated.

After discussing and analyzing the situation, they concluded the perspective of the researcher was different from that of the leaders, a situation with two effects. First, the researcher looked for and anticipated data that supported his perspective. Second, he was inclined not to see the situation from the perspective of the leaders.

With this understanding, the researcher and the leaders realigned the research to include identifying and understanding the perspective of the leaders rather than continuing to operate from a perspective (of the researcher) inconsistent with the data.  

The shift in emphasis was subtle; the leaders’ learning was still the emphasis of the study, but the perspective of the leaders became more important as the researcher’s perspective receded. Rather than approaching the study from
the point of view of the researcher, the study was shifted to concentrate on the point of view of the leaders.

The shift was also significant; by refocusing, the findings and conclusions generated in the study also changed. The methods for collecting and analyzing data were directed toward a more clearly defined research question. The purpose of the observations and interviews was still; What can be explored and uncovered about learning of leaders as they transform organizations? With the redirection, though, the focus was narrowed to concentrate on understanding the perspective of the leaders. With the clarification of focus, the methods for collecting and analyzing data resulted in a different study than would have been the case had no changes occurred. [click for page 413]

This example demonstrates several important features of the method for conducting this study. First, the analysis demonstrates the constructivist-interpretive paradigm as defined by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) and of the constructivist paradigm as defined by Guba and Lincoln (1989). Second, the analysis in this stage follows the guidelines of Maxwell (1996) and Miles and Huberman (1994) by providing for member/informant feedback and checks on researcher’s bias. Third, the analysis demonstrates a recurring feature of qualitative research. Miles and Huberman write that qualitative research seeks to “explicate the ways people in particular settings come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day operations” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 7). This study focused on the perspective of the leaders rather than the perspective of the researcher. Fourth, the analysis
follows the guideline suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1994) to narrow the focus once you have begun the study by using data from earlier field work (and the analysis of it). Finally, the analysis identified, tested, and clarified an important factor influencing the study, namely, the ability of the researcher to adapt and modify the study in light of emerging and unanticipated data.

The analysis in this stage was dialectic, reflective, and iterative. The analysis was dialectic because it the researcher and the leaders constructed meaning together; the analysis was reflective because it involved thinking about and reviewing factors in the study; and the analysis was iterative because it occurred repeatedly during the study.

The fourth stage of analysis

The final stage of analysis took place when the researcher drafted the results of the study upon completion of the observations and interviews. The analysis occurred in three ways.

First, the fourth stage occurred as the researcher composed the results. Using the analyses from previous stages, the researcher reviewed his daily summaries, other notes taken during and after interviews and observations, and various other accounts and documents he wrote. With that data, he wrote preliminary drafts of his findings and conclusions for others to review. Van Manen (1990), who asked, “What is the nature or essence of the experience of learning...?” (van Manen, 1990, p. 10) provided the question to guide analysis in this stage.
Significantly, the writing of the drafts for review by others is not a one-time, isolated event. Rather, as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), the transformation of data “is a continuous, iterative enterprise” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 12). What is presented and discussed here as a separate occurrence, the writing of the preliminary drafts, was the result on an on-going process of writing that began when the study began.

Second, the fourth stage of analysis occurred as the leaders and colleagues of the leaders commented on the drafts. Maxwell (1996) and Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend that methods for collecting and analyzing data include forms of triangulation and seeking feedback from members and informants. In this study, Maxwell’s (1996) and Miles and Huberman’s (1994) recommendations were implemented by using the leaders as the members and the colleagues of the leaders as informants.

Triangulation occurred in this stage by having each draft critiqued by others. The researcher composed one draft for each leader to portray and present his findings. Each leader read and critiqued the draft written about him or her. The researcher revised the drafts by taking into consideration the leaders’ comments.

The drafts were sent to colleagues of the leaders, one per leader. [click for page 402] The colleagues who commented on the drafts were friends and professional colleagues of the respective leaders. The colleague commenting on James’ draft was a long-time consultant to the International Center
for Work. He (the colleague) had recommended the researcher to James. The colleague who commented on Mary’s draft was a colleague who had started a statewide women’s professional organization with her nearly a decade before and continued their relationship professionally and personally over the years. Similar to the colleague who had referred the researcher to James, this colleague had referred the researcher to Mary.

Each colleague read and critiqued a draft concerning the leader whom they had known and worked with for several years. The colleagues discussed their comments with the researcher.

Third, the fourth stage of analysis culminated as the researcher revised the drafts after considering and evaluating the comments from the leaders and their colleagues. The criterion for determining what to include in the drafts was provided by van Manen, who suggested that researchers strive “for precision and exactness by aiming for interpretive descriptions that exact fullness and completeness of detail” (van Manen, 1990, p.17).

Thus, the analysis was both solitary and dialectic; the researcher wrote alone and engaged with others (the leaders and colleagues) to compose and revise the drafts. This approach is different from the previous stages that were either solitary or dialectic. Stage four of analysis was similar to earlier stages in being reflective and iterative and in being a form of constructivist interaction between the researcher and the leaders or between the researcher and the two colleagues.
Collectively, these methods for collecting and analyzing data met the criteria for internal generalization and validity, dealt with potential threats and obstacles, and fulfilled the purpose of an exploratory study. The collection and analysis of data does not complete the discussion of method, however. The final consideration is the art of interpretation.

The Art of Interpretation

The art of interpretation as understood by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) concerns the transformation of data into readable and credible documents for others. The art of interpretation is a complex process of composition that is difficult and can never capture fully and accurately the research experience. van Manen (1990) writes, “to construct a full interpretive description of some aspect of the lifeworld, and yet to remain aware that lived life is always more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal” (van Manen, 1990, p. 18).

Given the difficulty of composing and presenting the findings of research, researchers make choices about what to include and how to present it. In this study, the choices were informed by the distinctions drawn by Wolcott (1994) between description, analysis, and interpretation and Bogdan and Biklen (1992), who encouraged researchers to write about their feelings as they conduct research.

The daily summaries, as noted above, were organized into three sections: What did I see?, to capture
description; What did I think?, to capture analysis and interpretation; and What did I feel?, to capture feelings. The same three categories are maintained and refined in the following sections.

The description of the data collected in the study must meet the criteria established by Van Maanen (1995), who wrote, “what we continue to look for is the close study of culture as lived by particular people, in particular places, doing particular things at particular times” (Van Maanen, 1995, p. 23). The challenge is to find a means of portraying the lived experience accurately, fully, realistically.

In this study, the portrayal takes the form of a narrative in which the events of the research, as lived by the researcher and the leaders, are constructed as a narrative. Richardson (1994) argues “that narrative is quintessential to the understanding and communication of the sociological” (Richardson, 1994, p. 199). Polkinghorne (1988) agrees, arguing that narrative is the basic form humans use to organize their experiences.

The narratives in this study are presented as a day in the life of the researcher. One day is presented for each leader. Each “day” is a composite drawn from all the experiences the researcher had with each leader. The researcher selected experiences which provide a representative sample of the key findings and conclusions of the study and which enable the researcher to portray the “day” engagingly. As noted above, the narratives were read
and approved by the leaders and by colleagues of the leaders to ensure accuracy.

Thus, each descriptive narrative stands as a separate element emanating from the daily summary section titled, What did I see?, and transformed into a day in the life format with events selected from the several days of interviews and operations. One narrative appears for each leader, entitled, A Day with Her, for the narrative of research with Mary, and, A Day with Him, for the narrative of research with James.

The analysis and interpretation of the data are presented separately from the narratives and follow the distinction provided by Wolcott (1994). The analysis is separate from the interpretation.

The analysis of the findings of the research are presented beside the narratives in the next chapter, Findings and Analysis, to juxtapose them next to the data they analyze. The narrative is on the right hand side of the page and the analysis is on the left-hand side.

This parallel display seeks to present visually the experience of the research process regarding time. Data collection did not occur separately in time from analysis and interpretation. These three activities did not occur in a linear fashion only, with data collection happening alone and separate from analysis and interpretation. Rather, they occurred simultaneously and alternatively. The researcher engaged in and alternated between data collection and analysis (and interpretation) in the midst of the research
experience. Displaying the data beside the analysis mirrors the research experience, albeit imperfectly, by presenting the data and the analysis simultaneously to the reader’s eye.

In addition, the parallel display encourages the reader to alternate between the narrative and the analysis. This is a second way that the display mirrors the research experience, since neither the research experience nor the parallel display of data and analysis occurred in a purely linear, sequential manner.

The interpretation occurs in the final chapter, Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations. Presenting the interpretation is a separate chapter from the analysis establishes further the distinction between them.

Finally, the third category, dealing with feelings and the reflections triggered by them, is handled with another device. In this study, the notes in the texts (both the narratives and the analysis) identify the reflections resulting from the researcher’s feelings. The notes refer the reader to the reflective writings available in two ways, depending on which medium the reader is using to access this study. If the reader is reading the text as a printed document, the notes refer the reader to the Appendix. If the reader is reading the text as an electronic document, the notes are presented as hyper-links to which the reader can turn.

This literary device, whether as Appendix or as hyper-links, allows the researcher a third form of expression.
The literary device extends beyond the narratives, analysis, and interpretation to present the data not available elsewhere and to represent the research as it was experienced. The literary device expands the presentation of the research by including thoughts and comments that would otherwise be excluded, but which are relevant to it, and which occurred in the course of the study.

As Miles and Huberman (1994) have stated (noted earlier), "we need to find out what qualitative researchers do when they assemble and analyze data from the field" (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 5). The addition of written reflections by the researcher presents a portion of what he did that would otherwise be excluded. In the course of the research, his feelings triggered reflection. The written product of his reflection did not always fit within the confines of the narratives or the analyses and interpretations. Yet, the reflections are important and should be included.

van Manen writes, "The meaning or essence of a phenomenon is never simple or one-dimensional. Meaning is multi-dimensional and multi-layered" (van Manen, 1990, p. 78). The meaning to be conveyed about this study is multi-dimensional and multi-layered, too, and cannot be presented fully in the descriptions, analyses, and interpretations mentioned above. The written reflections are the vehicle for including additional insights and observations that contribute to a holistic and multi-faceted study.

One final note. The description (presented as narratives) and analysis in Chapter Four and the
interpretation in Chapter Five are the result of the collective, iterative work of the leaders and the researcher. All of the data collected and all of the analysis and interpretation resulted in the following two chapters. While the description, analysis, and interpretation are presented separately, they did not occur separately. Each fed off and influenced the other in a dynamic, on-going, recurring process.

Retrospectively, it is difficult to identify the precise time or specific instance that led to each of the myriad decisions resulting in the following chapters. [Click to go to page 390] The final test for the leaders and the researcher was that the description, analysis, and interpretation reflect our best effort to understand and present what we lived in ways that others might understand.
CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND NARRATIVES

Advice to the reader:

The format of this chapter in which the columns are beside one another presents challenges to the reader. You have to think about and make some choices about how to read it.

You may want to read one column (either the left or the right) all the way through before reading the other column.

Or, you may want to alternate between parts of one column and parts of the other.

How you choose to read the chapter depends upon you. As the researcher and writer, I don’t want to impose an approach. I do, however, believe that it is my responsibility to let you know about the intent and potential difficulties so that you can make an informed decision.

As you read the chapter, you’ll notice markers pointing you to other places in the dissertation (either to the other column in this chapter, or to reflections in the Appendix). These markers are signposts alerting you to possible items of interest you can pursue. Just as highway signposts alert you to historical sites or tourist attractions, the signposts in this document alert you to informational side roads you can take. They are optional.
The signposts that link the two columns in this chapter are not intended to establish causation or provide verification. Do not conclude that because an experience in the right column is linked to an analysis in the left column that the right column confirms the analysis. The narratives complement the analysis; they are not proof.
ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the findings of the research on the two leaders studied. The following sections organize the discussion. First, the study reveals the primary finding that leaders operate from a mental model dominated by a concern for work. Two factors contributing to the development of the mental model are presented. Second, the mental model is presented and discussed. Third, the study identifies three factors influencing how leaders accomplish tasks and solve problems. Fourth, models for transforming organizations and solving problems are presented and discussed in relation to the leaders in the study. Fifth,
personal attributes of the leaders that influence their learning are presented. Lastly, three concepts in adult education are discussed in relation to the leaders in this study.

The data presented in this analysis comes from: (a) three primary sources of data generated in the interviews with leaders, observations of leaders, and interviews with staff members, (b) internal documents of the two organizations, and (b) the collaborative and cumulative efforts of the leaders and the researcher to identify, understand, and present the experiences they shared.

Identifying the data sources is problematic. The iterative, leader and his or her organization), and the researcher agreed upon the accuracy of each narrative.

All of the names used in the narratives are pseudonyms.

The purpose of the narrative is two-fold. First, the narrative will give the reader a different (and more rich) understanding of the research experience. The narrative enables the researcher to convey information about the research experience that cannot be conveyed via conventional devices.

Second, the narrative juxtaposes the conventional analysis (on the left side of this page) with the researcher’s experience of conducting the study. This device approximates, albeit imperfectly, the connections between data collection, analysis, and interpretation.
(introduction - continued)

collaborative process employed to analyze the data and to construct knowledge makes it difficult to deconstruct and isolate the specific sources of data.

When the unpublished field notes are cited in End Notes, the references refer to the data collected by the researcher via observations and interviews, and the data constructed by the researcher and the leaders during interviews.

A Distinctive Mental Model

The most substantive finding is that leaders operate from a mental model centered on their work.\(^1\) As noted in the chapter on method, the

Narrative One: A Day with Her

The exit ramp off the interstate curves slowly in the open farm land, depositing its vehicles onto the two-lane road that divides the cornfields. After several miles of straight road, the small sign for the Regional Educational Service is nestled among those for the Rotary, Kiwanis, and several local churches.

The building is like many other educational building constructed during the baby-boom of the sixties: brick, one-story, long, non-descript, lots of parking, institutional. As you walk in the cramped entry-way of cement block, the painted walls are covered with pictures of members of the staff from the most recent all-hands meeting when the staff worked in teams for the day to identify and plan for this year's school opening.

The small receptionist's cubicle has a too-tall, moveable counter in front and six-foot partitions framing the back. The receptionist, a middle-aged woman whose appearance and demeanor mirror that of the farm wives who populate the area, is on the phone with another member of the staff, deciding what to do if the schools close early.

I wait off to one side as the bustle of early morning swirls around me. Three bus drivers enter, check on their assignments, and then leave; a custodian takes a shovel outside to clear the walkways; two men carry cardboard boxes from one end of the building to another on handcarts;
focus of the study shifted significantly in the midst of the research. The focus changed when the leaders and the researcher recognized that the original focus was not appropriate. The new focus became the mental model of the leaders.

Mary was the first of the leaders to raise a question about the appropriateness of the original focus of the study. During the second day of observations and interviews, she noted, “I don’t seem to be answering your questions very well, do I”? Once she raised the question, it was discussed and analyzed with her until there was mutual agreement to shift the focus of the study. 

one woman enters the building carrying a large montage with photos of elementary students. Several other members of the staff enter and pass time talking about the weather, their families, or other events in their lives as they ease into their assigned locations and begin to focus on the work of the day.

After a few minutes, the receptionist, who has by this time talked to at least seven members of the staff, notices me and says, “Welcome back, how are you today? Here to see Mary again?” Noting my assent, she says, “I’ll let Dorothy know you’re here,” dials a number and says, “Dorothy, Mr. Ambrose is here for Mary.” Hanging up the phone, she tells me, “She’ll be right down.”

Dorothy is a middle-aged woman who, upon seeing me, says, “Hello, I saw your sister, Dr. Wright last week. She and Mary were meeting with other women administrators here.”

“I know, I stayed with her last night, and she said she had been here.”

“How is she?”

“Fine, but busy. With school opening, it’s a hectic time.”

“It’s the same here, we’re busy all the time. Mary’s not in yet, let’s go into her office.”

“She’s keeping banker’s hours now!?”
Thereafter, the leaders and the researcher sought to understand more fully the mental model of the leaders because of its importance. Mumford (1995) and Senge (1990) help to establish the importance of mental models for leaders. They argue that leaders operate from a distinctive mental model that undergirds and informs their thinking and action. Leaders concentration on “work seems to drive out the awareness of learning” (Morris, 1994, p. 127).

Mumford provides one reason for this phenomenon: “many managers see task achievement and learning as not merely different but separate processes” (Mumford, 1995, p. 116). The processes aren’t related, and

“Well, not really, Joe was taken to the hospital and Mary stopped in to see how he’s doing?”

Joe was Mary’s predecessor and mentor. He had hired her more than sixteen years earlier and had nurtured her career throughout her time with Starburst. She had been his Deputy for the last six years before the board had unanimously appointed her to succeed him a year ago without conducting a search. They kept in regular contact. Joe stopped in about once every week or two to visit with members of the staff and was available to advise Mary whenever she wanted.

“Oh, sorry, I didn’t know.”

“What happened?”

“It looks like his cancer has come back, they’re going to schedule an operation soon to see what they can do.”

“How does it look?”

“Not so good, really. It’s been a year now since his last operation and, for the last few months, he hasn’t looked very good. We’ll just have to wait and see, but I’m not very hopeful.”

“It just keeps going on, doesn’t it? You and Mary had cancer, my wife had breast cancer, and now her younger sister has it, too.”
because the leaders focus their attention almost exclusively on work, they are unaware of learning processes and do not see opportunities for learning.

Morris (1994) and Mumford (1995) state that work supersedes learning, but they don’t explore or explain their reasoning. This study provides an opportunity to explore the mental model of the leaders in greater detail and to begin to establish connections between the leaders’ mental model and their learning. The leaders’ mental model is central to understanding their perspective, decisions, and actions. Because of this importance, the mental model of the leaders will be dealt with first and discussed in

“I’m sorry, how’s she doing?”

“OK, I guess. Her situation is worse than my wife’s, the lump was bigger and more lymph nodes were involved. She’s had a radical mastectomy, and will have to have a more aggressive treatment, including a bone marrow transplant. But, she seems to be handling it well, everything considered.”

“It’s not easy, is it? Mary’s been going to the hospital every morning and calling Joe’s wife two or three times a day to see how she’s doing. She’s got a lot to deal with as it is, and now this.”

“Well, what time do you expect her?”

“I would guess she’ll be here pretty soon, can I get you some coffee?”

“I’ll get it, it’s just down the hall anyway.”

I retrace my steps toward the receptionist’s desk, go just past it, and turn left down a narrow hallway, make another left, and enter the copy and lunch room. Two women are there chatting about the weather. One of them, the Director of Student Services, whom I’d interviewed during my last visit, looks over as I’m getting coffee and asks,

“Oh, it’s Mr. Ambrose, isn’t it?”

“Sure is, how are you?”
(A Distinctive Mental Model – continued)

detail. The first two factors to be discussed are organizational context and organizational culture.

Organizational Context

The context in which leaders operate influences them and their organizations. In the United States in the early 1990s, a shift took place in society that affected the two leaders and their organizations. The shift involved a reduced reliance on government funding. Republican legislators across the country led the effort to reduce government funding for welfare and other “entitlement” programs. As Republican efforts came to fruition, both of the organizations in this study faced funding threats.

“Fine. So, how’s your research going? Find anything interesting?”

“Well, as far as I’m concerned, it’s going real well. No one has thrown me out yet, and most folks seem really interested in what I’m doing.”

“What have you learned about us?”

“How much time do you have? You want the short or the long answer?”

“I guess the short one, I’ve got a meeting in a few minutes.”

“Well, mostly, I’ve been impressed with how positive and enthusiastic everyone is here about the changes that are going on. It’s not often that way. In other places I go, people are more hesitant, more worried about what’s going to happen. But that’s not how it is here.”

“You can thank Mary for that, she’s done a real good job of making sure that we’re all involved in determining how we’re going to move forward.”

“I know.”

“Well, I’ve got to run, see you later.”

“Right.”
During the course of interviews with the leaders and the staff members of the two organizations, the funding threats became clearer.

In the case of Starburst, the trend played itself out through the efforts of a newly elected conservative Republican governor who promised to cut taxes and trim government. The state government partially funded Starburst. The governor included Starburst among the many agencies he wanted to wean from dependence on state coffers. While he made no concrete proposals to reduce Starburst’s funding, he continuously took public stances against “welfare organizations” and proposed budgets that reduced taxes, thereby forcing

Coffee in hand, I return to Mary’s office, and enter to wait. In the corner, set between two vertical floor-to-ceiling windows framed with drapes is an elegant desk neatly organized. Off to one side and in front of the desk are two upright Edwardian chairs with a round lamp stand between them. To the right, across the room is a small, rectangular conference table with four chairs around them covered with the same material as the Edwardian chairs. Behind the conference table, nestled into the corner is a glass-fronted bookshelf filled with books about leadership, organizational change, and educational administration.

I walk over to the bookcase, and tilt my head to read the titles. Noticing a book by Terrance and Deal, I open the glass doors and take it out and begin to thumb through it when Mary walks in, smiles and says,

“Hello, sorry to be late, but I had to stop by to see Joe. How’re you today?”

“Fine, my sister says, hi, too. More importantly, though, how’s Joe?”

“Not too good, he’s got cancer of the liver, and they’re going to operate soon to see if they can remove the cancerous portions. Once that’s done, he’ll have to have chemotherapy, and then, who knows. I’ve been stopping to see him every morning and spending time with him and his wife.”
the legislature to find ways to reduce spending. As the negotiations to reduce spending took place between legislative leaders and the governor’s office, Starburst and its partner organizations across the state were included in the list of organizations whose funding was to be cut.5

“I know, Dorothy told me. I sometimes think that there are times when we’re brought into someone’s life because we have something to offer. I know that was the case with my wife. It was only two years after we met that she got breast cancer. It sure felt like I was supposed to be there.”

“Joe’s such a great friend and mentor, it’s the least I could do.”

“You owe him a lot, don’t you?”

“Absolutely, if it weren’t for him, I wouldn’t be here and we wouldn’t be in such a good position. He was the one who got us moving in this direction.”

“How do you mean?”

“Well, several years ago, probably in the late 80’s, Joe realized that things were changing and that we needed to change too. He didn’t wait for events to overtake us, he saw what was coming and decided that we needed to get a head start. That’s when he changed the name, got us involved with strategic thinking, stuff like that.”

“Others weren’t doing that?”

“No, no one else even thought about it then, and not many are doing it now, for that matter. When we changed our name,
threats were general and fought out in annual budget battles, The International Center for Work experienced a definite endpoint in federal funding. The agency upon which the center relied for its revenue through five-year grants changed its funding procedures. The agency announced that the Center would have two years to replace the money it got from the agency. A drop-dead date two years in the future would end all grants. By that point, The International Center for Work would have to have developed other ways to generate money.  

Thus, both organizations experienced effects from the national trend to reduce dependency on the other agencies thought we were nuts. And as for strategic thinking, well, only a few have done much of that either. We were way ahead of the curve. And it’s a good thing, too, since with the recent budget threats, if it weren’t for Joe, we’d really be behind the eight ball.”

“I’ve noticed that most people around here are excited about what’s going on, they don’t seem to have any of the resistance that I see other places.”

“I think that’s because we’ve been working at it for so long, it’s not like we just decided to do this yesterday, and, more importantly, we’ve made sure that everyone’s involved.”

“How’s that?”

“Well, you’ll get to see how we do that in a few minutes. There’s a meeting we’re going to that should provide you an example.”

“What’s the meeting?”

“It’s the department heads for the agency. We meet every two week and we talk about what’s going on, but we’ve done it in a way that makes sure this isn’t just me telling others what to do.”

“Great, I’ll look forward to it. What else have you lined up for me?”
government funding, albeit in different forms. The trend was a major societal factor that preoccupied the attention of the leaders. Because of the threat to their funding, the lifeblood of their organizations, the leaders had to focus a disproportionately high amount of their time and energy on financial concerns. Both leaders sought new sources of income.  

This societal trend does not provide a complete understanding of the context of the two organizations at the time of this study. The trend provides one reason why the leaders are concerned about their work; the threat to the future of their

“The department head meeting should take about an hour or so, then I thought you might want to meet with Teresa, she’s in charge of our public relations. After that, we have a luncheon in the next county with some of our local superintendents. When we get back, I’d like you to sit in on another meeting having to do with a quality award we’re applying for. And after that we may have some time to talk for a while before I’ve scheduled for you to meet my Assistant Director, Dr. James Goodling. Well, we’ll just have to see what crops up. I’ve got a board meeting later tonight, and you can stay for that if you’d like too, even though it’s a bit late.”

“I think I will, it’ll give me another opportunity to see you in a different forum.”

“OK, no problem. We can have dinner somewhere before the meeting, OK?”

“Sounds fine. So, where’s our first meeting?”

“Down the hall, why don’t I show you where it is while I’m on my way to the restroom?”

“Sounds great.”

Mary leads the way to the large conference room, ushers me in, and continues on down the hall. Upon entering I take my seat at the corner of one of the rectangular tables arranged in a large square. As people arrive, they take seats around the
respective organizations increased the leaders’ need to focus on their work.

Organizational Culture

A second factor contributing to the leaders’ adoption of a mental model that concentrates on work is the organizational culture. Status and role are elements of societies that apply to leaders. Warner, Meeker, and Eells (1949) note that regardless of the size or complexity of the group, all societies and social groups include status systems. Status affects leaders in a variety of ways. One way is that “greater responsibility and authority accrue along with higher status” (Bass, 1990, p. 170).

square. They shuffle through papers, stop to get a pastry from the table off to one side, or enter, put down papers, and leave, returning with coffee.

Once there are ten or so people in the room, one of the men begins. He’s the semi-retired administrator I’d interviewed during my last visit. He says, “Even though not everyone is here, I think we ought to start.” A few heads nod in agreement, and he proceeds, “I notice we have a newcomer here, looking at me. Do you want to introduce yourself to those who don’t know you?”

“Sure, Willard, glad to. I’m David Ambrose. I’m here because I’m doing doctoral research on what leaders learn as they transform organizations. Mary is one of the two people who’ve agreed to let me observe them. This is the third day that I’ve been here. I’ve already seen and talked with some of you. And I imagine I may see others of you, too, in the next few months.”

“David’s a bit of an expert on organizational change, so if you want to find out how we’re doing on that front, just corner him. Isn’t that right, David?”

“I don’t know about the expert part, but I’d be glad to talk with any of you about organizational change if you’d like. It won’t cost you anything more than a cup of coffee.”

“Looking around the room, Willard continues, “Let’s get going. The minutes of our last meeting indicate that there are
The leaders in this study hold greater responsibility than other members of their organizations. In conversations, Mary indicated that she was “responsible for continuing the transformation that Joe began.” James also indicated “It’s my duty to get us through this.” Thus, both leaders confirmed they were primarily responsible for their organization’s changes.

A second way in which status affects leaders is that they are provided with greater latitude in expectations than are those with lesser status. Bass writes, “high status people can break the rules more easily” (Bass, 1990, p. 182).

Linda, looking over to Jim, says, “Jim, why don’t I go first, since there’s not much to report?”

Jim responds, “Sure.”

Linda’s report is perfunctory, indicating that since their last meeting, she’s tried to collect the information that was requested, but that with other priorities and with her recent vacation, she was not able to get as much of the information as she had planned. Without any discussion, she turns to Jim, saying, “Your turn.”

Jim looks up and passes around the table a set of handouts, saying, “These are the preliminary findings from the surveys we conducted. Why don’t you take a few minutes to scan them, and then I can try to answer any questions you might have?”

While Jim is speaking, Mary enters and takes a seat near the door. No one seems to notice her entrance. She selects a copy of the findings as they pass and scans them too. After a few minutes, Jim asks, “So, what do you think?”

The questions and ensuing discussion is straightforward and collegial, as most of the people in the room participate in seeking to understand the findings, making observations about the survey, providing some analysis, or suggesting
In Mary’s case, one example of how she broke the rules concerned attendance in meetings. Several times during meetings, she was observed to leave when beckoned by her assistant. Sometimes she returned during the meeting with no acknowledgment by her staff. They proceeded as though nothing happened. Sometimes she did not return. At no time during the observations did staff members leave.\(^\text{11}\)

In James’ case, the latitude he was provided took other forms. One example concerned the time of arrival at work. Everyone else at The International Center for Work arrived steps for further action.

After about 30 minutes, Jim reviews the next steps he will take. He has incorporated several of the comments made during the discussion into the actions he will take. He concludes by identifying what he should have completed by their next meeting.

Willard opens up the discussion by asking, “Is there anything else that we need to be talking about?” Three of members put forth topics to be addressed. In turn, each of the three are given a chance to identify and explain the area about which they are concerned. Colleagues ask questions to understand, offer other perspectives and analyses, and suggest some possible actions. Each idea is considered and explored to determine what its impact is on the agency, whether or not it fits within the purview of this group, and what action, if any, should be taken.

The discussion continues, Mary participates periodically, offering comments and suggestions. Her observations and comments include such things as: “Jim, I noticed that these findings seem to reflect mostly the opinions of the professional staff, were other members of the staff considered, too?” “What we’ve got here is very valuable, who else ought to see what we’re looking at?”

Twice during the one-hour meeting, Dorothy comes in and whispers to Mary. Once they whisper briefly and Dorothy leaves, the other time Mary leaves with Dorothy and returns
at work between 8:30 and 9:00 AM. James, however, rarely arrived until after 9:30 AM, well after the other members of his staff reported.12

A third way that status affects leaders concerns the expectations for the leaders’ work. The leaders are not expected to perform routine tasks that other members of the organization perform. The leaders are expected to spend more time in activities outside of the organization (Bass, 1990).

Both Mary and James bore the primary responsibility for contact with people outside of the organization. Mary met with many

several minutes later. No one in the room attends to the conversations or to Mary’s departure.

As the meeting breaks up, the department heads carry on small side conversations as they slowly sidle out the door, some of them grabbing another pastry on the way. The topics vary, one concerns an issue discussed during the meeting, another pertains to another work issue, and the rest have to do with personal things like kids’ vacations, car troubles, family visitors, etc. Mary joins in two of these conversations. When she finishes, she turns to me and says, “If you’re ready, I’ll introduce you to Teresa McDonough.”

“Sounds fine to me, let’s go.”

Leaving the conference room, we turn left and go only a few steps before we turn right, go past a few desks nestled in cubicles, and approach Teresa’s office. Standing at the door, Mary looks in, waiting until Teresa looks up, and then says, “Teresa, I brought David Ambrose to spend some time with you. He’s the consultant who’s doing research on me that I had talked to you about last week. Is this a good time for you to talk with him?”

“Of course it’s a good time, but I’m not really sure what help I could be.” Looking at me and extending her hand, she says, “Mr. Ambrose, good to see you.”
people her staff did not interact with: the governor, members of his staff, leaders of other organizations, and legislators.\textsuperscript{13} James also met with those his staff did not work with: the board, the minister who founded the center, and leaders of other organizations.\textsuperscript{14}

A fourth indicator of status is that leaders have signs and symbols, like corner offices, which distinguish them from persons of lesser status (Barnard, 1952). Mary and James have signs and symbols that distinguish them from their staffs. Mary had the largest office in the building, one of only two reserved parking spaces, and had her own secretary while other administrators shared a secretary.\textsuperscript{15}

“Thanks, good to meet you, too.” We shake hands, and I turn to Mary, “Mary, I’ll come back to your office after Teresa and I have had a chance to talk for a while, probably in an hour or so. Is that OK?”

“Sure, see you then,” and to Teresa, she says, “Teresa, now don’t you go off telling him all my deep dark secrets.”

Laughing, she responds, “Don’t worry, your secrets are safe with me!”

Mary leaves, and Teresa indicates a chair for me to take in front of her desk. I sit down, saying, “So, what are her deep dark secrets?”

Smiling, Teresa responds, “Actually, she has no secrets. And maybe that’s the key to it all for her. She doesn’t hide anything, in fact, she probably tells you more than you wanted to know.”

“What do you mean?”

“How much do you know about the financial situation we’re in with the state?”

“Some. From what I can recall, the governor has been trying to reduce state spending, and he’s threatening to reduce the money you get. Is that what you mean?”

“Yes, then you probably also know that we’ve been working
James has the largest office in the building with its own entrance and his own secretary.\textsuperscript{16}

Collectively, the signs, symbols, expectations, and responsibilities reflect the higher status of the leaders and support the leaders’ preoccupation with work. Leaders understand their status is related to their work. Hence, they are continuously reminded of the importance of their work by these factors, and thus these factors serve to support their preoccupation with work. These symbols of office impact the leaders and others in the organization as reminders of responsibility.

for quite some time to generate revenue from other sources?”

After I nod assent, she continues, “Well, one of the things that Mary does is to let us know how things are going.”

“For example?”

“For example, last week when she and I were meeting to talk about a project I was working on, she spent an additional five minutes or so telling me about her meetings with other agency directors.”

“How does that apply to the funding?”

“Well, it applies because she was telling me what the other directors were thinking and what they were planning to do to deal with the governor’s efforts to reduce our funding. She didn’t have to tell me what they were planning, but she did.”

“And how did that affect you?”

“Well, it was reassuring. It felt good that Mary had enough trust in me to let me know what was happening in her world. And I got a glimpse of what that world is.”

“Her world?”

“Yes, she operates in a world that is very different from mine.”

“How do you mean?”
The effect of organizational context and organizational culture as described above combine to influence the leaders’ adoption of a mental model in which work predominates. Organizational context and organizational culture, although helpful in understanding why the leaders adopt a particular mental model, do not explain the mental model itself.

The Leaders’ Mental Model

The leaders’ mental model has two primary elements: a predominant concentration on work, in this case the task of transforming an organization, and a secondary concentration on solving problems.

Well, she engages with other agency directors, with the governor’s office, and with the State Commissioner of Education. Those are not circles I operate within, although she brings me into them.”

“Really, how does she do that?

“Well, like I said, she tells me about the conversation she’s had with other agency directors. And she takes me along some time, too.”

“Takes you along? Where?”

“To meetings and conferences, places like that. She introduces me to some of the other directors, state folks, people like that.”

“It sounds like you’re appreciative of that.”

“Yes, I am. Mary has done a lot to help me in my career, and that’s just one example.”

“What are some others?”

“I guess the biggest thing is that she gives me projects to do that I wouldn’t have considered on my own, projects that I didn’t think I could pull off. But she’d give them to me and then encourage and support me so that I could do it.”
The two elements are related. Concerning their orientation on transforming their organizations, the leaders are continuously presented with information that reinforces both the importance of and their responsibility for organizational transformation. In the course of doing that work, however, problems inevitably emerge. Then the leaders engage in problem solving to overcome the barriers to completing the task of organizational transformation.17

This study provides evidence of how the leaders undertake the task of organizational transformation and the enabling process of problem solving. Before reviewing how they engage in these two activities, though, under-

“How would that work?”

“Well, let’s see… Recently, she asked me to organize a conference for administrators. I’d never done anything like that, and I didn’t think that I could. But she thought that I could and she helped me all along the way.”

“How?”

“For example, she’d pop into my office every few days and ask how it was going. And if I had any questions, she’d take the time to answer them. Or, she’d edit a piece I was writing, or suggest someone for me to call. She was always there when I needed her.”

“Sounds really supportive.”

“Very much so. By the time the conference came around, I was ready. It went off without a hitch. Now, I do that sort of thing without blinking an eye, but I couldn’t have done it without Mary’s help.”

“So, you’re sort of thankful for what she’s done.”

“More than sort of, very thankful. Mary’s made a big difference in my career, she’s been a great teacher.”

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“Teacher?”
standing some of the factors that influence how they do so is important.

Factors Influencing How Leaders Work

Three factors will be discussed: the legacy of their predecessors, their own experience and expertise, and different challenges which each of the leaders faced. Each of these factors influence in their own way how the leaders in this study do their work.

The legacy of predecessors

First, each of the organizations made the decision to transform differently. At Starburst, Mary’s predecessor, Joe, had initiated

“I guess if you had to use one word to describe Mary, it’s that she’s a teacher.”

“Oh?”

“No matter what’s going on, it seems that she’s always teaching. I’ve watched her in meetings and she does the same thing. She teaches."

“What have you seen her teach in meetings?"

“Lot’s of stuff."

“Like?"

“Like what I had mentioned before. She let me know what’s going on with the other agency directors, and I’ve seen her do that in meetings with others, too. And, she has taught us how to be work as a team."

“Really?"

“Absolutely."

“How does she do that?"

“She shows us how to do it, and then she has us try it on our own. Let me give you an example, OK?”
organizational transformation well before the environmental factors of the mid-1990s. The leader of Starburst for more than 20 years, Joe led efforts to create a new name and vision for the organization, to develop a long-range plan, to have annual staff-led celebrations, to have team-building sessions for the senior staff members, and to expand the range of services Starburst offered. His efforts were well received by the staff, he was well regarded, and he was acknowledged as the visionary who started Starburst on its groundbreaking path.18

“OK.”

“You sat in on the department heads meeting just before meeting with me, right?”

“That’s right.”

“Well, who ran the meeting?”

“Willard did, why?”

“Because Willard doesn’t always run it, it changes every month. A different one of the department heads takes turns chairing the meeting. That way, no one person always is in charge, and the authority is shared.”

“Is that important?”

“Mary thinks so, and so do we.”

“Really, why is that?”

“Simple, if we’re really going to make the changes that we have to make to survive and excel, then we all have to be responsible, we can’t rely on just one person, we can’t let Mary do it all. By rotating the chair, it helps everyone feel as though they’re a part of the team, that they all have a role to play.”

“I don’t know, it doesn’t seem to me that just rotating who
As a result of these efforts, Starburst developed a reputation internally and across the state as a groundbreaking, forward-thinking organization. The staff embraces and takes pride in this image, consistently mentioning the reputation of the Starburst during interviews. Their pride contributes to a receptivity to change because they were motivated to maintain and expand their status.19

In contrast to this receptivity to change was the situation at The International Center for Work. James’ predecessor made decisions without consulting the staff, played runs a meeting would do all that.”

“That’s true, by itself it doesn’t, but that’s not the only thing that’s going on. Mary’s initiated a whole range of things that also help.”

“Like?”

“Like having an annual strategic planning session that everyone attends and gets involved in. Like creating teams of folks who work on particular issues we’re facing. Stuff like that. Altogether, they work to remake this place into what we have to become.”

“And what is that?”

“We’ve got to become the kind of organization that excels in times of change, and to do that we have to be more innovative and cooperative.”

“And are you that type of organization?”

“We’re not as far along as we’d like, but we’re making progress, and we’re a lot farther along than the other agencies.”

“Really?”

[See left hand column, page 203]
favorites, and failed to explain the actions he took. Consequently, the predecessor was seen as authoritarian, insular, and aloof. His style of leadership created resentment and frustration among the staff.  

A second difference was that James’ predecessor did not engage in any forward-thinking or organizational development activities. His orientation was toward maintaining the existing organization. Consequently, the staff is not as receptive to organizational change. They respond to James’ efforts to transform the organization with reluctance and resistance. They question the need for change, argue in favor of keeping things the same, create obstacles to

“Absolutely, most of the other agencies haven’t even begun to think about stuff we’ve been doing for years. Take our name, for example, Starburst, that didn’t just happen overnight, it happened because we realized that how we were seen, as represented by our former name, the Northeast Regional Educational Agency, didn’t reflect who we really wanted to be. So we changed our name to help us and others see us differently.”

“And did it work?”

“I think so, especially on our part. By having a different name, it forces us to think about ourselves differently, and when we do that, we act differently. We don’t think of ourselves as just a regional agency, we think of ourselves as an organization that serves a particular clientele and does so with a unique set of services and products.”

“That sounds a lot more like a business than an educational agency.”

“Precisely. I think a lot of what we do is much more like a business than like an educational agency, particularly the need to be innovative and entrepreneurial. We don’t rely on someone else to tell us what to do or to tell us how much money we have to spend. We are more like a business in that we have a clientele we try to serve and we have to find new ways to serve them better, ways they will pay for.”

“You mean, you’re in this just to make money?”
doing things differently, and ignore or respond slowly to directions to try new things.\cite{21}

As a result of these differences, Mary and James inherited organizations that were different in important ways. Internally, each organization experienced prior leadership whose influence lingered and created conditions in two areas that affected the leaders in this study. One condition had to do with regard for and confidence in leadership. A second condition had to do with the staff understanding of and experience with organizational change. An element of this condition is receptivity-resistance.\cite{22}

“Well, not exactly, but sort of. Let me try to explain. We’re not in this just to make money because we’re not a profit-making organization, we’re a non-profit. But given the state’s belt-tightening, we don’t have the secure funding source that we once had so we have to find ways to earn money to support what we do. That means we have to find things we can do that others will pay for.”

“Like…”

“Like our financial package. Several years ago we developed a computer software program that helped us manage, track, and report our finances. It helped us a lot. We realized that it could help others, too. So we offered it to some of the other regional educational agencies and they bought the idea, though not the program itself. What actually happened is that they hired us to run their accounting function. They outsourced to us what we could do better than they could.”

“That sounds very entrepreneurial.”

“It sure is. That’s the sort of thing I mean when I say we try to find things we do that others will pay for.”

“Doesn’t that put you at some risk, though? The regional educational agencies were created thirty or so years ago to do a specific job, and now you’re not doing just that job. Now you’re in the business of making money.”
Mary inherited an organization in which a visionary predecessor laid a positive foundation for organizational transformation. Her staff is enthusiastic about and eager to continue efforts to transform the organization. James, on the other hand, inherited an organization whose members resented and are frustrated by leadership and who have no experience in or knowledge of organizational transformation. His staff is leery of leadership and uncertain about or opposed to change.  

The prior conditions created by their predecessors are not the only factor influencing how leaders work. A second factor is the experience and expertise of the leaders. 

“You’re right, we were created to do a specific job, but times have changed, and an important part of those changes has to do with money. In the past, we could rely on the state for most of our money, but that’s not the case any longer. Back then, there was plenty of money and people sort of expected the state to pay for what we do. That’s not the world we live in now. Today, there’s not as much money and state governments don’t automatically pay for things.” 

“So, as you’ve said, that means that you have to find things to do that others will pay for.” 

“That’s right.” 

“Well, it sure sounds like Starburst has come along way.” 

“No doubt about it, and we’ve got a lot more to do, too.” 

“As so do I. I promised Mary I’d meet her about now, so I should be going. Thanks for taking the time to talk with me. You’ve been very helpful.” 

“I’m glad I could help. See you later.” 

I return to Mary’s office where she was at her desk talking on the phone. She gestures to me, indicating I should come in. I take a seat at the small conference, take out my notepad, and begin to write notes from my morning so far. Not really paying any attention to her conversations, I write for several minutes, when she walks over and sits down, asking, “How’s
Leadership expertise and experience

Each of the leaders brought different experience and expertise to the task. James, educated and trained as a technician in agriculture, had work experience prior to becoming the head of The International Center for Work focused on providing technical expertise to projects in the United States and Africa. He had been a professor in that field, before working for The International Center for Work.

As a result, he follows the path of many leaders: technically trained, they move up the ranks of an organization by virtue of their professional/technical ability only to find themselves confronting the task

your morning been?”

“Informative, as always.”

“In what ways?”

“I guess two or three things sort of stick out. First, I noticed how the meeting of department heads isn’t run by you, it’s almost as though they’re on cruise control and don’t really need you to be around.”

“I’m glad you noticed, I can’t do everything that we’ve got to do here, so I’ve been trying to institute ways that get everyone involved.”

“It looks like it’s working with the department meeting. They don’t rely on you to tell them what to do. They seem pretty good about accepting responsibility, talking things over with one another, rotating leadership, stuff like that. But you’re still in charge, you’re not the same as them.”

“What do you mean?”

“It’s pretty clear that you run this place. On the one hand, you come and go as you like, I think Dorothy came in twice to talk to you, and once you left. That didn’t happen to anyone else. And they didn’t flinch, they kept on working, so they’re used to you coming and going like that. I imagine there’s a recognition that your job is different from theirs, and that you have some license that they don’t have.”
of leading an organization when they haven’t been trained or prepared for the job.  

Mary, on the other hand, was introduced to and enamored with leadership as a child. Her father held the same position at another agency. Mary recounts with fondness and enthusiasm the conversations at the dinner table with her father about his work. She remembers how eager she was for those conversations and how much she enjoyed discussing the topics that arose over dinner.

“That’s interesting, hmmm. I don’t think I ever thought about it quite like that before. But I guess that might be the case.”

“Might? Does anyone else come and go in those meetings, other than you?”

“Well, I guess not. Is that a problem?”

“I wouldn’t say it’s a problem, it’s just an acknowledgment of the difference in roles between you and the others. They know you’re in charge and that you’re not subject to the same rules they are.”

“Do you think that bothers them?”

“I didn’t get any indications of that. I would say that they’re more than willing to allow you that license because of what you’ve done for them.”

“What do you mean?”

“When I was talking with Teresa, she was telling me how you helped her take on projects that really stretched her and made her grow. She was very thankful for what you’d done for her. She talked a lot about how you were always available when she might need you and how you helped her by editing or
(Leadership expertise and experience - continued)

In addition, during Mary’s 17 years at Starburst, she steadily moved up the organization into ever-greater positions of authority until, prior to becoming its head, she held the position of assistant director under Joe for several years. In that job, she not only had important leadership responsibilities but also watched and learned from Joe as he mentored her as his successor. As a result, when she took over the reins of leadership for Starburst, she came prepared, having been groomed and nurtured through her adulthood.25

These two factors, the legacy of their predecessors and their own experience and expertise, contributed making other suggestions.”

“I guess that’s the teacher in me, eh?”

“That and more. You seem to see your role as a teacher, and you’re really concerned about each person, as a person. And that showed in how you helped Teresa. You helped her grow into responsibilities she would not otherwise have attempted, and you seemed to care about her as a person.”

“I do that a lot, don’t I?”

“All the time, and not just with individuals.”

“How do you mean?”

“You did it in the department head meeting, too.”

“Really, how?”

“Well, you were teaching them how to be more inclusive in their thinking.”

“Huh?”

“Every once in a while, you’d insert a comment like, ‘Have you thought about how the staff would think?’ Or, ‘Who else ought to see this?’”

With a knowing smile, she responded, “Is it that obvious?”
to Mary and James undertaking different challenges as leaders of their respective organizations.

**Different challenges**

James first had to help the staff accept the need for change and overcome their resistance and reluctance to abandon the status quo. At the same time, he had to develop new organizational procedures, structures, and processes to develop new funding sources within a tight time frame. James had to develop his own style of leadership while he was working on all of the above organizational issues. 

“I thought so. It’s another example of you being a teacher. You’re teaching them how you want them to think about others and involve others.”

“Don’t you think that’s important?

“It’s not so important what I think, it’s what you think that’s important. Is that what you’re trying to do?”

“Yes. I think that if we’re going to succeed, we need everyone involved and we need everyone’s ideas, too. One person can’t do it all. So, I want to make sure that we learn how to do that.”

“How do you feel it’s going?”

“Let me ask you that.”

“From what I can see so far, it’s going well. Most of the folks seem on board. Like I said a minute ago, they’re willingly accepting responsibility, talking things over with others, rotating leadership.”

At this point, Dorothy walked in and said, “Mary, if you don’t leave now, you’ll be late for your luncheon meeting.”

Mary laughed, saying, “OK, thanks.” Turning to me, she said, “We’d better get going.”
(Different challenges – continued)

Mary had to fine tune a system that was already on track. Her major challenges were developing relationships with her fellow agency leaders and state politicians, negotiating the political landscape (to reduce the likelihood that the state would pull the plug on funding), and refine her style of leadership in the organization.27

How Mary and James dealt with these challenges was influenced by the two factors noted above, the legacy of their predecessors and their own experience and expertise. These factors combine to influence how the leaders undertake the task of organizational transformation and the enabling process of problem solving.

Dorothy continued, “And don’t forget, you’ve got the Quality Award planning meeting at 2.”

“Oh, that’s right, thanks.” Turning to me, Mary said, “Would you mind if I drove?”

“Not at all. Where are we going?”

“We’re going to sit in on a meeting of superintendents from school districts in one of the three counties we serve. They have regular luncheon meetings, and I try to make sure that I go to as many as I can. It’s about a twenty minute drive.”

During the drive over, we talked about my sister and her work. Since my sister, a professor at one of the state universities, was also a friend and colleague of Mary’s, it provided us with an opportunity to compare notes regarding someone we both felt close to.

When we arrived at the restaurant, we entered the front door and Mary followed the hostess around to the back room that was set aside for the superintendents. In the room, rectangular tables were set in a square so that everyone could see one another. I sat down on one side of the square, clearly not wanting to be at the head of the table. Mary hung up her coat, dropped her purse in the chair next to me, and made her way around the table, shaking hands and talking briefly with each of the six or seven people there. All were men with one exception. I watched as more men entered, shook hands, and chatted with those in the room. A waitress made her way
The combined effect created circumstances unique to each leader and each organization. For example, Mary relied on her expertise and experience and the strong foundation for organizational transformation laid by her predecessor as she focused her efforts externally. James spent most of his time internally, working on his own development as a leader and helping the staff to move ahead.

Models for Organizational Transformation and Problem Solving

Mary and James’ mental model is dominated by their preoccupation with the tasks of organizational transformation and problem solving. As a result, understanding the two among them, taking orders for lunch.

When the waitress was nearly done, the meeting was begun by one of the men, “Let’s all take our seats, we need to get started or we’ll never leave. For the newcomers here, let me tell you how we work here. The procedure is pretty simple, we each introduce ourselves so we all know who is here, then we eat, and after eating we get down to our business, which is discussing relevant topics we all care about.

Each of the people in attendance introduced themselves and, in the case of the two who weren’t superintendents, took a minute to identify why they were there. In addition to me, the other guest was Mary’s Associate Director, Dr. Carl Goodling, who introduced himself by saying he was now responsible for the new strategic planning services at Starburst.

While lunch was being served and eaten, numerous conversations took place in groups of two or three throughout the room. Every once in a while, someone would call out to pull into the nearby conversation someone sitting across the room. In my case, the lunchtime conversation ranged from my research, to travel, children, and the financial situation of the state.

After lunch, when the food was cleared away, the chair again called out to quiet us and to begin the more collective part of the meeting. The general business of the meeting, to identify and ask questions about topics of interest to the
activities in depth is important. A model for organizing what the leaders do in each activity will make the activities easier to understand. In the next section, a framework will be presented for each activity and Mary and James will be discussed and analyzed using the appropriate model.

A model for organizational transformation

Leaders transform organizations in different ways. One of the models for transformation identified in the literature review and used here is by Tichy and Devanna (1986). The Tichy and Devanna model was chosen by the leaders and the researcher because the superintendents, took place. Most notable among the topics was the one introduced by Mary’s Associate Director, who consumed nearly twenty minutes telling the superintendents about his effort to provide strategic planning services.

His talk was noteworthy, not because of the topic, but for the way in which he delivered it. He did not merely share some information and then allow those around the table to ask questions according to their interest. Instead, he lectured them on the need for strategic planning and what he had found out when he was a superintendent about how to do it properly. During his talk, I glanced over to Mary to see what she was doing, and she acknowledged my look with a slight smile. It was clear that during our ride back, we would talk about Carl.

After the business of the meeting concluded, Mary made her rounds again. In some cases, she’d talk about personal things, like children, and in other cases it would be about work, such as scheduling a time to talk with them later. By the time she left, she had talked individually to everyone in the room at least once.

Once we were in the car on the way back, I looked over to Mary and smiled, “Is Carl always like that?”

She laughed, “I knew you knew. As a matter of fact he is, and it’s something that we’ve been working on for quite a
model best incorporated and organized what the leaders did, or thought they should do, to transform their organizations.  

Tichy and Devanna (1986) identify three major tasks that transformational leaders undertake. Leaders help their staff members recognize the need for revitalization, create a new vision, and institutionalize change. Each of these three tasks will be explained briefly.

First, leaders help their staff recognize and accept the need for organizational revitalization. For Tichy and Devanna this entails two subtasks. The first subtask is
portraying the gathering storm that includes delineating the factors and forces that necessitate transformation. The second subtask is overcoming resistance to change that requires that leaders identify the source and significance of resistance and develop ways to reduce or eliminate the resistance.

Second, leaders create a new vision. This major task has three subtasks. Diagnosing the problem is the first subtask, which includes determining what organizational structures, procedures, and policies need to be changed. Creating a motivating vision is the next subtask, which means developing a powerful

“Well, we agree that we see things differently, but neither of us is willing to change, I haven’t been successful in helping him learn how to handle groups differently.”

“Is that important?”

“Very. If we don’t learn how to get everyone involved and sharing ideas, we won’t be able to make the changes that we need to.”

“What does he think? What does he say in your meetings?”

“Well, as I said, he sees things differently. He believes that we spend too much time talking about what to do, as he says, ‘beating around the bush,’ and not enough time doing the work that needs to be done.”

“Is he right? Do you spend too much time “beating around the bush?”

“I don’t think so, but that’s not the real point.”

“What is?”

“That he’s too autocratic. You saw that at the luncheon today. He doesn’t really understand that he comes across as a dictator some times and that he should learn how to listen to and involve others.”

“And, so . . .”
image of the future state, one that appeals to values and beliefs of the staff. And the final subtask is mobilizing commitment, which requires leaders to find ways to capture the staff focus and energy.

Third, leaders must institutionalize change. The three subtasks are reweaving the social fabric, making the bureaucracy behave, and motivating people. Reweaving the social fabric includes developing new ways for the staff to behave and interact that support the new vision. Making the bureaucracy behave includes monitoring progress toward the new organization and interceding to diminish negative behavior or lack of change. The last

“And, so . . . ummm. Well, he doesn’t get it. I’d have thought that he would have figured out by now that he needs to facilitate more and tell less. But he hasn’t.”

“How long has this been going on?”

“Pretty much right from when I hired him.”

“Didn’t you have any clue about this beforehand?”

“Sure I did. In fact, I hired him because he looked at things differently. But to be honest, I didn’t anticipate that it would be like this.”

“Like what?”

“That he would destroy the camaraderie and teamwork that we’ve developed.”

“Is he really doing that?”

“Several of the staff have come to me to complain that he runs meetings like a drill sergeant and that they no longer want to say anything in meetings he runs because he doesn’t listen. As a result, they’re not being heard, and that’s not acceptable.”

“So . . .”
(A model for organizational transformation – continued)

subtask is motivating people so they continue to move ahead.

Placing Mary and James in the model

Tichy and Devanna (1986) organize their model after acts in a play. Each of the three acts will be discussed and analyzed.

In Act I, Recognize the Need for Revitalization, there are two Scenes: Scene I, The Gathering Storm, and Scene II, Overcome Resistance.

With respect to Act I, Scene I, Recognizing the Need for Revitalization, Mary had very little

“So, I’d like you to sit in on this meeting about quality and tell me what you think.”

“OK, I can do that.”

“Thanks.”

By this time, we had returned to the offices. Mary parked her car in the reserved space by the back door, and we went in, said hello to Dorothy, and proceeded to the conference room we’d been in during the morning meeting. It was still arranged in the same rectangular shape and a few folks were beginning to straggle in.

About a minute before two o’clock, Carl strode in, looked around to see who was there, dropped off a pile of papers by one chair near the door, and left. He returned soon with a cup of coffee in his hand and sat down, saying, “It’s two o’clock, time to start.”

Looking around the room, he began talking about where they were in the process of applying for a national Quality Award and what he had planned for the next steps. He passed out a copy to each of the people that identified the steps in the work plan he had developed, with places for names of people to be assigned those tasks.

He explained what each of the steps in the plan entailed and the schedule that would have to be met for the award application to be completed and sent in for consideration.
to do. Since Starburst had begun its transformation under her predecessor and had accepted and took pride in its ability to do so. She had little to do in this area.\(^{31}\)

... the best chance of success and were able to give reasons for their decisions. Unless they were asked, they did not explain the already were well on that road. Instead, Mary reinforced what they were already doing and reconfirmed their status and progress to date.\(^{32}\) Using political decisions from the governor, she kept the staff’s attention on the need for transformation. She made a point of commenting on the governor’s decisions and actions:

Then he asked if anyone had any questions about the work plan or schedule. There were only two minor questions and he answered them fully, making sure that the person asking the question was satisfied with the answer.

After explaining the work plan and schedule and answering questions, he indicated that the next task was to determine who would be responsible for the tasks he had laid out. He offered two suggestions as to how the responsibilities could be assigned; he could assign people or they could volunteer for particular tasks. Then he asked which procedure they would prefer, when there was no response, he responded by saying, “Well, if you don’t have any preferences, why don’t I just put some of your names down? That’ll save us time, and we can get started.”

There was a murmur of responses from a few of the people in the room such as, “That should work OK,” “Sure, whatever,” and “If you say so.” The rest said nothing. Handing out another set of papers, Carl said, “I’ve anticipated the possibility that you might want me to assign responsibilities and have a list of assignments. Do any of you have any questions about them?” No one said anything.

Carl concluded the meeting by saying, “Well, that’s settled. Now it’s time for us to get to work and get this project off the ground. If any of you who have been assigned tasks have any questions, just let me know. I’ll be glad to help you figure out what you have to do. Just give my secretary a call, and she can schedule a time for us to meet. It shouldn’t take
“The governor has initiated another of his efforts to change the legislation affecting our funding. “You know, I’m really glad we’ve been restructuring. If he ever gets that legislation through, we’ll be in much better shape than other agencies.”

“The governor is off on another of his escapades again, shooting at our finances. But, it really doesn’t matter that much. As long as we continue on the track we’re on, we’ll be fine no matter what he does.”

These statements built on and supported the belief, already held by the staff, of the need for transformation.

With that, he got up, picked up his papers and coffee cup, and left. The others also collected their papers and slowly filed out, glancing at one another and shaking their heads from side to side. Mary and I also left and headed to her office. Before arriving there, Dorothy saw us and called out, “Mary, there are two important calls for you to return.”

Mary asked who they were, and upon hearing the answer, turned to me, “I’ve got to take these alone. I thought we’d have a chance to talk more now, but I’m afraid that’s just not possible. Would you excuse me? We can get together again before the board meeting, OK? Until then, will you be all right?”

“Sure, I’ll be fine, I can take some notes and I’ve got some reading I can do for the next hour or so, and then I’ve got an interview scheduled with Carl.”

“Oh, good. I’ll see you later then.”

“I collected by briefcase and walked out of Mary’s office. Stopping at Dorothy’s desk, I ask, “Dorothy, is there some place where I can sit for a while and do some reading and take some notes before I meet with Dr. Goodling?”

“Gee, let me think. We don’t have a lot of empty space. Is the conference room empty now? Why don’t you check there first, and if that’s not available, come back and we’ll see what

(Placing Mary and James in the model – continued)
As for Scene II, Overcoming Resistance, Mary had nothing to do. The organization had accepted the need for transformation and had developed an enthusiasm and excitement about being in the forefront of change in the state. At this point, they were on cruise control and no resistance emerged.  

James’ situation was different and the difference was reflected in all of the three categories or acts. With regard to Act I, Scene I, The Gathering Storm, members of the organization still did not fully accept the need for revitalization. More accurately, they accepted the need for revitalization we can do?”

“Sounds fine, thanks.”

The conference room was empty, so I took one of the chairs around the rectangle and spent several minutes reviewing the notes I had taken during the day’s observations and interviews. Several questions arose regarding Dr. Goodling, and I made a list of a few to keep in mind when I talk with him. Finishing that list, I spent the rest of the hour reading some of the articles from the Sloan Management Review that I had brought with me. As the time for my interview with Dr. Goodling approached, I collected my notes, magazine, and briefcase and headed for his office.

Dr. Goodling’s office was at the same end of the building as Mary’s, although it was across the hallway past two secretaries’ desks. As I approached, one of the secretaries looked up, and said, “Yes, can I help you?”

“Yes, I’m David Ambrose, and Mary has set up an appointment for me to meet with Dr. Goodling now.”

“Let me let him know that you’re here.” She got up, walked to his doorway, knocked, and entered. She returned, saying, “Please go on in, Dr. Goodling will see you now.”

I entered the office and looked around. To my left, behind a large neat desk, was Dr. Goodling. To my right was a small table with four chairs around it. In back of the table was a
(Placing Mary and James in the model – continued)

intellectually, but not yet emotionally. During meetings, they openly acknowledged that the organization needed to change.  

In private, however, James’ staff consistently and repeatedly described the benefits and advantages of the organization as it had been. Their private analysis included an emotional component of longing and loss. They had not yet moved through the stages of loss that Kubler-Ross (1969) identifies. As a result, they still had more work to do to bring them through this stage so they could accept both intellectually and emotionally the need for revitalization.

tall bookshelf which held the reel-to-reel tape recorder and speakers. Soft jazz was playing in the background. Dr. Goodling stood up, came around from behind his desk, shook my hand and said,

“Hello, I’m Dr. Carl Goodling, how are you today?”

“Just fine.”

“How about if we sit down over here,” indicating the table. “It’s a bit less formal.” We take chairs on opposite sides of the table and sit down.

“So, Mary says you’re studying her. How’s it going?”

“Pretty good so far. There’s a lot happening around here, so that keeps it interesting.”

“What do you think about how we’re doing?”

“In general, I’d say you’re doing very well. Most folks seem excited about what’s going on and pretty committed to what you’re trying to accomplish.”

“Really? That’s not quite how I would describe it.”

“Why is that?”

“Well, we spend an awful lot of time talking and much to
James portrayed the gathering storm by regularly talking to the staff about the external threats to The Center and the changes required in the organization. James terminated several employees when he realized the anticipated revenue under the soon-to-be-implemented government agency policy did not provide sufficient revenue to retain the positions. He reorganized the staff into teams with new sales and marketing goals to reach.

In addition, James conducted organization-wide updates and planning sessions to keep the attention of the little time getting to the actual work.”

“Oh? Why is that?”

“In a word, Mary.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, she’s a lot more concerned about process than product. She wants to be sure that everyone is on board and involved.”

“And there’s something wrong with that?”

“There is if it gets in the way of getting the job done. Don’t get me wrong, there’s a lot of great things going on here, and Mary is a big part of that. Otherwise I wouldn’t have taken this position. But, at the same time, we could be a bit smarter about what we do.”

“For example?”

“For example, we could spend less time in meetings getting everyone’s ideas and input and more time in our offices getting the work done. Leadership is not about having everyone feel good, it’s about providing direction and getting results. You’re a consultant, aren’t you?”

“Yes.”
staff on the need for and methods to deal with organizational transformation. 41

These efforts, and others, portrayed the gathering storm for the staff at The International Center for Work. The effectiveness of these efforts, however, was not substantial, as indicated above and by the resistance of the staff. 42

Although they had not yet grieved for the loss of the old organization, some members of the organization were resistant. Not overt and rebellious, their resistance took a more subtle form. For example, during meetings when plans were being made to change...
policies or procedures, most members of the organization went along with the discussion. Afterwards, a few of them met with James privately to voice concerns or ask questions. They used their private time to build a case for keeping things the same. Instances of this kind occurred regarding public decisions to reduce the clerical staff and have everyone do their own clerical work, regarding the creation of cross-functional teams, and regarding the establishment of individual goals for making sales calls. 

James’ actions to deal with resistance reflected his personality. James is quiet, retiring, thoughtful,

“But it sounds like it’s not going smoothly, at least from your perspective.”

“That’s right.”

“Why do you think that is the case?”

“That’s no mystery. It’s because of what I said before, Mary is too concerned about process and not enough about results. Consequently, when I push for getting things done, I run into resistance. They can’t seem to get past the need to talk and onto the need to produce something. It’s a real problem.”

“And it stems from Mary?”

“I think so.”

“So, what’s the solution?”

“I’m not sure. I know that I’m not happy. It isn’t any fun to keep beating your head against a wall. It may be time for me to move on.”

“Really? Why is that?”

“Because it doesn’t make any sense staying here if I can’t accomplish what I was hired to do.”

“So, what do you think will happen?”
and supportive. His first and dominant response to resistance was to listen. As indicated above, after announcing initiatives or plans for change, individual staff members asked to see him privately. He always met with them and listened to their ideas and concerns. Sometimes he accommodated their ideas by revising or changing his decision.\textsuperscript{44}

James’ response encouraged staff resistance. They realized that if they spoke to him individually, his decisions could change. Thus, his willingness to listen resulted in increased and more persistent resistance.\textsuperscript{45}

“I’m not sure. We both feel strongly. Thus far we’ve been at an impasse for more than a year. So, I’m not sure how it will turn out.”

“Me either, it doesn’t sound like there is any easy answer.”

“I guess not.”

“Well, I hope that things work out.”

“Me, too.”

“I’ve got to go now. Thanks for talking with me, I really appreciate it.”

“You’re welcome.”

After leaving Dr. Goodling’s office, I crossed the hallway to Mary’s office to see if she was there so we could go to dinner before attending the board meeting. I looked in only to see that her office was empty. Dorothy was sitting at her desk nearby, so I went to her to ask, “Is Mary around?”

Dorothy looked up and said, “She’s down the hall. She should be back any minute. Why don’t you wait in her office, she shouldn’t be too long?”

I went inside and took a seat at the conference table, thinking that I’d write a few notes before we went to dinner, but Mary came in soon, and sat down next to me, saying, “So, how was
Eventually, James realized the dilemma he had created and took a more adamant stance on decisions. By that time, however, nearly a year had passed.46

In Act II, Create a New Vision, there are three Scenes: Scene I, Diagnose the Problem, Scene II, Create a Motivating Vision, and Scene III, Mobilize Commitment.

In Mary’s case, Act II had already been accomplished. Because her predecessor’s efforts began nearly a decade earlier, the Starburst staff understood their situation. Under her

your chat with Carl?”

“Interesting, to say the least. You two have quite a thing going, don’t you?”

“I guess you could say that. He and I have been at odds right from the start.”

“From what I can gather, you knew there were differences even before you hired him.”

“That’s true. And to be honest, I thought that we could work it out, but we haven’t been able to do so.”

“Do you think you ever will?”

“I’m not sure. After what you saw today, what do you think?”

“I’d say there are some pretty serious differences. As I was talking to Dr. Goodling, I got to wondering why you hired him in the first place. He doesn’t exactly hide his preferences.”

“I guess I thought he would be good for us, both Starburst and me.”

“From what I heard, you thought he’d be good for Starburst
(Placing Mary and James in the model – continued)

predecessor’s leadership, they participated in the development of a new vision of the organization and had worked for several years to make the vision become reality. Thus Mary had no need to diagnose the problem, develop a new vision, or mobilize commitment. These efforts had already been accomplished.

James was less fortunate. He had to start from scratch. The problem had to be diagnosed and James worked on it.

Staff members knew the primary funding organization was withdrawing its support, but they did not fully because of his background in strategic planning, is that right?”

“That, of course, and also because he’s a superintendent, so he’s got credibility with our superintendents.”

“He’s really focused on producing results. So I wondered whether he would complement you in some ways because of that. Is that so, or not?”

“You noticed, huh? Well, yes. I did think that he’d be able to do some things that I might not be as good at. Obviously, being a superintendent helps, and I didn’t come from those ranks. But I also hoped that the more I spend time out of the building the more I could rely on him to take care of things on the inside. Kind of like it was when I worked for Joe. He did the outside stuff with the board and the superintendents and the state, and I worked on the operations from the inside. But it didn’t work out that way with Carl.”

“Because of his style, how he runs meetings?”

“You got it. He just can’t get the fact that how you treat people is important.”

“From what he said, you and he have been working on that for a while.”

“That’s right, we have. And I think I’ve been real patient, but I’m beginning to wonder whether he ought to stay or not.”
understand the depth of the problem. For example, many staff members did not accept the decision to reduce staff. James explained to the staff the connection between the change in funding and the need for staff reductions. James’ efforts to understand and explain the connection between the change in funding and the change in staffing contributed to his diagnosis of the problem.

James struggled to create a motivating vision. His newness to leadership and the newness of the demand for transformation combined to create a situation in which he needed to develop a motivating vision, but did not have the experience to do so.

“Does he know it’s that serious?”
“I would think so? We’ve talked about it enough?”
“You’ve talked about that he might have to leave?”
“No, not that, not that directly, but he’s got to know.”
“Why?”
“Well, because there have been plenty of hints.”
“I don’t think the hints have worked. I don’t think he has the feeling that his job is on the line.”
“Really? How could he not know?”
“From what I’ve seen and heard, I’d say he has a totally different way of seeing things than you do. For one, he understands power differently. For him, power comes from the top and is a tool leaders directly use to get things done. Your subtle way misses the boat. He doesn’t get the message because it doesn’t come in the way he’s used to seeing power wielded.”
“Do you really think so?”
“Yes. From his perspective, you haven’t told him not to do anything, all you’ve done is discuss viewpoints. If you
He tried to create a new vision with the help of the staff and an outside consultant, but James and the staff were unable to build any clear, agreed-upon, or motivating vision.\textsuperscript{51}

As for mobilizing commitment, James’ effectiveness varied with the receptivity and enthusiasm of the staff. James mostly succeeded with three members of the staff who had strong personal relationships with him.\textsuperscript{52}

Two other staff members resisted strongly (one left voluntarily during the study).\textsuperscript{53} The remaining staff sat understand power like he does, then this all makes sense.”

“It does? How?”

“Simple. Until you come out directly and tell him that he’s not doing it right, anything you say is interpreted as mere suggestions, not as something he has to do. It’s too subtle. I don’t mean that he’s stupid, just that he reads power differently.”

“I’ve been trying to be more supportive, less direct.”

“It sounds like it. Why have you been less direct.”

“It’s a long story, but the crux of it is that when I worked for Joe and took care of the internal operations, I was much more direct, much more authoritative. Then, I got my doctorate at State and as a part of that work, I got a lot of feedback and did a lot of introspection. As a result, I realized that I didn’t want to be so authoritarian, that I wanted to be more facilitative. I’ve been working on being that way in my new job and I was trying to be that way with Carl, too.”

“Well, it seems to have worked in general, one of the things that most of the people I’ve talked to applaud is the way that you get everyone involved and participating. So, I’d say that you’ve made a lot of progress in that regard.”

“It’s good to know they see that. But, with Carl, as you say, it doesn’t seem to have worked.”
on the fence as passive observers. At James’ urgings these staff members participated in strategic planning and goal setting sessions, but their involvement lacked energy and commitment.\(^{54}\)

In Act III, Institutionalize Change, there are three Scenes: Scene I, Reweave the Social Fabric, Scene II, Make Bureaucracy Behave, and Scene III, Motivate People.

Mary faced few of the problems associated with institutionalizing change since her predecessor had accomplished the task for her. Her efforts involved refinements required

“So that’s why you wanted me to sit in on the meeting he ran this afternoon, right? You wanted me to see how he did.”

“Exactly, I thought you might be able to help me out.”

“I’m not sure I have, and to be honest, that’s not why I’m here.”

“I know, but it’s always helpful to get another viewpoint on a subject. And you have been helpful because you helped me see things a bit more clearly.”

“I’m glad it was helpful, even though that wasn’t what I wanted to talk about.”

“What did you want to talk about?”

“I wanted to discuss the role that you wanted Dr. Goodling to play at Starburst and how you decided on hiring him.”

“OK, we’ve got some time before the board meeting. Why don’t we talk about that over dinner?”

“Sounds great. Where do you want to go?”

“There’s a pretty good seafood place down the road. How does that sound?”

“Fine, although I wasn’t expecting a seafood place in the
by changes to staffing or environmental threats.\textsuperscript{55}

Mary did not have to reweave the social fabric. She did not have to develop new ways for the members of the organization to behave since they were accustomed to operating under the new vision.\textsuperscript{56} The only exception involved new staff members, and mostly, the culture of the organization wove new members into the social fabric.\textsuperscript{57} One notable exception, her newly hired assistant, will be addressed later.

Mary controlled the bureaucracy. Already on cruise control, she only needed to keep it on course. One of

middle of farm country.”

“It may not be what you expected, but it’s good nonetheless. Let me check with Dorothy before we go to be sure everything’s set for the meeting. I won’t be but a minute.”

With that, Mary stepped outside to speak with Dorothy. I waited until she returned and we left through the back entrance to get into her car. The discussion began again as we drove to Ruth’s Seafood and continued through dinner. Mary asked,

“So what did you want to know about Carl’s role?”

“It seems from what I’ve been able to gather that at some point you decided that you wanted someone as your assistant who had different skills than you did. Tell me a little about that.”

“You’re right, I did want someone who was different from me.”

“Why is that?”

“Well, I realized that if we were going to be successful in becoming what we had put forth in our strategic plan, I couldn’t do it all alone. I had to have someone who could carry a good deal of the load internally because I knew that I’d be doing a lot outside.”
Placing Mary and James in the model – continued

her methods was a one-on-one meeting with staff members.\textsuperscript{58} For example, she met with the controller regularly to review the financial situation and to set or adjust the agency’s financial course. Their meetings were cordial and productive and supported the direction of the organization.\textsuperscript{59}

Finally, to motivate people, Mary had developed effective ways of motivating her staff that they understood and appreciated. Mary had developed an effective strategy for working with individuals that she had learned as a teacher and applied as a leader.

“How did you know that?”

“A couple of reasons. First, it was the way Joe and I worked together. I saw what he had to do as the head of Starburst and knew that I would also shoulder that responsibility.”

“Like working the board and the governor?”

“Exactly. What I couldn’t know then, but what I’ve learned since I’ve been on the job, is how much time it takes and how much others have thrust me into the forefront in terms of working with the governor.”

“How do you mean?”

“In the past several months, many of my colleagues, mostly men, have called on me to act as their spokesperson with the governor.”

“Why have they done that?”

“For several reasons. First, I’m new. There has been a lot of negative publicity recently concerning bribes by some of my older male colleagues in the western part of the state, sort of like a good-old-boy kickback network. Well, since I’m new, I’m not associated with them, I’ve got a clean slate, so to speak.”

“Makes sense.”
The strategy was simple. She asked what the staff wanted to achieve/become/learn and then she found ways to help them reach their goals in the course of their work in the organization. All of the staff appreciated and acknowledged Mary’s efforts to help them grow, learn, and achieve. Her efforts motivated them.60

James was less successful in instituting change than Mary. First, regarding reweaving the social fabric, he was still in the midst of finding ways to develop new social systems and ways of interacting to reweave the social fabric of the transformed organization. On the one hand, he had established performance measures for

“Sure does. Also, we’re geographically closer to the state capital so I can drop in there much easier than my colleagues can who’re farther away.”

“Also makes sense.”

“Yes. Finally, in addition to being new to the job, I have the advantage of being seen as one of the new breed, one of those who is ready and willing to try new things. Starburst has always been an innovator, and that reputation has rubbed off on me.”

“So, for all of those reasons, you’ve been designated as the spokesperson.”

“That, and the fact that I’ve found out I’m pretty good at this politics stuff. It’s fun.”

“Fun, that’s not how many of the leaders I know talk about politics.”

“I know. That’s not how those I know talk about it either. But I realized that politics is in my blood. My father held the same job that I do, and I remember being fascinated by his stories at the dinner table.”

“Really!? That’s amazing. Like father, like daughter. Do you have any siblings?”

“Yes, two brothers.”
teams. On the other hand, individual members of the team still came to him, individually, to complain about others and ask for his intervention. His efforts to reweave the social fabric at the center were incomplete and inconclusive. Residual elements remained of the ways staff members worked.  

As for controlling bureaucracy, James made more progress in this area than in reweaving the social fabric. He established a financial system to track finances closely and a system for developing goals for individual staff members and teams. These successes made elements of the bureaucracy behave.  

“Are they in the same line of work?”

“Not at all. One’s a lawyer and the other’s a psychotherapist.”

“So, the only girl followed in dad’s footsteps.”

“I guess so.”

“You’ve had a longtime interest in politics, then?”

“Yes, only I didn’t know it could be this much fun. In fact, I really have to watch out.”

“Why?”

“If I don’t watch out, I can get so involved in the game that I can lose sight of the objective. I miss the forest for the trees.”

“And that’s a problem?”

“Of course. I can get so wrapped up in the game that I lose sight of what we’re playing for. It’s just so much fun, and I’m pretty good at it, so I have to be careful.”

“How do you know you’re good?”

“A couple of things. My colleagues call me to ask for my advice on how to handle situations. I don’t think they’d call
Finally, James achieved mixed results in motivating staff members. Everyone in the organization readily acknowledged and appreciated James’ ability to listen.\textsuperscript{63}

They recognized his good intentions. However, nearly a third of the staff questioned his ability to transform the organization.\textsuperscript{64}

His ability to listen did not overcome other factors. The staff interpreted his willingness to change (after he had announced a decision) as indecisiveness. They concluded that he was unable to stick to a decision me if they didn’t think I could help out.”

“You’re probably right about that. What else?”

“The governor calls me, too. I don’t think he’d call if he didn’t think I knew what I was doing.”

“Good point.”

“So I get indications from both sides that I must be doing something right. And, more importantly, we’re able to get things done. There are results we can point to that prove we’ve been successful.”

“Like?”

“Like not having the budget cut this year even after it was announced that the governor wanted to do so.”

“That’s a positive result.”

“I think so.”

“So, others call you, from both camps, and you get results. But how do you catch yourself?”

“I just know when to back off. It’s obvious.”

“I’m not sure I understand, what does obvious look like?”
(Placing Mary and James in the model – continued)

and was unduly influenced by certain staff members whom they identified as insiders. As a result, his actions frustrated and angered many of his staff.65

As the above explanations indicate, Mary and James fit differently within the Tichy-Devanna (1986) model. The differences were the result of variations in the legacies of their predecessors, their leadership experience and expertise, and the unique challenges of their organizations.

Table 7 summarizes the differences between how Mary and James fit into the Tichy-Devanna (1986)

“Hmmm . . . I don’t know what to say. It’s just obvious, I just can tell when it’s time to back off a bit.”

“I see. Well, how about exploring another aspect to this, OK?”

“Sure. What aspect is that?”

“I guess it has to do with what drives you to do this work. In our conversations before, we’ve talked about what you do and how you do it. But we’ve never talked about why you do the work.”

“You want to know why I’m in this business, right?”

“That’s right.”

“It’s the kids. I care about what happens to kids, and what we do here plays an important role in helping kids learn. I know we may not be the most important piece of the puzzle, but it is an important piece, and I know it makes a difference.”

“How do you know that?”

“Did you look at the area by the reception area today?”

“I’m not sure I know what you mean?”

“Did you see the paintings by the kids?”
model of the tasks of transformational leaders. The table uses a grading scheme to organize and present the leaders’ level of proficiency in each task.

The researcher is a former high school and college teacher; in developing this table he called upon his expertise at evaluation by grading each leader at each task.

The grading scheme functions according to two variables: knowledge and skill. The knowledge variable concerns the leader’s ability to think about and articulate the task. The skill variable concerns the leader’s ability to act to accomplish the task.

“Oh, yes, I did. They’re wonderful.”

“Just what I thought, too. We wouldn’t have those paintings if someone didn’t think we were doing something right. That’s just the tip of the iceberg, though. We regularly get letters from parents, legislators, people in the community, people who’ve benefited directly from what we do or have seen the results we’ve gotten.”

“Sort of spontaneous outbursts of support.”

“Yes. Very heartwarming. Knowing that I’m doing something that helps kids, and those kinds of support verify that we are, is why I do it.”

“Is that enough?”

“What do you mean?”

“Is the fact that you get indications that you’re making a difference enough to keep you going?”

“Well, hmmm . . . Not really . . . I, uh, I don’t know quite how to say this, but . . .”

“But, what?”

A grade of D signifies that the leader can neither think coherently nor act competently to complete the task. A grade of C indicates that the leader has a limited awareness of how to approach the task and is minimally competent at accomplishing it. A grade of B denotes a leader’s increased awareness of the task and a firmer grasp of the actions necessary to move forward, but the leader is not yet proficient. A grade of A indicates that a leader has achieved clarity of thought and effectiveness of action regarding the task.

“Oh well, I might as well just come out with it. I pray.”

“You pray?”

“That’s right, I pray. Everyday, on the way to work, I pray.”

“On the way to work?”

“Yes, I know it sounds weird, but that is my time for talking to God.”

“What do you say?”

“I ask for help. Sometimes it’s help for me to understand, sometimes it’s help for us to overcome some difficulty, sometimes it’s just help for me to get through the day.”

“Why help?”

“I know I can’t do this alone. There’s no way I could keep going without some help. Praying gets me through. Without it, I couldn’t keep going.”

“I wouldn’t have guessed that you prayed, but at the same time, I sensed that there was some spiritual stuff going on here.”

“Oh, why is that?”

“Well, when you and I talked about some of the difficult
(Placing Mary and James in the model – continued)

Table 7
Assessment of Mary and James according to Tichey-Devanna Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mary</th>
<th>James</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Act I: Accept Need for Change</td>
<td>A*</td>
<td>C*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene I: Portray Gathering Storm</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scent II: Overcome Resistance</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Act II: Create New Vision</td>
<td>A*</td>
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<td>Scene I: Diagnose Problem</td>
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<td>Scene II: Develop Vision</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene III: Mobilize Commitment</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act III: Institutionalize Change</td>
<td>A*</td>
<td>C*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene I: Reweave Fabric</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scene II: Make Bureaucracy Behave</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene III: Motivate People</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Average grades for an Act.

times we’ve had, what with your cancer and my wife’s, it was clear then that there were spiritual implications.”

“That’s true, there are times when belief in something greater than ourselves is important.”

“And yet, from what I can tell, you don’t go around discussing your spiritual beliefs or practices at work.”

“No, I wouldn’t do that. I’m pretty sensitive to what I think I should do and what is off limits. I’m not one to proselytize, so I guess I keep my religious beliefs more private.”

“And yet, at the same time, people know that you have a spiritual side.”

“That comes out privately, I don’t talk about it publicly.”

“Someone I’d met here, and I can’t remember who it was, talked about the ‘energy’ that is here and which she said you helped to create. That sort of sounds, at least in some sense, as a spiritual energy. I’m pretty sure she meant it that way.”

“I wouldn’t be surprised. There are a few people here who are attuned to the spiritual aspects of life, including the energy that exists. If people sense that, and want to build on that, it’s great.”

“And yet, I sense that you don’t hide your spiritual side either. So while you don’t go about wearing it on your
The above summary presents the researcher’s evaluation of the leaders’ level of proficiency for the task of organizational transformation. The evaluation has been discussed with and agreed to by the two leaders. The summary presents only the first of two models selected to portray the key elements of the leaders’ mental model, the other being a model for problem solving.

**A model for problem solving**

(A model for problem solving – continued)

As with the model for organizational transformation used above, Newman’s (1995) model was selected by the researcher and the leaders because it incorporates many of the elements of the other models and best represents the expressions of problem-solving by the leaders in this study. 67

Newman (1995) calls his eight-stage problem solving process the Problem-Solving Process wheel. The eight stages are:

1. Identify the Problem
2. Gather Data
3. Analyze Data
4. Generate Solutions
5. Select Solutions

complex.”

“From what you’ve said before, the new governor is not as supportive of your agency as his predecessors. Is that right?”

“Yes, sort of. He has a much different understanding of the role of government than many of his predecessors. He doesn’t think that the state should be responsible for as much as in the past and he’s been trying for a few years now to find areas to cut state programs that aren’t absolutely necessary. And we fit into that category.”

“A classic conservative Republican.”

“I guess you could say that, although I don’t see it as Democrat versus Republican.”

“How do you see it?”

“In some ways, he has some good points to make. There are ways that the state has shouldered a financial burden that might better be taken on by someone else. The state shouldn’t have to pay for everything.”

“But doesn’t that pose a threat to your funding?”

“Of course, absolutely. But we’ve known for quite some time that times were changing and we couldn’t rely on the
A model for problem solving – continued

6. Plan
7. Test and Rehearse
8. Action

These eight stages are organized into three creative sub-processes. Stages one through three constitute the foundation sub-process; stages four and five constitute the generation sub-process; and stages six through eight constitute the execution sub-process.

The foundation sub-process includes the development of an initial problem statement followed by the gathering and analysis of the some data to confirm the initial problem statement. The process is repeated through several iterations. According state to continue to fund us using the same formula as has been the case for so long.”

“Really?”

“Yes. That’s one of the great things Joe helped us understand. He was the one who, more than anyone, brought us to the understanding that times were changing and we had to change with them. We all owe him a great debt.”

“How does that play out in your relationship with the governor?”

“Since I accept the fact that times are now different, I’m not in the same camp as many of my older colleagues. I’m much more willing to try new things, to change with the times. Because of that, I think I have a different relationship with the governor.”

“What is that relationship?”

“Well, I think he’s more willing to hear me out when I have something to say, and not as likely to see me as merely trying to defend my turf.”

“Is that how he sees your ‘older colleagues?’”

“Yes. As a result, I have access that others don’t have. And that’s good. In fact, it’s something that we take advantage of.”
(A model for problem solving – continued)

... to Newman, “up to 80 percent of your time can be spent just exploring this iterative sub-process” (Newman, 1995, p. 9).

Once the foundation sub-process is completed, the generation sub-process begins during which a wide range of possible solutions are explored and developed before one is selected. During the generation sub-process, it is possible to “have fun developing and capturing many ideas” (Newman, 1995, p. 10). After this sub-process, a return to the foundation sub-process is necessary.

The final sub-process of execution includes the planning, testing, rehearsing and taking action.

“We?”

“The other agency leaders and me. Some of us talk pretty regularly, and in those discussions when we’re figuring out our strategy, we rely on the fact that because of my relationship and access to the governor, I often am the best person to make contact.”

“Is that OK with you?”

“Absolutely, it puts me into a position of power that, as a woman, I wouldn’t necessarily have. Most of my colleagues are men, there are only three women in this job out of more than 20 in the state. That’s pitifully few. So, it’s nice to be a woman and have power.”

“Is that important?”

“To me it is. I would have thought that your sister would have brought you up better than that. Shame on you.”

Laughing, “OK, I deserved that, but at the same time, I wanted to know how important it is to you that, as a woman, you want power.”

“Yes, it’s important to me in lots of ways. It’s important because I can do my job much better, the more power I can wield. And, it’s important to me because women have not held many of the positions of influence in this field. I’m not
(A model for problem solving – continued)

to implement the selected solution. During the planning stage, to anticipate and creatively solve the obstacles to effective implementation is important.

Newman cautions that “the wheel is not a linear process. Sometimes a move backwards is required to take the next step forward. When working around the wheel, the idea is to work forwards as well as backwards, iteratively” (Newman, 1995, p. 11).

Placing Mary and James in the model

The three sub-processes and eight stages of problem solving employed by Mary and James can be portrayed best saying that there has been overt prejudice, but no matter how you cut it, women have not had a fair deal. And it’s nice, and long overdue, that I can have more influence.”

“And, as you said before, you like the game.”

“Yes, it’s just fun. And I’m enjoying it.”

“Are you at all surprised?”

“Surprised, what do you mean?”

“Are you at all surprised that you’ve got the influence you’ve got, that you’re as good at is as you are, that you’re recognized as being a key player?”

“Yes, and no. I’m a bit surprised that my colleagues have turned to me for advice the way they have. Since I’m a newcomer as an agency head and I’m a woman, I thought it would take me longer to establish myself. I thought there would be more of an old boy network to overcome. But, did it surprise me that I could do this? No. That didn’t surprise me.”

“How come?”

“I don’t know really. I guess I always knew, at some level, that I could do this. Perhaps it was because I saw my father do it and then saw Joe do it. It just seemed natural, comfortable for me, too.”
by representative examples of interactions between the leaders and the researcher.

In Mary’s case, the best example to portray how she solves problems pertains to her assistant, Dr. James Goodling. In the course of conversations between Mary and the researcher, she brought up and discussed the problem she was having with Dr. Goodling, her newly hired assistant.68

“So, now that you’re here, what’s next?”

“Well, I guess what’s next is making sure we get through tonight’s board meeting.”

“OK, let’s take a few minutes to talk about that for a while, but I also want to get to where you’re going, or at least, where you want Starburst to be going.”

“Fine.”

“Tonight’s board meeting, what will be going on?”

“There’s more than one way to answer that. Do you mean what’s the agenda? Or, do you mean what are the politics and issues in the group?”

“I think I meant the agenda, but which do you want to talk about?”

“Let’s start with the agenda, OK?”

“OK. So, what’s the agenda?”

“Nothing special, really. Some rather perfunctory business mostly. Reports on hiring, some discussion on some technological programs we’re considering, an update on our application for the Quality Award we’re applying for. And a little bit of background on the discussion about funding I had
identifying specific aspects of the problem. Mary was clearly wrestling with this problem. The researcher asked questions to help Mary define the problem and gather and analyze pertinent data. In response, she observed that, “He’s much more authoritative than I am.”

Mary and the researcher discussed the differences between what she perceives as his authoritative style and her more participative style. They compared their observations of him as he ran two groups and discussed what the impact of the differences was. In this example, Mary engaged with the researcher to identify and with the governor.”

“Sounds rather uneventful.”

“It is.”

“So, then what about the other question, what are the issues and politics in the group?”

“Well, to be honest, with this board, there are very little problems like that. We get along quite well.”

“Really? That’s not often the case with directors and their boards. Why is that?”

“I owe it all to Joe. He was here for more than fifteen years and he was able to develop a board that is very supportive of what we’re doing and where we’re going.”

“How do they demonstrate the supportiveness?”

“One way that shows how they’re supportive of me is that they never considered conducting a search when Joe retired and they hired me. They just decided that I’d take over.”

“Wow! That must have made you feel good.”

“Absolutely. And beyond that, whenever I have to talk something over with the board, they’re always there. I’m not caught playing telephone tag. It makes it much easier to
define the problem and gather and analyze data related to it.

During the second sub-process of generation, the conversations between Mary and the researcher included reviewing the solutions she had attempted thus far and other options to consider. They discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each strategy she had already used and explored additional options. Eventually, Mary decided upon a new strategy.

As for the third sub-process of execution, the conversations included a review of the way that Mary had executed her strategies earlier.

work with them.”

“I would think so. What should I look for tonight, then?”

“I don’t know. What’s important to you?”

“There’s no one special thing I’m looking for, more like I’m just interested in what might happen that might influence or be a part of what you learn. So, I guess that I’ll just see what happens, OK?”

“Sounds good to me. Why don’t we head back then.”

“Fine.”

Once we arrived at the Starburst offices, we entered through the back door near Mary’s office, dropped off our coats and headed for the conference room. As had been the case in other meetings that day, the conference room was set up with the tables set in a large square. Off to one side there was a buffet set with soft drinks, coffee, the makings of sandwiches, two salads, and cookies. Unlike the earlier meetings, however, there were neatly printed name cards marking the seats of the board members and those who would be speaking before them.

Mary, as during the luncheon meeting earlier in the day, made rounds. She circulated around the room, shaking hands, chatting, making contact with nearly everyone in the room. As the time for the meeting to begin arrived, the
Using the lessons learned from her earlier efforts, she (along with the researcher) planned the new strategy. While planning, she rehearsed her strategy. Mary implemented the new strategy and continued to test its effectiveness. Conversations with the researcher helped Mary test the effectiveness of the strategy.

Many of the problems Mary experienced during this study followed a similar approach that involved trusted colleagues and consultants. She spent a great deal of time in person and on the phone with people she used to help her solve problems.

Board President, asked that everyone take their seats so they could begin. Within a minute, everyone had taken their seats, many with food or drink.

In the room were about twelve or thirteen people. Eight were members of the board, the rest were Mary and four members of her staff who were going to give reports. Using Roberts’ Rules, the Board President moved through the agenda; reading and approval of the minutes of the last meeting, old business, new business, and the director’s (Mary’s) report.

The members of Mary’s staff delivered their reports to the board. The board members were attentive. It was clear they were aware of the issues inherent in the various topics by their questions, which reflected their reading of reports, recollections from earlier discussions, or a personal interest in the topic.

Two topics engaged the members in more lengthy discussion, Mary’s discussions with the governor and other agency heads about funding and my research.

Mary related the conversations she had had during the few weeks since their last meeting concerning the ongoing funding crisis. She briefly reviewed each of the conversations she had had with those in the governor’s office and with her peers. There were many more board member questions regarding this topic than any other during the meeting. Among the questions were, “Why do you think the governor took that position?” or “Where do you think they’re
(Placing Mary and James in the model – continued)

In James’ case, the example to portray how he employed this model concerns his efforts to find new sources of income for the center. The problem was readily apparent during the first sub-process of foundation. James had to find new sources of revenue for the center.78

Gathering data about the problem included finding out the reasoning behind the decision by the government agency to eliminate funding and ascertaining the details of the transition plan and the new funding requirements.79 James and the staff analyzed the data during several of their strategic planning sessions.80

heading next?” Mary’s responses were thorough and detailed and provided more than perfunctory response to the questions.

She would provide background information about the person she had spoken with, which would include what their position was, how they viewed the financial situation, what relationship they had with Starburst, and what they were trying to accomplish. In addition, she would assess how each conversation fit into her overall plan for dealing with the financial situation.

Given the number of questions and Mary’s responses, the conversation took longer than the agenda had allotted, prompting the board president to say, “I know this is taking longer than we’d planned, but we need to spend the extra time on this, it’s important.”

When Mary introduced me to the board, she said, “This is David Ambrose, he’s conducting research on me for his doctorate. He wants to find out what I might learn as we redirect Starburst. He’s already visited us a few times, following me around, observing what I do, going to meetings with me, and interviewing members of the staff. I’m sure he’d be willing to answer any of your questions.”

Interestingly, the questions did not deal with what I was researching as much as they reflected an interest in how Starburst was doing. They asked questions like: “Why did you choose Starburst and Mary as the site for your study?”
James used both collective and individual means of generating ideas during the second sub-process of generation. Some ideas emerged from discussion with staff members when they were discussing and planning for changes. He generated other ideas alone. One idea he generated alone is useful in demonstrating how he generated and selected ideas. The idea was to the merge The International Center for Work with its American sister agencies. This idea occurred to James in an intuitive flash during the silence of a late night plane ride.

“How does Starburst compare to the other site you’re studying?” “How do we measure up to other organizations you know about?” “Will you be willing to return to let us know what you find out?”

Since I was the last topic on the agenda, it was late in the evening, and the questions for Mary had run long, I didn’t go into much detail in my responses. In addition, I offered to return once the research was done to share the results with them. The board president accepted my offer, wished me well on my study, and closed the meeting.

Once the meeting was closed, most of the board members lingered in two or threes, talking about various issues and topics. One or two came up to me to ask a question or offer me luck on my study. Within a few minutes, though, the room had emptied out.

Mary walked over, and said, “So, what you think?”

“How?”

“I just wanted to check, to be sure that’s it’s working—for the both of us.”

“Oh, I see. I think the day was very productive. I learned some things about you, like that you pray, that I hadn’t anticipated. And I think I got some good insights from my interviews and observations.”
Unlike Mary’s problem solving and his efforts to solve problems with his staff, this idea arrived intuitively. Coincidentally, the researcher met with James the day after the intuitive flash. They discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the possible solution. The advantages included the ability to reduce overhead costs by having only one organization to support and the improved ability to raise money by only having one organization, not three or more, contact prospective funders.  

Regarding the third sub-process of execution, James tested the idea

“So, what’s next?”

“I’ve got to debrief the day. Tomorrow, I’ll review my notes, think through some of what I’ve seen and heard. Then, I’ll prepare for the next time.”

“Have we scheduled that yet?”

“No, not yet.”

“Why don’t you call Dorothy. She can schedule that for us.”

“OK, I’ll give her a call tomorrow.”

“I’ll let her know you’ll be calling so she can look at my calendar beforehand.”

“Is there anything we’ve missed?”

“What do you mean?”

“Is there anyone I haven’t met yet that you want me to interview, or is there any activity you’re engaged in that might be valuable for me to observe?”

“None that I can think of right now. If I think of anything, I’ll let Dorothy know, and you and she can work it out.”

“Sounds fine.”
immediately, first on the researcher and Reverend Lincoln. He reasoned that unless Reverend Lincoln was in favor of the idea, nothing would happen. Both The International Center for Work and its American sister agencies reported to and were founded by Reverend Lincoln, and nothing of significance changed in either organization without Reverend Lincoln’s approval.85

In this example, James did not plan or rehearse the solution. And the only action he took was to test the idea with Reverend Lincoln. Thus, his efforts to execute the ideas he

“I guess that’s it then, right?”

“I think so.”

Well, take care driving. It’s a long way home.”

“I will. Good-bye.”

“And, when you see your sister, tell her I said hello.”

“Be glad to. See you soon.”

Narrative Two: A Day with Him

The traffic on the Interstate through the city is heavy and the commuters stop and start, moving no more than 25 miles an
generated were incomplete because he did not fully implement all the elements of this sub-process. In less than twelve hours, James generated an idea, discussed it with the researcher, and tested it with Reverend Lincoln. After that, nothing more was done to implement the idea. 86

As these examples demonstrate, Mary and James solve problems using the stages in the problem-solving model presented by Newman (1995). They may not use all the stages all the time, but they exhibit selective use of the stages and the three sub-processes as they solve problems that inhibit their organizations’ transformation.

As I turn into the driveway, I notice that the once proud mansion shows its age, the cement in the driveway sprouting weeds, the steps up to the front entrance swollen with weather damage and missing several stones, and the paint peeling from around the windows. The building displays other changes resulting from the change in the neighborhood. Wrought-iron grates cover all first floor windows and doors.
Three aspects of problem solving come into play as Mary and James solve problems. Exploring each of the three aspects will provide a more detailed and thorough understanding of the leaders’ mental model as it pertains to problem solving. The first aspect concerns the style with which problems are solved.

**Problem-solving styles**

Newman writes, “While the way we appear to solve problems according to the profile may be influenced by recent experience or even lack of it, I have noted three general stereotypes or tendencies in managers’ problem-solving styles. I call them the

and security door locks and alarms are attached to each entrance. The changes are not just external. No longer a family residence, the foyer contains the desk, computer, and filing cabinets of the receptionist, the kitchen serves as the storage room/copy center, the dining room becomes the conference room, and the many upstairs bedrooms are offices of the staff that hold two and three desks each, along with the phones, computers, surplus desks, and metal file drawers.

The young receptionist, Michelle, after buzzing me in, says, “Hello, Mr. Ambrose, how are you today?”

“I’m doing pretty good, how are you?”

“OK, I guess, considering…”

“What do you mean, “considering…?”

“I just found out that my mother has breast cancer.”

“Oh, I’m sorry to hear that. How’s she doing?”

“She seems to be doing fine.”

“How do you mean?”

“Well, she doesn’t seem to be bothered much by it. She’s just going along like it’s no big deal.”

“It sounds like there’s something wrong with that.”
Coyote, the Competitor, and the Eagle” (Newman, 1995, p. 13).

The Coyote tends to skip over the first two sub-processes of foundation and generation to begin immediately to plan for the solution. Coyotes tend to operate within a limited set of options and possible solutions and quickly latch onto the first idea that occurs to them.

The Competitor skips over the first sub-process to invest time in the generation phase. The way the Competitor engages in this phase is limited, however, since the Competitor emphasizes the ideas that he or she can generate while diminishing the contribution of others. Competitors

“There sure is. She doesn’t really understand how serious this is. I mean, she might not make it. How can she just ignore the fact that she might die?”

“What exactly did the doctors say?”

“They said she had breast cancer, and that she had to have a biopsy. It’s scheduled for next week, on Tuesday.”

“Did they give you any other information?”

“No, not really.”

“My wife had breast cancer three years ago. It really scared her, and me, too. But she’s doing fine now, even though her life is not the same, and never will be.”

“I didn’t know. Is she OK?”

“Yes, but it was a scary time, for a year or two. One of the things my wife did was to read a lot about breast cancer so she knew what she was up against. Do you think your mother would want to read more about it?”

“No, I don’t think so. She’s a very strong woman emotionally. She’s going to deal with this like the other setbacks in her life. She’ll just keep on working. She won’t spend a lot of time thinking about it or trying to understand it.”
see problem-solving as a very personal test of their own ‘right stuff’: as a challenge to their personal ideology. They are solution, not problem-centred” (Newman, 1995, p. 15).

The Eagle uses all of the stages of the problem-solving wheel and the three sub-processes without overlooking or giving only cursory attention to any of them. As a result, the Eagle spends more time actively engaged in each stage, thereby reaping the benefits of that stage.

Part of the explanation may be due to the nature of the problem itself. As Simon (1960, 1977) found, “Would you like to know more?”

“Of course. I don’t know what to expect or anything.”

“One of the best books that my wife read was Dr. Love’s ‘Breast Book.’ If you want, I’ll send it to you so you can read it.”

“That would be wonderful. Thanks.”

“Not at all, I’m just glad that I could help.”

“Is your wife really OK?”

“Yes and no. Yes in that it’s been three years and she’s not had a recurrence. But no in that it changed her life. You’re never really cured of cancer, they just don’t know enough. All they can say that is if you do some combination of things, like chemotherapy and radiation, that the chances are 65%, or 80%, or whatever, that in five years, you’ll still be alive.”

“You mean that you don’t know if you’re cured?”

“Precisely. All they can tell you is the odds you’ll be alive in five years. As a result, there’s a hammer hanging over your head for the rest of your life. That’s the hardest part for my wife. It’s always there, in the back of her mind.”

“Oh my.”
leaders categorize situations into those that are either routine or non-routine, and the non-routine situations invite new actions.

Keen and Scott-Morton (1978) categorize situations similarly as structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. Unstructured tasks are seen as new situations with unfamiliar data. In the case of the two leaders in this study, their situation is both non-routine and unstructured.

Newman (1995) provides additional support to this claim. Newman provides four ways to define a problem as “either a deviation, a matter of difference, open or closed” (Newman, 1995, p. 21). A deviation occurs when

“Well, I’ll send you the book. Maybe it will help.”

“Thanks.”

“Is James here yet?”

“Let me check with Jackie.” Michelle steps through the wide French doors behind her desk. After a moment, Jackie emerges, smiling to say, “James hasn’t arrived yet. Would you like to wait in his office?”

“That would be fine.”

As she leads me through the door into what used to be the dining room, a dark paneled, elegant room that adjoins James’ office, I ask, “Is there someplace that I can get a cup of coffee?”

Jackie responds, “I don’t drink coffee myself, and neither does James. But I think Lon does. His office is upstairs, on the third floor.”

“Thanks, I think I’ll just leave my stuff in James’ office and see if I can find some coffee.”

Returning through Jackie’s dining room office, I pass Michelle’s desk and walk up the stairs that wind their way to the second floor. Sticking my head into the first bedroom-converted-to-office, I ask a young woman sitting at her desk.
(Problem-solving styles - continued)

A situation is unusual or unexpected. A difference measures the gap between the present and future situations; that is, the distance between the current state and the projected future state. An open problem is one with no verifiable right answer; a closed problem is one in which the parameters of a solution are easy to determine.

Given Newman’s definitions, the leaders in this study dealt with problems that are a deviation. Both organizations exist in circumstances with unusual and unanticipated events, particularly their governmental funding. The difference, or gap, between the present and future states varies with each organization. The difference between the present state

if there’s a place to get coffee. She said Lon usually has some, and leads the way to his third-floor office. Dropping me off there, she says to Lon, “Here’s David Ambrose, you remember him, don’t you? He’s studying James and our change. He wants some of your coffee.”

Lon answers, “Of course, come in, Mr. Ambrose. I just made a fresh pot, let’s see if we can find you a cup.”

“Thanks, it was a bit of a drive here this morning, and I didn’t get any coffee along the way.”

He pulls a cup out of one of the metal file cabinets behind his desk, wipes it off with a paper towel and offers it to me, “This should do just fine.”

“Thanks,” I answer, filling my cup with coffee and adding the powdered cream and two packets of sugar.

“I spend a lot of time reading and studying about executives and administration.”

“Oh really, I didn’t know that. What kinds of things are you interested in?”

“Well, there are two or three ideas that I’ve been interested in for quite some time. If you have some time, I’d be very happy to talk about them with you.”

“That would be fine. Is there a particular time today that
and future state regarding funding for Starburst is less than the difference for The International Center for Work. James had to develop completely new sources for funding for the center. Mary worked with colleagues, legislators, and the governor’s office to keep the existing funding formula in effect. In both cases, the problem is open, not closed, since no clearly identifiable right solution exists.

The problem-solving situation for both organizations is non-routine, unstructured, and open with both a deviation and a difference. Categorizing the problem as unique in these ways complicates the problem-solving process. As a result, the

you’d like to get together?”

“Well, I’m really busy today. But maybe we can find a time later?”

“Sure. I’m not hard to find. If I’m not in James’ office, Jackie would know where I am.”

“Good, I’d really like to share some ideas with you.”

“I look forward to our talk. Thanks for the coffee.”

“There’s always a pot on, so just help yourself any time.”

Coffee in hand, I go down the two flights of stairs and return to James’ office.

I sit down in the wooden chair in front of Michelle’s desk to wait for James, feeling a bit awkward as it sticks into the middle of the foyer partially blocking the way for those who walk by. It’s now close to 9:30 AM. Three or four people dribble in, buzzing for entry as they do, and make their way up the winding staircase only to be lost in the upstairs bedrooms that serve as their offices. After a few minutes, from the behind the French doors behind the receptionist, a slim woman emerges, smiling, and says, “James isn’t here yet, would you like to come in?” Gwendolyn ushers me through her office, what was once the formal dining room, and into James’ office, the former living room. Leaving me there to wait, she returns to her office, saying, “James had to
leaders must spend more time in working through the problems they confront.89

Mary is an Eagle because she invests time in all the stages of the problem-solving process. She benefits from her predecessor’s efforts to lay a solid foundation for organizational transformation. As a result, she has few organizational transformation issues requiring her time. Notwithstanding this benefit, Mary chooses to explore fully the stages of the problem-solving model.90

James is more Coyote than either Eagle or Competitor. He is not an Eagle because, unlike Mary, he does not invest significant amounts of time

I take a seat at the small conference table in front of the fireplace, put my briefcase down, and look around. The good-sized room is filled with various souvenirs and collectibles from trips James has taken to Africa on behalf of the agency. Across the mantel of the fireplace and on the top of a built-in bookcase are dolls from African countries, all with black faces and all in traditional attire. Shields, masks, and other tokens of his trips populate the desk, tabletops, and the walls of James’ office. In a few minutes, James arrives.

“Hello, David, I hope you weren’t kept waiting too long? I was taking my daughter to school.”

“Not at all. I was here a bit early, so I had a chance to get some coffee. How have you been?”

“I’ve been fine, how about you?”

“Pretty good, thanks. How are things going? When we met last time, you were in the midst of starting some new initiatives.”

“That’s right, we were. Before we go into that, though, I’d like to ask you something.”

“Sure, what is it?”
in each of the stages of the problem-solving model. James is not a Competitor because he is not preoccupied with “his” ideas and does not see the generation of ideas as competition.

James is like a Coyote in that he overlooks or gives short shrift to stages in the problem-solving model. He frequently identifies and takes initial action upon ideas that occur to him “out of the blue.” He does not wait to think them through fully.

His tendency to act upon intuitive ideas without thinking them through caused problems with his staff. James prides himself on his willingness to “try things, and if...

“Well, last night I had a thought, and I wanted to see what you thought about it.”

“Of course, what happened last night?”

“Well, I was in New York for an awards banquet honoring Reverend Desmond Tutu.”

“From South Africa?”

“Yes. The agency was one of several African American organizations in the United States that honored him for his work. Dr. Adams asked if I wanted to go and represent the agency.”

“That must have been quite an event then?”

“It was, in more than one way.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, first, Reverend Tutu is a marvelous human being, very humble, and very direct. He had a lot of inspiring things to say about South Africa.”

“It must have been wonderful to hear him.”
they don’t work, try something else.”
He announced and implemented ideas only to change them later when he found they didn’t work. The staff had difficulty coping with the repeated starts and stops. Their confidence in him as a leader diminished as a result.

A second aspect of the ability to solve problems concerns obstacles to problem solving.

Obstacles to problem solving

Newman (1995) identifies four obstacles to problem solving: the past, stress, Coyote problem solving,

“It was, he’s truly a saintly man.”

“Saintly?”

“Yes, he’s not just a run-of-the-mill preacher. He has a way about him that’s just special. He’s gentle and very kind in ways that most of us don’t experience much. He really makes you think.”

“About what?”

“Well, about the purpose of the work we’re doing.”

“What do you mean?”

“We really are on a mission here, to make things better for as many people in Africa as we can.”

“But you’ve known that for quite a while.”

“Yes, that’s true, but we sometimes lose sight of that. Reverend Tutu helps us remember that we are here to help others. We’re not just a running a business.”

“Except that you’re trying to run the agency a lot more like a business than ever before.”

“I know, and I want to continue doing that. But that doesn’t mean that we should lose sight of what’s really important.”
and comfort. Each of these limits the problem-solving process. The past provides a framework that “determines much of our perception of what can be done” (Newman, 1995, p. 32). When we rely on our past to solve new problems we are restricted by what we know. What we know may not work for unknown situations.

Stress affects problem solving in two ways. First, it fosters counterproductive responses geared more to reducing stress and solving the problem. Examples include the avoidance of taking risks, short-cutting the generation of new solutions to reduce complexity and uncertainty, and the tendency to overlook disagreements and seek

“Which is?”

“Which is that the only reason we exist is to help others. Sometimes we forget that when we worry about ourselves too much.”

“Have folks here been worrying about themselves too much?”

“I think so.”

“How?”

“As you know, we’ve been trying to find ways to save money ever since we were told we wouldn’t have a steady stream of money coming in anymore.”

“Right, and…”

“And, I thought each of us at the agency should donate some of our salaries back to the agency.”

“Sort of like a tithe, right?”

“Precisely. I donated 10% of my salary. And I expected everyone else to make a similar contribution, but they didn’t.”

“What did they do?”
conformity. Second, stress contributes to the use of tidying behaviors to displace our stress through irrelevant activities such as cleaning a room, arranging chairs, organizing folders, etc. These behaviors don’t solve the problem and inhibit finding effective solutions.

The Coyote approach to solving problems emphasizes action rather than thought and overlooks important steps in the problem-solving process. As a result, activity occurs, but the likelihood for success is diminished.

The fourth obstacle is comfort, the opposite of stress. When comfort is highly valued, there is less willingness to do things that threaten

“Hardly anything.”

“Really?”

“Some of the more senior folks donated $2.00 per paycheck. That’s like less than ½ of one percent.”

“You expected a lot more?”

“Absolutely, it showed me that they didn’t really care about the agency, that they were thinking only of themselves.”

“Oh, why is that?”

“Because if they were thinking of the agency they would have made a larger contribution.”

“Really?”

“I think so. If you were really worried about whether the agency would make it or not, you’d do whatever it takes to help it out. And that includes giving some of your salary back. It shows you really care, that you’re committed.

“That’s a big assumption. You made a connection between commitment and tithing. For you, if a person is committed to the work of the agency, they’d return a significant amount of their salary back to it. But that’s not necessarily the case. It’s just what you think.”
it. As a result, problem solving stays within the comfort zone of preferred or safe solutions and Coyote problem solvers may never attempt other, more effective, solutions.

The four obstacles can be overcome with a shift in perspective. As Newman writes, “The answer is to move yourself to a position which allows you to make a real choice, a piece of ground which gives you perspective from which you can see the whole landscape, and can use your process binoculars to select not only the best route, but also the best destination” (Newman, 1995, p. 33). The leaders in this study demonstrated that perspective.

“I know. That’s sort of what my wife said, too.”

“What did she say?”

“She said that my expectations are too high; I expect people to do what I’d do and that’s not how other people are.”

“Do you think she’s right?”

“I’m afraid so. Sometimes I think that other people think like I do. They don’t.”

“So, what did you do about the tithing?”

“I talked to Dan about it and asked him to talk to the staff.”

“Why?”

“Because I knew I was too close, emotionally, to deal with it well.”

“What happened when he talked with them.”

“I only spoke with him a day or two ago and he’s been out of the office a lot. So he probably hasn’t had a chance to talk with them yet.”

“What are you going to do then, about the tithing?”

“I’m going to wait to see what Dan finds out. Then I’ll look
Mary and James regularly and consistently used outsiders as tools to provide fresh insight. They used consultants and colleagues in the same way. James and Mary hired consultants to assist them with specific tasks. James hired a consultant to assist with the development of proposals and Mary hired a consulting firm to conduct team-building activities. During conversations with the consultants, they asked for the consultants’ viewpoints and opinions.

In addition, Mary and James used colleagues as sounding boards and advisors.

Mary belongs to a professional association of women administrators.

at it again.”

“I see.”

“Something else happened last night.”

“At the awards dinner for Reverend Tutu?”

“Not at the dinner, on the way home.”

“What was that?”

“Well, I had to take a late flight back here from New York and the plane was mostly empty and dark. And I was alone for most of the flight home. It was a good time to just think.”

“So, what did you think about?”

“Nothing.”

“Huh?”

“I wasn’t thinking about anything. I was just being quiet, sitting there alone in the dark when it occurred to me.”

[See left hand column, page 251]

“When what occurred to you?”

“That we ought to merge with the American agency.”
with whom she meets regularly and upon whom she calls for advice and counsel.\textsuperscript{99} James calls colleagues in other organizations and others with whom he had worked in Africa.\textsuperscript{100}

They both sought advice and feedback from the researcher, too. Throughout the study they asked for observations, analysis, and recommendations. They used the researcher as a vehicle for obtaining information and insight not available to them inside their organizations.\textsuperscript{101}

These examples demonstrate Mary and James’ efforts to broaden their perspective and therefore overcome the obstacles to problem solving identified by Newman (1995). Their

“Really? It just sort of popped into your mind?”

“Yes.”

“Does it make any sense?”

“It makes a lot of sense.”

“Why?”

“For a couple of reasons, mostly economic.”

“Like…”

“Like we could reduce our overhead expenses. Right now, we run two central offices, the American one, and the one we have here that works internationally. There’s really not enough work for both offices.”

“How do you know that?”

“My wife works at the American office, in downtown, and from what she says, there’s not a lot of work going on.”

“Unlike here.”

“Yes, I think we’re pretty busy. Now that we’ve cut staff and reorganized, we’re a lot busier. But that’s not the real reason for merging.”
efforts led to varying results, however, since Mary and James differ in their ability to apply the data collected via this process (see discussion above regarding Mary as an Eagle and James as a Coyote).

The third aspect influencing how Mary and James solve problems is a uniqueness they bring to the process.

Their uniqueness in problem solving

The problem-solving styles and means of overcoming obstacles to problem solving identified by Newman (1995) do not cover all the aspects of problem solving demonstrated by the leaders. The leaders exhibited

“What is?”

“There are two, really.”

“What are they?”

“One is that we’d both save money because we wouldn’t have two offices to run. With just one office, we could do the work of both offices with a lot fewer people.”

“So, it’s an efficiency question?”

“In part that’s true, but it’s more than that.”

“What else?”

“It has to do with money raising. We could do a better job of raising money if we did it jointly.”

“Why is that?”

“Right now, it’s very confusing. They have local offices all across the United States and each of the offices raises money on its own. In addition, we have our offices here, and we raise money too, under a similar name. They’re the Center for Work in Detroit, or the Center for Work in Chicago, and we’re the International Center for Work.

“I see what you mean.”
additional, distinctive aspects of problem solving not covered above. Mary and James brought elements to the problem-solving process resulting from their experience as professionals and as leaders of organizations. \( ^{102} \)

First, the leaders in this study have a large number of organizations and individuals with which they come in contact on a regular basis. \( ^{103} \) As leaders of important organizations and as individuals who themselves have earned doctorates, many of their personal contacts are highly educated, experienced, and skilled. As a result, the range and depth of potential resources upon which they can call is quite large.

“But it gets worse. Reverend Lincoln founded both the U.S. Centers for Work and the International Center for Work. He’s no longer up north, he moved to Florida and started the Foundation for Human Dignity.”

“What does the foundation do?”

“Well, it’s a sort of an umbrella agency. It has a much broader mission. The Foundation raises money, too, but the projects it works on aren’t limited to just jobs like what we do or the U.S. Centers.”

“Is there a direct connection?”

“Sort of, but not really.”

“Huh?”

“Well, it is connected in that Reverend Lincoln started it, just like us. A lot of staff there used to work here and vice versa. And, sometimes they give us money to work on parts of projects they’ve gotten.”

“So, you’re a subsidiary.”

“No, it’s not that clear. There is a good deal of overlap between the staff and the work of the two organizations, but they’re separate.”
(Their uniqueness in problem solving – continued)

Second, many of the people they engage with are people with whom they have had long relationships. As a result, the people are willing to engage in detailed conversations and explore and analyze options. They know Mary’s and James’ situations well enough to evaluate the options under consideration with insight and background.\(^{104}\)

Third, the leaders have time to invest in problem solving that others in the organization do not have. Mary and James are unconstrained by routine activities, unlike their staff members who have day-to-day responsibilities.\(^{105}\) Moreover, Mary and James, as the organizations’

“You’re right, it’s not that clear. What did you mean, ‘a lot of the staff there used to work here?’”

“Well, for example, Reverend Lincoln’s son used to work here, but now he works there. And pretty soon he’ll be back here again.”

“How does that happen?”

“Well, for a while, he was here because the Reverend wanted him to learn more about what we did. But it didn’t work out.”

“Why?”

“To be honest, my predecessor thought he was a spy for the Reverend and did everything he could to keep him out of the loop.”

“Really?!”

“Yes, it got to be rather crazy. Eventually, the Reverend brought him back to Florida, but he’ll be back soon.”

“Why? If he had such a problem last time, why bring him back?”

“Because the problem was my predecessor. Now I’m here, so we won’t have that problem.”
(Their uniqueness in problem solving - continued)

leaders, have license to break the rules. They devote more time to the problem-solving process than other people in the organization can devote.  

Fourth, as the leaders of their organizations, they have more authority to try new things. Within the parameters established by their boards, Mary and James do not have to seek permission before undertaking new things. Consequently, they can put new alternatives into operation quickly, and, if needed, discontinue them, as well.

“‘What’s he going to do? I thought you were cutting staff because of the money problem?’”

“‘That’s true, but the Reverend wants his son to take over this agency when I’m done.’”

“‘So, it’s a training session. You’re supposed to break in your successor.’”

“‘Sort of, yes.’”

“‘How do you feel about that?’”

“‘It’s fine. I’m not going to be here that much longer, so it’ll work out.’”

“‘Not here that much longer? What do you mean?’”

“‘Well… I’m only here for a few years. I didn’t ask for this job, and I’ll be ready to move on soon.’”

“‘You didn’t ask for the job?’”

“‘No.’”

“‘How did you get it, then?’”

“‘Reverend Lincoln asked me if I would do it. So I took the job.’”
(Their uniqueness in problem solving – continued)

These elements combine to create a uniqueness of problem solving that does not exist for others in their organizations. They have access to a wide array of knowledgeable resources; they have time to invest; and, they have the authority to make changes.

The three aspects of problem solving are summarized below.

**Problem-solving styles**

- Mary is an Eagle, she uses all the stages.
- James is a Coyote, he skips some of the stages.

“That’s it, he asked and you accepted?”

“Yes. If Reverend Lincoln wanted me to do it, then I should do it.”

“Really? Why is that?”

Well, I don’t know really. I’d worked overseas for several years and then I came back here.”

“Overseas? I didn’t know you’d been overseas, except as the CEO of the agency.”

“I’d been in Africa for about eight years when I came back to work in this office. And then, when things weren’t working out with my predecessor, Reverend Lincoln asked me to take over. And when Reverend Lincoln asks, you don’t say no.”

“Why?”

“Have you ever met the Reverend?”

“No, I haven’t.”

“He’s the most charismatic men I’ve ever met. He has a vision and commitment to helping others that is truly inspiring. All you have to do is spend a little time with him and you’ll understand. I’ve never met anyone like him.”

“Sounds like you’re very impressed with him.”
Obstacles to problem solving

- Mary and James call upon outsiders to broaden their perspective by providing fresh, new insights and ideas.

Uniqueness of problem solving

- They have a wide array of people and organizations to call on.
- They have long-term relationships with colleagues and friends who provide wise counsel.
- They have time to invest in problem solving, unfettered by daily, routine demands.
- They have the authority (and license) to experiment.

“Absolutely. I don’t know anyone who isn’t.”

“So, because he asked you, you took the job?”

“Right.”

“No questions, no concerns.”

“If the Reverend thought I should do it, I’d do it.”

“Just like that.”

“Yes, just like that.”

“It seems a bit unusual that someone, you or anyone else, would take on a job like this just because someone else asked you to do it.”

“I don’t think it’s unusual.”

“Really, why is that?”

“I’ve done it before.”

“When?”

“Lot’s of times.”

“Like?”
While Mary and James use these three aspects of problem solving, there is still more to discuss. Other factors affect how Mary and James transform organizations and solve problems.

**Personal attributes**

Three attributes influence the process these two leaders use to transform organizations and solve problems. The personal attributes provide additional insight into how Mary and James solve problems that is not captured in the model provided by Newman (1995).

One attribute is the use of

“When I went to college, I didn’t want to go. I only went because my mother told me to.”

“That’s it, your mother said, ‘James, I want you to go to college’ and you went?”

“Yes. I didn’t want to go. I wanted to follow my older brother.”

“What did your older brother do?”

“He went into the Army right out of high school, and I wanted to do that, too. But my mother told me to go to college, so I went.”

“This is really hard for me to grasp. It’s so unlike my experience. When I was 18, if my mother told me to do something, I’d more than likely not do it. I was much more rebellious than you. So, it’s hard for me to relate to what you said.”

“That’s you, not me. If someone told me to do something, I’d do it.”

“No questions asked?”

“That’s right. I owed it to them.”

“Owed?”

(Unique ness in problem solving - continued)
intuition. Problem solving may appear
to be a logical, rational, linear
process. It is not. Aspects of the
process are highly intuitive and
unconscious.

At times, the leaders found ideas
much like the proverbial flickering
light bulb. More than once, the
leaders discussed solutions or ideas
that came to them intuitively. In one
case, the idea came while sitting in a
dark plane late at night after
attending a gala celebration out of
town. In another case the idea came
while driving to work in a
snowstorm. Neither leader could
explain where the idea came from other
than to say the idea came to them out
of the blue.

“Yes. It was my obligation.”

“Sort of a sense of duty.”

“That’s right. It’s my duty.”

“So, you went to college and you took this job out of sense of
duty?”

“Absolutely.”

“And that’s all right?”

“Of course. You have to have faith.”

“Faith? Faith in what?”

“You have to have faith in God that things will work out.
You don’t always know what’s right or what’s wrong. But
you can trust that if you do the right thing, things will work
out.”

“So it doesn’t matter that someone else told you what to do
because in the long run, because of your faith in God, things
will work out for the best?”

“Yes. But that’s not all.”

“What else?”
Intuition contributes additional, non-rational forms of solution generation to the problem-solving process. As a result, the leaders expand the range of solutions to consider when solving problems.¹¹¹

A second attribute is a belief in God. Both leaders pray daily. They say that without prayer, they could not do their work.¹¹²

Prayer is a means of connecting to a being greater than themselves whose support, albeit silent and assumed, is critical to their success.

“I pray every day.”

“Pray? When do you pray?”

“I pray in the morning before I come to work.”

“What do you pray for?”

“I pray for help. I think about what we’re going through here, and I pray for God’s help.”

“Does it help?”

“Yes, it does.”

“How?”

“I couldn’t do this work alone, it’s not easy. Prayer gives me the strength to go on.”

“It’s interesting that you mentioned prayer. In my interviews with Mary, the other leader I’m following, she also prays every day.”

“I’m not surprised.”

“I was. I didn’t expect to have both of you talk about the
The leaders attribute to God the support they need to continue on a path filled with challenges and obstacles. God sustains them emotionally and spiritually.\textsuperscript{113}

Given the stress and responsibility in their lives, the leaders’ need for support is understandable. The fact that both of the leaders in this study rely on prayer for that support is a surprising finding. The researcher had not anticipated it. After the leaders’ use of prayer was identified, however, other references were found that explored the relationship between spirituality and leadership (Bolman and Deal, 1995, Griffin, 1993, Hawley, 1993, Moore, 1991, Whyte, 1994).

importance of prayer.”

“What did you think?”

“I don’t know. I knew that I believed in God, and I’ve trusted that things would work out in my life when I didn’t know what to expect. I just didn’t expect it to come up in my research with you and Mary.”

“But it did.”

“Yes, it was unexpected, but at the same time, I should have expected it because there were signs of it.”

“What signs?”

“In your case, the signs were a bit more obvious.”

“What were they?”

“Well, the agency was started by Reverend Lincoln, that right there is a big clue. Any organization started by a minister is likely to have a spiritual aspect to it, don’t you think?”

“I guess so. What else?”

“Do you remember the last time I was here, the card you had on your desk? It said, on the outside, in large letters, ‘I’ve got you covered’ and on the inside, “with prayer.””
The third attribute is a wealth of experience in their field of endeavor that informs their thinking, actions, and decisions. Their problem solving at times looks haphazard or lacking rigor. What is not seen, however, is the extent to which the leaders use their experience in the field to categorize and rate options. This process is rarely explicit.114

The leaders regularly rejected options presented or discussed by others.

“Yes, I know. But those are two signs that I could have read. In Mary’s case, the signs were different.”

“What were they?”

“The first was how some of her staff talked.”

“What do you mean?”

“When you listen to some of her staff, they use language that suggests there’s something spiritual going on.”

“Like what?”

“Some of them use words like, ‘the energy around here,’ or ‘she has a certain way of being,’ or ‘there’s something special about her.’”

“In and of themselves, that doesn’t sound that religious.”

“It isn’t, on the surface. And it’s not religious as much as it’s spiritual.”

“What’s the difference?”

“For me, the difference is that religious has to do with a particular religious tradition, like Baptists or Catholics. And spiritual conveys a more general sense of the divine that is
answered, “I knew it wouldn’t work.”

(Personal attributes - continued)

James agreed, when the researcher asked him why he rejected certain ideas, he responded, “After all these years, I just knew.” When pressed for further explanation, the two leaders provided specific instances when similar options failed to produce the desired result.

This process applied to the selection of options as well. In some cases the leaders focused their attention on one or two choices. Later, when asked to explain, they indicated that the choices they focused on had the best chance of success and were able to give reasons for their decisions. Unless they were asked, they did not explain their not connected to any church or mosque, or whatever.”

“So, how are words like ‘energy’ and ‘something special’ spiritual?”

“When you talk with the folks who use those words, and ask them what they mean, they say that she has a belief in a greater power, though they don’t always use the word God, that influences what she does.”

“I see. Did you talk to her about that?”

“Yes, I did.”

“And what did she say?”

“Well, that goes to the second sign that I saw.”

“Which is?”

“Which is that she used her bout with cancer as a spiritual journey.”

“She had cancer?”

“Yes, a few years ago. And, when she was dealing with it, she and her former husband took it as an opportunity to delve deeply into their spiritual life.”

“That makes sense.”
decisions.\textsuperscript{119}

(Personal attributes - continued)

Thus, in the course of their work the leaders made decisions (to reject or select some options) without making explanations to others. Without such explanations, their decision-making process appears haphazard and uninformed. The apparent lack of rigor is deceiving, however, since the leaders rely on extensive personal experience in the process. The experience is not immediately obvious to others. With probing questions, the underlying explanations and support for their decisions can be identified.\textsuperscript{120}

The personal attributes are summarized below.

“I think so, too. Her struggle with cancer became, in part, a vehicle for her to become more connected to the divine. And now she feels closer to God that ever before, and it shows in her daily life. I think that’s what her staff sees.”

“I can’t see that it could be any other way.”

“She doesn’t really wear her beliefs on her sleeve, though. It’s noticeable in how she behaves, but it’s subtle. It’s there, but you won’t see it unless you look for it.”

“You don’t have to be outspoken to live a religious life.”

“That’s clearly the case with Mary, and I think with you, too.”

“I would say so.”

“I’d like to go back to something you mentioned when we first began this conversation. We’ve covered a lot of ground here, and I don’t want to lose track of some things you said.”

“OK, sure. What did I say?”

“You mentioned that there were two reasons why the international agency and the American agencies should merge. And then you identified that you could be more efficient because you’d only have one central office, not two, or more.”
Personal Attributes

- Intuition influences learning by providing an additional, non-linear method for generating ideas, solutions, etc.
- A belief in God influences learning by providing the leaders with the inner resolve and support they need to continue despite obstacles and challenges.
- A wealth of experience influences learning by providing an intellectual, emotional, and experiential backdrop to the work they do, thereby assisting in the selection of choices they make.

“Yes. That’s right.”

“What was the other reason?”

“The other reason has to do with how we raise money.”

“How do you mean?”

“Well, right now, there are several agencies all over the country trying to raise money to fund our operations. And there’s a good deal of overlap. We all talk to some of the same people. There’s a lot of redundancy.”

“For example?”

“For example, each of the American agencies, one in every large city in America, develops its own money raising programs, its own brochures, its own mailing lists. And that’s just the American agencies. Then there’s us and the Foundation. That’s a lot of time and money spent that’s wasted.”

“Because you all repeat many of the same activities, like the brochure development.”

“Right. And not only that, but I’d guess that we all know the same people and organizations. So, there are probably a lot of folks who are contacted more than once. That can’t be good for our image.”
The foregoing discussion describes and explores the mental model of the leaders that is dominated by preoccupation with their work. This discussion thus far has not addressed the learning of leaders.

Adult Education Concepts

The mental model of the leaders is the foundation upon which their decisions and actions are based. The work-dominated mental model, as discussed above, has not taken into consideration the adult education concepts. It may appear from the preceding discussion that there is little connection between the work of

“What would be good?”

“Well, I think if we joined forces, combined the organizations, we could save money on those things we repeat and do a better job of coordinating our fundraising programs. It’s got to be better than what we have now.”

“So, how do you go about doing that?”

“It’s not my decision.”

“Whose decision is it?”

“Reverend Lincoln’s.”

“Have you talked with him about it?”

“No, I just thought about it last night on the plane ride from New York.”

“Are you going to?”

“Yes. Matter of fact, I’ll give him a call now.”

“Now?”

“Sure.”
leaders and learning. However, that is not the case.

(Art Adult Education Concepts – continued)

In the next section, the discussion continues by exploring the relationship between selected adult education concepts and the leaders in this study. The leaders in this study demonstrate the use of three concepts in adult education literature: self-direction, learning from experience, and reflection. The three concepts were isolated and related to the work of the leaders only after the mental model was delineated by the researcher and the leaders.  

**Self-direction**

Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) define self-direction as both a

“OK.”

James looks on his desk for the Reverend’s number and dials the number. After a brief delay, he says,

“Hello, this is James Johnson, is Reverend Lincoln in?”

James begins to talk with the Reverend. As he does, I excuse myself and go up to Lon’s office to get another cup of coffee. When I return, he’s still on the phone. The conversation lasts another minute, with James ending the call by saying,

“Thank you Reverend Lincoln, I’ll be talking with you soon.”

“So, how did it go?”

“He said he wanted to think about it.”

“What does that mean?”

“It means that he hasn’t made up his mind yet, and he wants some time to think about it.”

“Do you think he’ll go for it?”

“I really can’t say.”

“Is he really going to think about it, or is that just a subterfuge?”
process and a personal characteristic. The first of these aspects, self-
(Self-direction – continued)
direction as process “centers on the activities of planning, implementing, and evaluating learning” (Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991, p. 28) and does not apply to the leaders in this study.

Mary and James do not see themselves as learners, nor do they actively engage in planning, implementing, or evaluating their learning. At no time during the study did the two leaders proactively anticipate and plan for their learning.\textsuperscript{122} Quite the contrary, the leaders’ lack of awareness of and attention to their learning is what triggered the change in focus of the study.

“No, he’ll think about it. But at the same time, you don’t know if he’ll decide to do anything or not.”

“Why is that?”

“It’s just that if he doesn’t want to take any action, he won’t. You just never know.”

“So, where does that leave you?”

“I planted the idea, now I just have to let it grow for a while. Maybe something will sprout and maybe it won’t, but at least I took the first step.”

“And that’s OK with you?”

“Of course. Sometimes the best thing you can do is just try something, to see if it works. And if it works, fine, if not, try something else.”

“So, the key is to just keep trying and see which ones work out?”

“That’s right. You never know which things will work and which ones won’t. So, just keep trying.”

“But, it’s also OK to change, right?”

[Click to go to page 271]
The second aspect of self-direction, as a personal characteristic, “refers to characteristics of an individual that predispose one toward taking primary responsibility for personal learning endeavors” (Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991, p. 29). This aspect of self-direction applies to the leaders, but only in that they take personal responsibility for something. What the leaders are responsible for is their work, not their learning.\textsuperscript{123}

The leaders demonstrate one of the two dimensions of self-direction as defined by Brockett & Hiemstra (1991). The leaders demonstrate

“\textbf{Yes. You know, a lot of people think that it’s wrong to change your mind. I know, I’ve been criticized for changing my mind.”}

“\textbf{Really? By whom?”}

“By members of the staff. They think that once I make a decision, I should stick to it, no matter what.”

“But you disagree?”

“Of course. Sometimes things don’t work out, so you have to change. It would be a bigger mistake to stick with something that’s not working than to change your mind. But they don’t see it that way.”

“And is that a problem?”

“Not for me.”

“Why is that?”

“Because I don’t let what they think bother me. And besides, I know it’s better to try something and have to change than not to try anything. So, it’s all right.”

“How do you know if something is working out?”

“After a while, you know if something is working or not by
personal responsibility, but only as it applies to their work.
(Self-direction - continued)

Self-direction is not the only adult education concept to address. The second adult education concept to be discussed in relation to the leaders in this study is learning from experience.

Learning from experience

As is the case with self-direction, learning from experience is different for the leaders in this study because of their mental model. The following example demonstrates how one leader in the study learns from experience and how her learning is related and subservient to her work.

whether or not it makes a difference in how the organization works.”

“So, it’s results that determine if it’s working or not?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

“Well, we’ve covered a lot of ground this morning. I was wondering if we might look ahead to the rest of the day to see what’s going on.”

“Of course. Let’s look at what’s on my schedule for today. At noon, there’s a board meeting and later this afternoon we’re having a staff meeting. I imagine you’d be interested in sitting in on those, right?”

“Yes, they both would be good opportunities to see you in situations I haven’t observed before. Is there anything else that might be worthwhile?”

“Well, I have several calls to make and I’ll be talking with some of the staff, but I’m not sure that would be as valuable to you.”

“You’re probably right. Is there anyone in the staff that I might talk with that I already haven’t met?”

“Let’s see. You’ve talked with Jackie and Dan, haven’t you?”
Mary hired a second-in-command, Dr. James Goodling, to perform the function for her that she had performed for her predecessor. She wanted him to administer the internal operations of Starburst so she could concentrate on the external relations.124

Dr. Goodling, as a former school superintendent, had credibility with the school districts which Starburst served and had a reputation as a long-range planner. Mary chose him partly because these attributes enhanced the reputation of Starburst (due to his experience as a superintendent) and provide an additional service to the

“Yes, the last time I was here.”

“How about talking with Billie, she’s our new fiscal officer? You haven’t talked with her yet, have you?”

“No, not yet.”

“Why don’t I give her a call and see if she can speak with you now, before the board meets?”

“That’s fine”

James dials Billie’s extension and says,

“Billie, this is James. How are you? I have David Ambrose in my office, he’s the consultant who’s following me as part of his doctoral research. We’re wondering if you might have time to talk with him now? OK, thanks.”

Hanging up the phone, he turns to me,

“She’ll be in her office, in the carriage house behind us, whenever you’re ready. Just drop by.”

“Good. Thanks.”

“I guess that’s it for now. You’ll have to excuse me for a while as I make some phone calls. We spent more time talking that I had thought.”
Soon after he joined, however, she began to see signs of trouble. The first sign she noticed was how he ran meetings. According to Mary, Dr. Goodling ran meetings in an authoritative style. He held tight control over the meetings, provided little opportunity for others to participate, and dismissed or belittled the comments of others.

His approach conflicted with the participative, nurturing style that Mary had established as the norm for the organization. Mary had spent several years developing her skills as a facilitative leader and applying those skills to how she ran meetings.

“Of course, I’ll find my way to Billie’s office.”

“Good, see you at noon.”

James went to his desk to begin his phone calls and I went back to the front lobby and the adjoining restroom. In the lobby was a large staircase that started near Michelle’s desk, went up several stairs toward the front of the house and the stained-glass windows, made right turn along the outside wall, and turned again to reach the balcony that overlooks the lobby.

Tucked under the staircase and off to the left was a small bathroom. The door was made of the same paneling as the wall, so that the entrance was not obvious. Once inside, the hexagonal tiles on the floor and cramped spaces reminded me of a similar bathroom in the old house that I grew up in 600 miles away, in Rochester, NY.

The similarities brought back memories from my youth. A notable difference in my house was the large safe hidden behind another paneled door inside the bathroom. I spent many a summer afternoon attempting to open the safe, imagining all the while the illicit treasures I might find. Needless to say, I never was able to open it.

Leaving the restroom, I put on my coat and headed for the front door. Once outside, I turned right, along the side of the house and under the carport attached to the house, and headed to the back corner of the lot where the carriage house stood.
In addition, she developed in the staff a belief in and commitment to collaborative problem solving which relied on participative meetings. Dr. Goodling’s approach contrasted with Mary’s long-standing efforts to develop Starburst’s collaborative problem-solving style.¹²⁷

When Dr. Goodling first started, Mary noticed the difference in their styles, but took no action. But when several members of the staff told Mary of their experiences in meetings run by Dr. Goodling, she began to reconsider her decision. The staff members’ comments triggered a concern on her part that Dr. Goodling’s approach was undermining the effectiveness of Starburst. As a result, when several members of the staff told Mary of their experiences in meetings run by Dr. Goodling, she began to reconsider her decision. The staff members’ comments triggered a concern on her part that Dr. Goodling’s approach was undermining the effectiveness of Starburst.

The carriage house at one time had room for two cars in addition to having an apartment for the chauffeur. Now, however, it held the offices of the finance staff. The main part of the building was open and held two or three desks and a conference table. Tucked into what formerly had been the apartment were two other small offices. Billie was in one of the smaller offices.

Billie, a bright, smiling woman in her thirties, welcomed me into her office, saying, “Well, I was wondering if you got lost. It’s nearly 11:20. I was ready to send out the troopers to look for you.”

“You know how it is, put me in a strange place and I’m lost without a map. Besides, who’d of thought that they’d put the finance group out here in Siberia. Sort of like an internal exile, don’t you think?”

“Oh sure, start by ragging on me for being out here. It wasn’t my decision. But really, it has its good and bad points.”

“Really, what might they be?”

“It’s nice to be away from the politics and pettiness that go on in the big house. Here, we can just focus on getting our job done. And that’s pretty good.”

“OK, there are some good points, what about the flip side?”
result, she began a two-year process to solve the problem.\textsuperscript{128}

(Learning from experience - continued)

Over the course of two years, Mary initiated several activities to overcome what she identified as a problem. She talked with Dr. Goodling repeatedly to raise her concerns with him. The two of them discussed their respective positions at length and in several discussions during the two years. Mary suggested, unsuccessfully, that he try other approaches. She discussed the “problem” with colleagues from outside the organization.\textsuperscript{129}

As the two years progressed, her feelings, concerns, and approaches evolved. Several factors contributed to the change. First, her staff

“Sometimes you feel a bit isolated, kind of like being an outsider.”

“Is that a problem?”

“Yes and no. It’s related to the politics, sort of.”

“In what way?”

“James in trying to make changes, and he needs to make more. But there’s a whole lot of shenanigans going on in there that mess things up.”

“Like what?”

“Well, I keep telling him that we have too many staff for the work we do. And he listens to me. But then, when he tries to do something about it, somehow things get stuck.”

“Stuck?”

“Yeah, stuck. You know how it is, it’s just dealing with kids.”

“How do you mean?”

“Do you have kids?”

“Yes, I’ve got two sons.”
continued to complain and to do so with increasing urgency and anger. (Learning from experience - continued)

Second, outsiders reinforced her concerns about the impact Dr. Goodling had on the organization. Superintendents of the school districts served by Starburst expressed their reservations about Dr. Goodling’s suitability as Mary’s assistant. Mary concluded her efforts to encourage Dr. Goodling to develop a participative approach had failed.

As a result, Mary evolved from feeling somewhat displeased with Dr. Goodling to feeling frustrated over her inability to get him to reform. The level of concern moved from her being aware of a possible problem to becoming highly concerned that Dr.

“How old are they?”

“One is 19, the other is 23.”

“Then you know what I mean.”

“Not yet.”

“Look, I’m a single mom, I’ve got three kids, all younger than yours. Haven’t you noticed that there are times when you recognize that your kids are doing things that don’t make any sense?”

“Of course.”

“And when you realize it, you try to help them out right?”

“Yes.”

“And what happens then?”

“Well, in my case, the situation is a bit complicated, but they don’t always listen to their father.”

“Exactly! Frustrating, isn’t it?”

“Absolutely.”

“Well, it’s the same here. No matter how much I try to get James to cut staff, he just can’t get around to it. He knows
Goodling was destroying the teamwork she had worked to build within the organization and was undermining the reputation of the organization with key stakeholders, school superintendents. Her approach evolved from subtle suggestions to direct confrontation. She replaced general discussions about differences in style with clear expectations for conducting meetings differently.131

The two-year problem-solving odyssey ended when Dr. Goodling tendered his resignation and took a job as a school district superintendent in another part of the state.132

This example demonstrates how one that he has to, but he gets caught.”

[Click to go to page 262]

“How does he get caught?”

“He listens to others.”

“How? I don’t think I understand. A minute ago, you said that he listened to you, and I sort of concluded that you thought that was good.”

“I did.”

“But now you’re saying that it’s not good to listen.”

Laughing, she says,

“But he should listen to me, not to them.”

Smiling, I respond,

“Oh, I get it. It’s good when he listens to you and bad when he listens to others, right?”

“Yup, you’ve got it now.”

“Aside of the obvious contradiction, why shouldn’t he listen to others?”
leader in this study learns from experience using many of the characteristics Kolb (1984) describes: learning is a process; learning is continuous and grounded in experience; learning entails the interaction between action and reflection; learning is a holistic adaptation to the world; learning involves interaction with the environment, and; learning is created not acquired.

Mary used a process, a problem-solving process, for learning. Her process was continuous and grounded in experience, not hypothetical or conceptual. She alternated between action and reflection. Mary interacted with the environment as she engaged with superintendents, staff

“He shouldn’t listen to others when what they’re telling him is motivated only by their desire to save their jobs or to maintain the status quo, not to do what the agency needs to do to survive.”

“Is that what you mean by ‘politics?’”

“Yes, James is very dedicated and means well. But he’s too nice.”

“How can someone be ‘too nice?’”

“Easy. How many times have your kids asked you for something they wanted, and wanted really badly, but you said ‘no’ to?”

“Lots of times. Why?”

“Did they like you then?”

“No, of course not. But I wasn’t trying to be liked.”

“Exactly, sometimes you tell your kids ‘no’ because it’s the right thing to do.”

“Yes.”

“Well, I think James is too nice because sometimes he listens to people rather than just say no. If it were me, I’d have gotten rid of people a long time ago.”
members, and colleagues. She developed new and revised old understanding of the problem, its impact on the organization, and means of solution.

James learns from experience, too. Although his situation differs, James also uses problem solving as the process through which learning occurs. In his case, the major problems he faced concerned overcoming resistance to transforming and developing new revenue sources for the center.\textsuperscript{133}

Mary and James learn from experience. The learning occurs as they solve problems. Their learning is embedded in their work, not separate from it. To paraphrase

“Really?”

“Oh, absolutely. That’s a big difference between James and me.”

“That you’d get rid of people who don’t belong?”

“It’s strictly a business decision. Look, I’m in finance, and I came here from a small business. In the business world, if you’re not making money, you cut expenses or increase revenues, or both.”

“But James is working on both, isn’t he?”

“Yes, but there comes a time when you gotta fish or cut bait.”

“So, what you’re saying is that you’re more of a financial hardliner than James?”

“No doubt about it. I’d have cut people a long time ago.”

“How else are you different from James?”

“Look, don’t make it sound like I don’t like James, or that I don’t think he’s doing a good job. That’s not it at all.”

“Sorry, I didn’t think I was drawing that conclusion. I really wanted to find out how you perceived James, and since you started the way you did, I just followed that path.”
Lindemann (1926), problem solving and 

(Learning from experience - continued)

the learning that emanates from it is coterminus with life.

Leaders learn from experience. Their learning does not occur in isolation, however; it occurs in a specific location, in a particular context.

The influence of context

Candy (1991) offers important distinctions having to do with the influence of the environment (context). He describes four strands of research, one of which is applicable here. Learning is context dependent in that the groups to which

“OK, I just don’t want you to think that James and I don’t get along, or that I don’t like working here.”

“I got it. Look, in my research, I’m trying to find out what happens as James tries to transform the agency. I’m only interested in the politics and dynamics insofar as they influence what he’s trying to do.”

“All right, I see. I really like James, his heart is in the right place.”

“What do you like about him?”

“Well, for one, like I already said, I like that he listens to me.”

“For example?”

“No matter what I want to see him about, if I want to see James, he’ll take the time to see me and listen to what I have to say. And he’ll really listen.”

“How do you mean, ‘really listen?’”

“He doesn’t just sit there. He’s asking questions to be sure he understands.”

“I see.”
one belongs influence what and how people learn. In particular, the expectations of others influence learning.

In the case of the leaders in this study, the roles they play in their organizations include expectations that influence learning. As leaders, Mary and James are in charge. They make decisions and take actions that determine what others do.

Part of what Mary and James tell others to do is learn. They tell their staff members to learn new jobs, new skills, and new behaviors. And in Mary’s case, she teaches others how to do things. Mary and James are in charge of the learning of their staff.

“Now, he doesn’t always agree with you, but that’s not the most important thing. What’s important is that you know you can always go to him and he’ll listen.”

“And what else?”

“He’ll take what you’ve talked about and take it to the next step.”

“How does he do that?”

“For example, if I bring him an idea for saving money, he won’t just listen to it and then let it drop. He’ll take the idea and talk about it with others to see what their reaction is and see what they think.”

“So, your idea just doesn’t die on the vine?”

“Yeah, sort of. Sometimes ideas aren’t any good and won’t work out. But James is good at spreading ideas around like that.”

“Are there other things he does well?”

“Sure. I really like the way he tries new things. He’s not afraid to take a risk.”

“Take a risk?”
members, just as they are in charge of their respective organizations.
(The influence of context – continued)

In only one instance did any of the staff members assume the role of teacher with Mary or James or offer to provide advice. The lone exception is Dr. Carl Goodling with whom Mary disagreed about styles of leadership. He perceived that he had things to teach Mary (and Starburst) about leadership. All the other staff members of Mary and James accepted the roles of student and subordinate. All the other staff members of Mary and James accepted the roles of student and subordinate. The expectations for the leaders’ learning may be influenced by the roles within the organizations. One argument is that as leaders, Mary and James are expected to know and the staff is expected to learn. The

“Yup, he tries new things all the time.”

“Like?”

“Well, one of the things James did when he first got here was to create an Executive Committee.”

“An Executive Committee?”

“Yes. You see, his predecessor made most of the decisions for the agency and he made them alone. People didn’t like that.”

“I can understand why.”

“Right, so can I. Anyway, to make sure that he didn’t make the same mistake, James created an Executive Committee of four other people from the agency and he’d use them to run ideas by.”

“Kind of like a sounding board.”

“Precisely. Now he has a group of people he can use to help him gauge the value of ideas and he doesn’t isolate himself like his predecessor did.”

“It makes sense.”

“Right. I think so, too.”
converse may not be the case. That is, for the leader to be a learner and (The influence of context – continued)

the subordinate to be a teacher may be inconsistent. If the roles are rigid and irreversible, then the staff members would not expect Mary and James to be learners.

The behaviors of the staff members support this argument since at no time did any of the staff members, except for Dr. Goodling, assume the role of teacher with Mary or James. As a result, the possibility that subordinates can contribute to the learning of leaders, as recommended by Chaleff (1995), is not borne out in this study. These two leaders are expected to know, not learn.\textsuperscript{138}

“So, he tries new things like that…”

“All the time.”

“What else does he do that you like?”

“He gives people a chance.”

“What do you mean?”

“He allows you to take on responsibility without constantly looking over your shoulder.”

“That sounds good.”

“It is, because then you can concentrate on getting the work done.”

“I know what you mean, I had a boss who told me I could do things, and spent all his time looking in on me and asking questions and making suggestions. He couldn’t really let go. It drove me nuts because I couldn’t get anything done.”

“Well, James is not that way. If he says you can do it, he lets you do it without interference. He doesn’t have to be involved in everything. He does that with every one. I think that’s one of the reasons so many of us like him.”

“I can understand why.”
Moreover, learning is not reflected in the language of the leaders. They don’t talk about themselves as learners; rather, they describe themselves as leaders and problem solvers.\textsuperscript{139}

Thus, the context in which the leaders operate, particularly the expectations and behaviors of the staff members, influence the leaders’ learning. Now, the discussion returns to the third adult education concept, reflection.

Reflection

Reflection takes many forms. This discussion will address three aspects of reflection that pertain to

“Do you know what time it is?”

“Why?”

“Aren’t you going to the board meeting?”

“Yes.”

“It’s supposed to start at noon and it’s almost that now, you’d better get over there.”

“You’re right, I should go.”

“No problem.”

“I hate to say this, but you sound just like my mother, reminding me to leave so I won’t be late for school.”

Laughing, Billie responded,

“Once a mother, always a mother.”

“Well, ‘mom,’ thanks.”

“Not at all, I’m glad I could help.”

Putting on my coat, I walked over to the house for the board meeting. Once inside, I entered the foyer where Michelle sat and ran into James as he was coming out of the room where
the leaders in this study. The first

(Cell and Mezirow distinguish between reflection that occurs during an event and that which occurs afterward. The second form of reflection, since the individual is removed from the situation, allows for individuals to revise interpretations. This aspect of reflection is akin to Mezirow’s (1991) transformative learning in which meaning schemes or perspectives are transformed. Cell and Mezirow distinguish the dimensions of reflection according to the result that is achieved via the reflection."

the meeting was scheduled. He turned to me, saying,

“That room is too cold, and it will take quite a while for it too heat up. Some of the board members are older and I don’t want them getting chilled. We’re going to relocate the meeting in my office.”

“Do you want some help setting up?”

“That would be a lot of help, thanks.”

“What would you like me to do?”

“Why don’t you set up the room for the food? There are napkins, plastic forks and things in the copy room.”

“No problem. How many people are coming?”

“I think there should be seven or eight.”

“OK.”

I go into the copy room, formerly the kitchen, a fairly large room still filled with cabinets and counters. Now, however, inside the cabinets are paper supplies, files, and miscellaneous other items from the agency that needed to be stored. Off to one side is a copier and a soft drink vending machine. A small table sits in the center of the room; it serves as a makeshift lunch table for some of the staff who don’t eat at their desks.
Most adult development theorists stress the central role that reflection plays in adult development. The result of reflection for Cell (1984) and Mezirow (1991) is personal development. According to Cell, reflection assists in the development of an autonomous self. For Mezirow, reflection assists in the development of a transformed self. Reflection leads to important personal changes.

Usher (1985, 1989) also describes reflection as having two dimensions, surface and deep. The difference between the two perspectives is based on learning. Surface reflection pertains to learning that is copied from experts and deep reflection pertains to learning in which

Rummaging through the cabinets, I find what I need and return with them to James office. I set up the plates, plastic silverware, napkins, and paper cups on one end of the small conference table. Meanwhile, James has cleared a space on his desk for the food. Jackie has brought the food in from the kitchen: cold pasta salad, sandwich makings, a few condiments, chips, cookies, and cans of soft drinks.

It’s now the time for the meeting to start and no one has arrived. James asks Jackie to call the board members to see who is coming and who isn’t. In a few minutes, Jackie returns, and announces,

“James, it looks like there will only be two members of the board coming.”

“Who is that?”

“Bill Hampton and Mrs. Lawrence.”

“OK, thanks.”

Turning to me, James says,

“We’ve got to fix the board.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, you see how it is. We don’t get a good turn out, and
knowledge results from an on-going process dependent upon context. The

important difference between Usher’s two dimensions and those of Cell and Mezirow is that Usher is concerned with the content of reflection whereas Cell and Mezirow are concerned with the result.

Kitchener and King (1991, 1994) provide a seven-stage model of reflection which, like Usher’s (1985, 1989), is based on concepts of knowledge and learning. Among its differences is that Kitchener and King’s model has seven stages, not two dimensions. Second, the seven stages are based on the certainty of knowledge. Third, the seven stages of reflection move from stage one in

more than that, we don’t have the right people.”

“Which people do you have now?”

“We’ve got a lot of people left over from when the Reverend was here. They’re friends of his. He’s known most of them for years, ever since he first began his activities here more than thirty years ago.”

“Is that so bad?”

“Actually it is. Things have changed a lot in thirty years, we’re not the same organization. We really need new blood.”

“Like who?”

“We need people who can help us with the fund-raising efforts. That’s such a big part of what we’re struggling with right now that we could use the help.”

“And the people on the board now can’t do that?”

“No, not really. Many of them are from the neighborhood churches that were our base of support. They don’t have the business sense that we need now.”

“So, how’re you going to handle that?”

“I’ve already begun. One of the people who is coming today is the HR Vice President for the largest grocery store chain in
which knowledge is certain and universal to stage seven where (Reflection - continued)

knowledge is individual and dependent upon context, history, and interaction. Fourth, the seven stages are purportedly progressive and developmental.


The third aspect of reflection to be discussed is the process of reflection. One key subprocess concerns values and assumptions. The
subprocess which Cell (1984) and Mezirow (1991) emphasize is undercovering and revising socially imposed values. Argyris, Putnam, and Smith (1985) also include in their explanation of action science the use of reflection to uncover hidden assumptions.

Schon (1983) distinguishes between theories-in-use and espoused theories. Schon names the subprocess “double loop learning” to distinguish between theories-in-use and espoused theories. The purpose of the subprocess is similar in all of these cases: to identify and bring into the light of reflection values, assumptions, or theories-in-use.

“And you think that board members could help you with that change?”

“Of course, don’t you?”

“I guess so, yes. If you had members of the board who were from the business world instead of from churches, I imagine they could make a difference.”

Right then, two board members walked into the room. The first to enter was Mrs. Lawrence, a heavy-set, older woman, walking slowly. Following her was Bill Hampton, tall, early thirties, wearing a blue pin-striped suit.

Mrs. Lawrence joked,

“I found this young man outside and brought him in with me, is that all right?”

Ignoring her quip, Bill Hampton responded, smiling,

“Mrs. Lawrence, let me take your coat.”

Taking her coat, he hangs it up alongside his on the coat rack in the corner of James’ office. Dan Adams also enters James office and joins in. After a few minutes of idle conversation during which they help themselves to the food and beverages, they sit down at the small conference table. James begins,

“Since Reverend Adams isn’t here, would you preside over
Argyris and Schon (1974) contribute a second subprocess. The ladder of inference is an intellectual tool for analyzing conclusions individuals draw. Using the ladder of inference assists individuals in developing sound conclusions.

The leaders in this study demonstrated some of these aspects of reflection and not others. They did not demonstrate reflection that led to results concerning personal changes as understood by Cell (1984) or Mezirow (1991). The deep personal changes Cell and Mezirow discuss and which are obtained through conscious questioning of socially imposed values did not occur for the leaders in this study.\textsuperscript{140}

the meeting today, Bill?”

“Of course. Let’s begin.”

Bill Hampton starts with a prayer to bless the proceedings and quickly proceeds through the initial items on the printed agenda. There is little discussion, only four people are at the table other than me.

At one point in the meeting, James provided the board with a copy of a new organizational chart for their approval. James hands it out, explaining,

“We’ve decided to change the titles of many of the staff. Since we’re hiring one more new person that some folks would report to, we thought that it would be better if we gave people new titles.”

Bill intervened,

“James, I don’t get what you’re doing here. Explain what you’re trying to do.”

“Some of the staff would report to the new person, and we felt that they need to report to a VP. With that, we also realized that some existing VPs might be upset about having the same title as the new person, so we decided to name them Senior VPs.”

“That doesn’t make any sense.”
Two possible reasons explain why. First, the content of their reflection was the work at hand and the obstacles to completing their work. Their mental model restricts the content of their reflection to work and problem solving.141

Second, both Mary and James had undergone what Mezirow (1991) calls a disorienting dilemma earlier in their careers that had triggered deep personal reflection leading to transformative personal changes.142

In James’ case, early in his career with The International Center for Work, he had been sent to Africa to work. His stay in Africa lasted for several years and was the first

“What do you mean?” James asked.

Bill continued,

“What you’ve done is to change the organizational chart because of how people feel. That’s directly opposite to what should be done.”

“I’m not sure I understand,” James said.

“In business, you decide what jobs you need and find people to fill them. What you’ve done is find people and change the organizational chart and titles because of how you think people will respond. That’s just not the way to do it.”

“What should we do, then?” Dan asked.

“Decide what the jobs are, give them titles to reflect what they do, and be done with it.”

“If that’s how to do it, where do we start?”

That question launched the board into a lengthy discussion of each job, its responsibilities, and appropriate titles. Bill led the way through his questions and suggestions. James asked questions such as,

“What do you think the job should be called?” and “What should the responsibilities be?”
time he had ever been out of the United States. He had grown up in the rural South and had spent most of his early career studying and working in predominantly African-American Southern schools. The relocation to Africa provided the disorienting dilemma that triggered soul-searching on his part. The result of his soul-searching (reflection) was a reformulated set of personal beliefs and values. A key element of these beliefs and values was a renewed and strengthened sense of self-reliance. James refers to this time as the time when he developed a new, and much stronger, belief in his ability to succeed regardless of the challenges.\(^{143}\)

When they were finished they changed all the job titles on the new organizational chart. Senior VPs would return to being VPs and Directors would be downgraded to Managers. Then, James inquired,

“Bill, we’ve spent a lot of time during the last few weeks talking about how to handle the job titles and what we’ve done changes things a lot. How do we explain it to the staff?”

“There’s nothing to explain. This is just the way that it ought to be. If they don’t like it, that’s too bad. You’re trying to run the agency like a business. And in a business, you make decisions based upon what makes sense and what’s right. That’s all there is to it. They’ll have to live with it.”

“OK,” James said.

Mrs. Lawrence interjected,

“Bill, didn’t you say you had a meeting at 2 o’clock? It’s nearly one-thirty now. If you don’t leave, you won’t make it.”

“Oh, that’s right. Thank you, Mrs. Lawrence.”

Bill got up and headed for the coat rack. As he put on his coat, and he helped Mrs. Lawrence with hers, the board formally concluded the meeting and scheduled the next one. Within less than a minute, Bill was gone, and Mrs. Lawrence
In Mary’s case, several years earlier she and her former husband both were diagnosed with cancer. The subsequent battle to deal with the disease served as the disorienting dilemma for her. Like James, she engaged in extensive soul-searching (reflection) that led to a restructured and deepened set of values and beliefs. Three key elements of these were a deeper faith in God, the desire to cherish each day, and a commitment to help others in similar circumstances. Mary talks about this, saying, “I’m not the same person I was before I had cancer.”

These experiences and the changes that resulted from them may account was on her way out.

As Mrs. Lawrence was leaving, Jackie walked in, and together with Dan, James, and me, helped to remove the remaining food and clean up James’ office. As we were finishing the clean up, James picked up the phone and said, “Lon, the board has just directed me to change the organizational chart. Would you come down here so we can talk?”

In about a minute, Lon arrived. James beckoned him to sit down at the conference table and, showing him his notes from the board meeting, said, “This is the new organizational chart the board approved.” Lon took the notes from James and looked them over. Then, he said, “We can’t do this.” “That’s what I thought, but the board has instructed me to go by this.” “But we can’t do that, not after all the work we put into the other one you presented today.” “I know.”
for why Mary and James did not undergo transformative changes as they led organizational transformations. The earlier changes may have established and strengthened a set of beliefs and values that assisted them in and were not threatened by their work.146

Related to this is that the leaders did not utilize the sub-process to identify and bring into the light of reflection values, assumptions, or theories-in-use. Nor did they consciously apply the ladder of inference as a tool evaluating conclusions. As a result, the two leaders did not engage in activities that would lead to deep personal changes.147

“Why did they want to change what we had developed?”

“It was mostly Bill Hampton. From his point of view as a VP of Human Resources, we’ve gone about this backwards. He feels that we’re changing the organizational chart to suit people and it should be the other way around.”

“He must not understand.”

“He made some good points.”

“Like what?”

“Like he thinks that with an organization as small as ours, with only 17 people, that it’s crazy to have so many VPs andSenior VPs and Directors. To him, those titles signify that someone leads a large group, and we don’t have enough people to justify all those titles.”

“But, it took us a long time to reach the proposal you submitted today. I think we need to talk to him.”

“I’m not sure I could do that. They’ve already instructed me to go by this new organizational chart.”

“I know that, but what if I talked to him. Maybe if I explained it to him, he might change his mind.”

“That’s possible. It might be better for you to talk with him. Maybe you would have better luck.”
Lastly, both leaders demonstrated the use of reflection after events. (Reflection - continued)

All of the interviews with the researcher involved reflection on recent events. The researcher asked questions that required the leaders to review and analyze their actions and thinking.¹⁴⁸

The leaders also demonstrated reflection during events. Two examples illustrate how the leaders reflected “in action.” One of the issues that Mary was concerned about was her second-in-command, Dr. Goodling. While she attended meetings led by Dr. Goodling, she thought about his leadership.¹⁴⁹ In one meeting led by Dr. Goodling, the researcher and Mary established eye contact and

“I’ll give him a call as soon as I have a chance, hopefully this afternoon.”

“Don’t forget that we have a staff meeting at two.”

“No problem, I’ll work it in.”

“Lon, thanks.”

“Glad to help.”

Turning to me, James says,

“It’s after one-thirty, and I have some things I have to do before the staff meeting. What do you want to do?”

“I’ve got some things I can do, too. Why don’t I meet you there.”

“That would be good.”

With that, James walked out of his office and headed toward Dan’s office. I went into the lobby and up the stairs to look for an empty office to work in. At the top of the stairs, I ran into Lon, and I asked,

“Lon, is there some place I can sit for a while and do some writing?”
smiled at one another. Afterward, Mary mentioned the eye contact and stated, “I knew what you were thinking.” As the researcher and Mary discussed the eye contact, Mary confirmed that she had been thinking about what was happening as it was happening. She had been reflecting in action.

James reflected during events, too. When James led the board meeting attended by the researcher, he reflected “in action.” After the meeting, the researcher asked what James had been thinking during the conversation about job titles. James said, “I was thinking about what I would have to tell the staff when I told them their job titles changed.”

“Let’s see what we can find.”

He and I wandered in and out of three offices, looking for one that was empty. Eventually, we found an unoccupied one. Lon said,

“This one is shared by two folks who aren’t here all the time. Why don’t you sit here?”

“Thanks. This will work out fine.”

“Good. See you at the staff meeting.”

“Right.”

I sat behind the gray, metal, government surplus desk and took out a notepad to write notes of the day. After about 20 minutes of writing, a small, quiet man stopped at the door, saying,

“Oh, I’m sorry, I didn’t know anyone was here.”

“No, that’s OK. I’m just hanging out here until the staff meeting starts. Is this your office?”

“This is where they’ve put me. I just got here last week.”

“From where?”

“I was in Liberia.”
The leaders’ modified use of adult education concepts are summarized below.

**Self-direction**

- Self-direction predisposes adults to take responsibility: self-direction predisposes leaders to take action.
- The leaders are not seen as nor do they see themselves as learners.

**Learning from experience**

- Mary and James learn from having to overcome obstacles

“Are you Liberian?”
“Yes.”
“And do you work for the agency?”
“No.”
“How did you end up here, then?”
“I had to leave Liberia.”
“Oh. Why?”
“Because they were going to kill me.”
“Who?”
“The military leadership.”
“Really?”
“Yes, they killed my brother, and they were looking for me. So I had to leave.”
“I’m sorry.”
“Me too. I don’t want to be here, but I have no choice.”
and challenges in the course of

(Learning from experience - continued)

their work. The learning is accidental and incidental.

- Learning is context dependent: the leaders influence the context/culture by fostering learning by others. They teach, others learn.

Reflection

- Mary and James do not demonstrate reflection leading to personal, transformative learning resulting from questioning or challenging their values, beliefs, or perspectives.

“Because?”

“Because if I go back, they’ll kill me, too.”

“That must be hard.”

“It is. There’s so much to do there, and I want to help. But right now I can’t go back. As it is, I had to leave in the middle of the night with my wife and kids. We were lucky to get out alive.”

“They were coming after you?”

“That’s right. I heard from friends that they were coming to my house the next day, so we left that night with only what we could carry in two suitcases. That’s all we could bring.”

“It sounds horrible.”

“It was. It was that night that they killed my brother. They were looking for me, but we’d already gone. They found him, though.”

“It must be hard.”

“Yes, it is. Right now, we’re staying with friends, but we have to find a place to stay. And I have to earn money to support us. And I want my kids to go to school here.”

“That’s a lot.”
• Mary and James reflect during and after events, sometimes with the assistance of colleagues and consultants.

The use of these three adult education concepts, as modified by the leaders, led to the leaders’ learning.

What Leaders Learned

What the leaders learned fell into two categories: a) self-knowledge and b) strategies and tactics.

“It sure is. Fortunately, the folks here have been very helpful. I don’t know what I’d do otherwise.”

“I’m sorry, I didn’t introduce myself. I’m David Ambrose. I’m doing doctoral research here with James.”

“Oh, I’m Reverend Manaquille. Nice to meet you.”

“I’m sorry to hear about your brother, but I imagine that you’re glad to be here, safe.”

“In some ways, yes, of course. It’s good to know that my wife and children are safe. But there is so much to do there, so many people who suffering…”

At this point, he stopped. His eyes appeared to look off in the distance, and they filled with tears. After a moment or so, he wiped his eyes, and looked at me,

“When you know friends and relatives are dying and you can’t do anything about it, it’s very hard.”

“I’m sure.”

“But, as you say, I’m glad to be here, for my family.”

“Do you think you’ll be able to go back soon?”

“I don’t think so, not for a while, anyway. There’s too much
Self-knowledge occurred in two areas: that which confirmed what the leaders knew and that which sought to clarify new understandings.

In the course of this study, Mary and James confirmed self-knowledge. For example, Mary confirmed that her preferred style of leadership is participative and that she approaches her work as a teacher. James confirmed that he does not need to be seen as the central or foremost member in a group and that it is unrealistic to expect others to live by his standards.

In both cases, the leaders

violence now. When things are better, I will go back.”

“And in the meantime?”

“In the meantime, I will rely on good friends, like those here and in the church, to help while I find a way to provide for my family.”

“Who do you know here?”

“I worked with several of the folks here when they were in Africa, in Liberia. James and I met several years ago in Niger, Dan and I met in Cameroon. They’ve been very good to me.”

“How is that?”

“They’ve helped with clothes, finding a place to stay, and providing me with some work here. I’m very thankful.”

“They’re good people.”

“Yes.”

“I don’t mean to be in your office, I was just using it for a while until the staff meeting began. I’ll get my things…”

“No, please. You don’t have to leave.”

“It’s time for the staff meeting anyway.”
confirmed that their motivation for their work resulted from a commitment to others.\textsuperscript{156} James sought to help those served by the center and to fulfill an obligation to Reverend Lincoln.\textsuperscript{157} Mary wanted to help children.\textsuperscript{158}

The two leaders clarified new understandings of themselves. Their respective explorations differed according to the circumstance, background, and challenges they faced. Mary explored a new role for herself and James explored new ways to lead.\textsuperscript{159}

During interviews with the researcher, Mary identified and discussed a new role she was developing for herself. This role

“Oh, I see.”

“Well, I hope that things work out for you and that you can return home soon.”

“God willing, that will happen. Thank you.”

I gathered my things and made my way downstairs to the room where the staff meeting was to be held, the same one that was too cold for the board meeting. Since lunch time, the radiators had been turned on and now the room was warmer.

Dan and Jackie were distributing notepads and pencils around the conference table that dominated the room. Easels with pads of paper on them and colored magic markers in the trays were placed around the room, four in all. The staff straggled in, some taking seats around the table, some sitting behind them in folding chairs that were brought in, and a few standing against the walls. James also came in and took a seat in one corner.

A few minutes after three, Dan began,

“I’d like to thank you all for coming on time. As you all know, we’ve got a lot to do these days, and it’s sometimes hard to find time to get together. However, it’s good to see
concerned the political realm and included as key players the governor (Self-knowledge – continued)

and her counterparts in other agencies. Mary became the spokesperson for her counterparts in conversations with the governor. This role was new for Mary and came as a surprise to her since she was a relatively new agency director and since she was one of only three female agency directors of more than twenty.160

Among the questions discussed regarding this emerging role were: why was she the one to perform the role of spokesperson, what skills did she bring to the job, what were the advantages and disadvantages of her doing this work, and what confidence you all here.

“If you recall, the last time we met, we had Joe Dombrowski from the Executive Service Corps begin a process with us in which we identified the five areas we should be working on as part of our transition to a more effective organization. Jackie and I took what we had brainstormed last time and organized the ideas into five lists that are now posted on the walls around the room.

“Today, we’re going to continue that process by adding other ideas to each of the lists and then work in small groups clarifying concrete goals for ourselves. After that, we’re going to have a small party to celebrate Nadim’s departure. So, let’s begin. Why don’t you take a few minutes to read over the lists. Once you’ve done that, Jackie and I can answer any questions you might have.

It took five minutes or so for the people in the room to read the lists. Then, one or two of the participants had a question about why particular items were on certain lists. Jackie answered those questions. When the questions ended, Dan began again,

“Now, we’re going to see if there are more ideas you might have to add to any of these lists. For the next 20 or 30 minutes, we’d like you to brainstorm additional suggestions we can put on these lists.”

With that, Dan and Jackie took markers in their hands and
did she have in her ability to do the job? As these questions were identified and discussed with the researcher, Mary’s role became clearer.\textsuperscript{161}

James’ exploration was different. In conversations with the researcher, he identified and discussed his style of leadership. Since James had no mentor and had not been groomed for his job, as was the case with Mary, he struggled with establishing an effective style of leadership. The conversations about leadership included such topics as his use of listening, his willingness to try new things, his willingness to change his mind, and the impact of these efforts.\textsuperscript{162}

began to write suggestions offered by members of the staff. Of the seventeen people in the room, several never said anything and another five or so made one brief comment or two. Most of the ideas and suggestions were made by four or five people. During this brainstorming session, James made only one or two short suggestions.

After twenty-five minutes, Dan concluded the brainstorming session and announced,

“Now we’re going to take these lists and using them as a starting point, write one concrete goal for the agency. We’ll work in small groups and present our goal to the rest of us in half an hour. Does anyone have an idea as to how we might decide on the groups?”

Lon spoke up,

“The simplest thing to do would be to count off my fives, and then break into groups from there.”

Hearing no dissent, he stood up and pointed to Jackie, saying,

“One…”

From there, they counted off, going around the room in a clockwise direction. When they finished, Lon said,

“Get with your groups.”
These examples demonstrate the lessons that Mary and James learned about themselves. Other lessons they learned concern strategies and tactics.

Strategies and tactics

The second category of lessons for the leaders pertains to strategies and tactics. Strategies are the overall plans of action to accomplish a large-scale operation, in this case, the transformation of an organization. Tactics are the specific techniques and actions taken to accomplish elements or parts of an overall plan.

The five groups coalesced in various parts of the room. I ended up in a group with James, Dan, and a woman whom I hadn’t met before. We spent the next thirty minutes developing the following goal: All affiliates in the United States would be responsible for raising the money to operate and maintain their offices and to run quality programs.

In addition to this goal, we also suggested some ways that this goal might be accomplished, for example, develop a way to share best practices, perhaps by having annual conferences. When we were done, the woman volunteered to write our goal and suggestions on a large piece of paper to share with the staff.

When all the groups had reconvened, each shared its goal. Two of the five groups offered more than one goal. Each time, James spoke out, “We’re only going to have five goals, no more.”

No one challenged him, and no one asked for an explanation. Dan concluded the meeting by saying, “Jackie and I will take these goals and develop one per group to present back to the staff at our next meeting so we can develop an action plan for each of the goals. Thank you for your time and effort.”
As they transformed their organizations and solved problems, (Strategies and tactics – continued)

Mary and James employed strategies and tactics. At times, the strategies and tactics themselves became the content of their learning. As a result, they learned new strategies and tactics or refined existing ones. Because of differences in their situations and background, their lessons differed.  

In Mary’s case, the strategies and tactics she learned or refined dealt with two particular issues: the threat of budget cuts by the governor and Dr. Goodling’s impact on the organization.  

When this study began, Mary had just taken over the reins of

“Now, it’s time to celebrate Nadim’s leaving. Why don’t we take a few minutes to get the cake and beverages, and then reconvene?”

With this, Jackie and Michelle left, to return within less than a minute with a large, store-bought cake and several large plastic bottles of soft drinks, paper cups, paper plates, plastic forks, napkins, and a small container of ice. They placed it all on the conference table and immediately began to cut and distribute the cake. While they were doing this, the staff got in line to receive the cake, and after they got their slice, picked up a cup and filled it with whichever beverage they wanted. After several minutes, everyone had cake and a drink, and were seated around the conference table, or were standing along one of the walls. James stood up, and began,

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank Nadim for his more than eleven years of faithful service to the agency. We all appreciate what you have done during your time here and we will miss you being a part of our family. I speak for all of us when I wish you well in your new venture to becoming the agency’s next millionaire.”  

Laughing, Nadim responded,

“More than anything else, I want to thank each of you for the way that you have enriched my life and made me feel a part of the agency family.”

He went on to thank each of the people in the room by name,
Starburst. The threat of budget cuts predated her appointment. Initial strategies and tactics – continued conversations about the issue concerned how she was going to deal with the threat. During the course of the study, Mary developed strategies and tactics to combat this threat.¹⁶⁵

One strategy Mary employed was to consult with a select few other agency directors before undertaking any discussion or action involving the governor. Within this strategy, she and her colleagues discussed tactics she should use with the governor, including: what they wanted to accomplish through her interactions, the issues to be addressed, and the particular messages and arguments she could make.

telling how he had first met them and what he appreciated most about them. When he was finished with the individual kudos, he said,

“I would like you to know why I’m leaving. I’m not leaving because of any ill will. The program that I’ve been working on for the past several years, HR 6723 will no longer be funded by the government next year. I wanted to leave before the agency had to ask me to leave because it could no longer afford to pay without the federal money.

“If, because of my candor or frankness, I may have inadvertently offended any of you, I apologize. Finally, I hope that you allow me to come back to the Christmas party since even though I’m leaving, I don’t feel as though I’ve left the family forever. Thank you.”

After a short round of applause, others stood up to speak. Dan, Reverend Manaquille, and Lon each spoke to thank Nadim and to tell a story or two about his time with the agency. When they had finished, Lon organized the staff for a group photo using a time-delay so he could be in the photo, too. Nadim asked if I would take a photo using his camera, and I did so.

By now, it was close to four o’clock. The staff mingled for several minutes before returning to their offices. Jackie, Lon, Billie, and Dan cleaned up. I walked over to Nadim and said,

“Nadim, congratulations.”
should use.¹⁶⁶

(Strategies and tactics - continued)

Several times in the course of interviews with Mary she was called to the phone by her assistant to talk with other agency directors about the most recent budgetary concern. These conversations often lasted fifteen minutes or more as they analyzed what was going on and explored and developed what should be done.¹⁶⁷

The other issue contributing to lessons Mary learned about strategies and tactics concerned Dr. Goodling and his impact on the organization.¹⁶⁸

When this study began, Dr. Goodling had just been hired. As the study progressed, Mary’s concerns

“Thank you.”

“You and I haven’t had a chance to talk yet. Would you be able to spend a few minutes with me now? I’d like to interview you before you depart.”

“Of course, let me get my camera and we can go to my office upstairs.”

I followed him upstairs to one of the smaller offices tucked into a corner of the second floor. He took a seat behind his desk piled with three cardboard boxes he was using to pack some of his papers. Moving them aside so he could see me clearly, he asked,

“So, what would you like to talk about?”

“As you may know, I’m studying James, to see what he’s learning as he transforms the organization. So, I guess I’d like to start there.”

“OK, what about James would you like to know?”

“How long have you known him, how’s he doing, as a leader?”

“James and I have known one another for more than ten years, when he first came to the agency, he and I shared an office before he went to Africa. So, I think I know him quite
about his impact on the organization grew. As her concerns grew, the strategies and tactics she employed changed. She learned that her initial approaches did not work and explored others.¹⁶⁹

Her initial approach to Dr. Goodling regarding his authoritative manner was subtle and indirect. She talked with him about the importance of teamwork and the need to involve others during meetings. At first, she did not tell him that she was concerned about his style. She did not tell him what to do or what not to do. During interviews, as she discussed this approach, she concluded it wasn’t working and developed a more direct approach that included telling well.”

“And…”

“James is a wonderful man, very caring. That’s his problem, he cares too much, he’s not hard enough.”

“How do you mean?”

“James is too nice, he’ll listen to people when he shouldn’t.”

“Can you give me an example?”

“It happens all the time.”

“What happens?”

“That he’ll listen to people.”

“I’m a bit confused. Many of the other folks I talked with said that his willingness to listen was one of the things they liked best about him. I don’t understand.”

“They’re right, James does listen, and it’s good that he does. But at the same time, it gets in the way of making the hard decisions.”

“How?”

“Because there are times when you just have to make a tough
Dr. Goodling he had to involve others in meetings more.\textsuperscript{170}
(Strategies and tactics - continued)

This second approach also was discussed during interviews as Mary and this researcher analyzed and evaluated the effectiveness of the strategy. She found that this strategy failed to produce the results she wanted. Dr. Goodling’s response to her strategy was to reiterate his belief that Starburst needed to be more results-oriented and that his “authoritative” style was his attempt to help the organization overcome its over-dependence on process. As a result, this strategy failed since Mary and Dr. Goodling engaged in stalled conversations. She talked about the need for him to involve others in conversations, and he talked decision and stick with it rather than talk with more people about it.”

“Does James do that a lot?”

“Too much, if you ask me.”

“It seems to me that James has made tough decisions. Look at the staffing. Right now, there are seventeen people on the payroll, last year at this time, there were more than twenty-five.”

“That’s true, but we’ve still got a lot of deadwood around here.”

“What do you mean, deadwood?”

“People who aren’t carrying their fair share. Look at my job. I run the HR 6723 program. Because of me, the agency brings in more than $100,000 a year, much more than my salary. Not everyone can say that.”

“So, you’re saying that everyone should bring in more money than their salaries.”

“Not exactly, but everyone ought to be a lot more concerned with selling programs than with creating new policies and procedures.”

“New policies and procedures?”
about the need to be more results-oriented.\textsuperscript{171}

(Strategies and tactics - continued)

As the study ended, Mary was still grappling with the residual effects of Dr. Goodling’s impact on the organization.\textsuperscript{172}

In James’ case, the strategies and tactics he learned or refined dealt with his style of leadership. When this study began, James had yet to develop a style of leadership the members of the staff understood and accepted.\textsuperscript{173}

Two examples demonstrate this. James inherited an organization led by an authoritarian predecessor. He decided to lead in a more participative way. One tactic he used

“...
was to be accessible to members of the staff whenever they wanted to talk to him. As many of the members of the staff acknowledged, James implemented this tactic consistently. Every member of the staff interviewed mentioned their admiration for James regarding his ability and willingness to listen to his staff.174

However, many of the same staff members, Nadim and Dottie among them, criticized James for listening to the staff. Their criticism stemmed from a belief that other staff members used access to James to resist change. They had seen instances when James made a decision, only to revoke or revise it after particular members of the staff talked with him. For those

“But, despite what he’s done, you think it’s not enough.”

“But it’s not James fault.”

“Help me understand. On the one hand you say it’s not his fault, and on the other you say that he listens too much to others.”

“I guess it’s just a difference between James and me.”

“And what’s that difference?”

“I’m more direct, more to the point.”

“I noticed that today, during your good-bye speech, you apologized if your candor might have offended anyone.”

“Yes, I’m very outspoken. And I’ve been criticized because of it. Some people say that I should learn to bite my tongue, but that’s not how I am. I have to say what I think.”

“And James is not that way.”

“That’s right.”

“And you would like James to be more like you?”

“I think there are times when it’s more important to do the right thing than to be concerned with how others might feel.”
critical of James’ leadership (Nadim and Dottie) this scenario repeated (Strategies and tactics – continued)

itself all too often as staff members used James’ desire to listen to the staff as a way to slow down or stop changes.175

This tactic of listening to others is one example of James’ struggle to find a workable style of leadership. A second tactic James used was to institute new initiatives only to revoke them later if they proved ineffective.176 As James perceived the situation, he was better off trying something, even if it didn’t work out, than not doing anything.177

The dilemma lay in how the staff

“So, in some ways, the difference between James and you is that he cares more about how others feel than you do?”

“Yes.”

“Do you think that, in the time that you’ve known him, James has changed at all or learned anything?”

“Of course.”

“What?”

“I think he’s learned a lot about patience.”

“Patience?”

“Yes. I think that when he first took over, he thought that the agency would be able to change more quickly than it has. He’s gone through a lot in his life, and has made a lot of changes. So, I think that he believed that others would be as able to change as he has been. But that’s not been the case.”

“How has that led to learning patience?”

“Well, because the staff hasn’t moved as quickly as he’d like, he’s had to develop more patience.”

“Anything else?”
interpreted this tactic. Those like Nadim and Dottie, who wanted him to take strong actions and stick with his decisions, interpreted his change of mind as weakness. They felt that James was too nice and too susceptible to entreaties by the staff.¹⁷⁸

Other staff members interpreted this tactic as an indication of James’ not thinking through his decisions. They felt that when James decided on a new course of action, the plans should be fully thought out beforehand so that the staff did not waste time working on initiatives that would only be changed later.¹⁷⁹

James’ tactics of listening to others and trying new initiatives were

“What do you mean?”

“Do you think he’s learned anything else?”

“I’m not sure, it’s hard to say.”

“OK. Well, I appreciate the time you’ve taken with me. I know that you must have a lot to do before you leave, so, I’ll get along. Thanks.”

“You’re welcome.”

“Good luck in your next endeavor. From what James said, you’ll be a millionaire soon.”

“I don’t know about that, but I am starting a new business.”

“Well, good luck.’

“Thanks.”

I got up and returned to the first floor, went past Michelle’s desk and headed towards James’ office. As I was nearing it, Dan exited. I stopped by the door, and looked in. James was at his desk. I asked,

“Do you have a few minutes? I’ll be heading back soon, and I wanted to check a few things with you before I left.”

“Please, come in. I have to pick up my daughter soon, but
well intended. However, many of the staff did not accept them. As a result, how the staff regarded him and his ability to transform the organization diminished.180

As the study concluded, James had yet to develop a style of leadership that produced the results he wanted and that addressed the concerns expressed by his staff.181 For Mary and James, their work led to learning as summarized below.

Confirmed self-knowledge

- Mary confirmed a style of leadership.
- James confirmed his belief that he does not have to be the

I’ve got a few minutes.”

“Thanks. First, I’d like to schedule my last visit.”

“Did you find what you wanted?”

“I’m not sure about that, but I think I’ve found a lot.”

“Oh? So tell me, what did you learn about me?”

“I haven’t really had a chance to think it all through yet, so I’m not ready to make any definite statements.”

“But you must have some tentative ideas.”

“Yes, that’s true.”

“So what are they?”

“I’d say there are four or five things that I’ve noticed.”

“What are they?”

“Well, I’ve been taking some notes, and I think I’ve got some of them written down. Let me show them to you and get your reaction.”

“Good.”

From my briefcase, I took a folder labeled, James
focal point of public meetings.

(Confirmed self-knowledge - continued)

- Mary and James confirmed that their motivation comes from a strong commitment to help others.

Newly explored self-knowledge

- Mary explored a new role leadership outside the organization with fellow organizational leaders.
- James explored a participative style of leadership.

Strategies and tactics

- Mary developed new ways to deal with Dr. Goodling and to

Observations. And from the folder, I took out a notepad I had been writing on. I showed him some tentative conclusions I had written. He took a minute to read over them and asked,

“Could you explain these?”

“Sure. Let’s go over each one, OK?”

I didn’t wait for a response, and held out my hand, indicating that I wanted the note. He handed it to me and I looked it over before beginning,

“First, you seem strongly driven by a sense of duty, or obligation.”

“Why do you say that?”

“You didn’t ask for this job, you took it because Reverend Lincoln asked you to take it, right?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

“And once you accepted it, you decided to do the best you could.”

“Of course, wouldn’t you?”

“I’m not sure that I would have taken a job because someone else asked me. I’m a bit more independent, or maybe more rebellious than that. In your case, however, you took the job
influence the governor.

(Strategies and tactics - continued)

- James learned to experiment with new procedures and policies, and to change them if they didn’t work.

Summary

Knowing the destination helps direct the course of the journey; knowing the research questions helps direct the analysis. The questions guiding this research were:

When leaders undertake the task of transforming an organization, what can be discovered about:

The process of how they learn?

because Reverend Lincoln asked you to and you’ve decided that you’ll do whatever it takes to get the job done.”

“OK, yes, that’s true.”

“Then, you spend a good deal of time seeking advice from others, trying to get as many ideas as you can from them. And you do that with a lot of people.”

“What do you mean?”

“I’ve noticed that you run ideas by folks a lot. Like Dan and Lon. You ask them their thoughts on issues or problems.”

“Yes, I do.”

“But you don’t do that just with members of the staff. You do it with others, too. You did it with me this morning and you did it with Reverend Lincoln when you called him about merging the agencies.”

“I guess I do, don’t I?”

“I think so, at least from what I’ve noticed. And you’re intuitive, too.”

“Intuitive? I’m not sure I know what you mean by that.”

“For example, you mentioned that on the flight home last night, you were sitting in the dark and an ideas just popped
What they learn?

(Summary - continued)

As the preceding discussion has detailed, learning for the leaders in this study is embedded in and driven by their work. Their concentration on task accomplishment and problem solving drives out awareness of learning. Learning is not in the forefront of their awareness. They do not think about their learning consciously, and they do not discuss what or how they learn. Rather, as they do their jobs, they learn things that help them become more effective in their work. They neither plan for nor manage their learning. They solve problems and accomplish tasks. As a result, their learning is accidental and incidental.
Several aspects of problem solving influence how they solve problems: their problem-solving styles, the strategy they use to overcome problem-solving obstacles, and several unique elements of problem solving. The leaders’ personal attributes also influence their learning.

Adult education concepts are evident in how the leaders solve problems, but the concepts are applied haphazardly and with modifications informed by their mental model. The lessons these leaders learn lie within the areas of self-knowledge (confirmatory and exploratory) and

“And then, when you get an idea, you act on it. You don’t wait. You try it out, run it by others, see what happens.”

“That’s true.”

“And if an idea doesn’t work out, you try something else, without worrying about it.”

“That’s true, too.”

“And, your religion provides the foundation that supports everything you do. Prayer provides the energy and drive you need to keep going. Without it, you wouldn’t be able to do this job.”

“Of course, it’s very important.”

“Well, that’s it, or I should say, that’s some of what I’ve concluded so far. Does it make any sense to you?”

“I never thought about it like that, but I think you’re pretty much right about how I go about things.”

“That’s good to know.”

“What?”

“That what I’ve concluded, thus far anyway, seems to make sense to you.”
strategies and tactics.

“Oh, OK.”

“Well, I’d like to schedule my last visit…”

“Of course. What did you have in mind?”

“I thought it might make sense if we could find a time when you were meeting with people outside of the agency. I haven’t seen you in many situations like that.”

“OK, but my schedule is not clear now. How about if I get back to you with some possible dates in the next week or so?”

“Sounds fine.”

“Good, by this time next week, I should have a better idea of my travel schedule.”

“Then I’ll look forward to hearing from you some time next week.”

“That’s right.”

“Well, thanks again for allowing me to do this. It’s been really great for me.”

“I think we’re learning some things, too.”

“That’s good. It’s nice that we’re both getting something out
of this. I’ll talk to you next week.”

“Fine. Have a safe trip home.”

“I will. Good-bye.”
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Historically, adult education’s role in society has been influenced by the circumstances of the times. As society faced new challenges, adult educators found new ways to contribute. The field of adult education is replete with examples, beginning with the Lyceum Movement of the early 1800’s, the Chautauquas of the late 1800’s, the efforts to incorporate new immigrants early in the 20th century, and the extension programs during the middle of this century through today.

The end of the twentieth century provides another example—the growing emphasis on learning in organizations. Professional organizations such as the American Society for Training and Development and the Association for Human Resource Development attest to and support the increasing interest in learning in the workplace.

Workplace learning has become an increasingly large and complex phenomenon. The subject matter is broad and varied, the audiences are greater in number and role, and the methods of delivery are diverse and increasingly reliant on technology.

Organizational leaders play important and varied roles in learning at work. They approve budgets to pay for learning, direct and monitor the learning programs, foster the development of learning organizations (Senge, 1990), and they learn themselves (Vaill, 1997).
This study concentrated on the learning of leaders who undertook the task of transforming organizations. The literature about leaders is extensive and continues to grow, develop, and broaden (Bass, 1990). The literature about adult learners is similarly expansive. However, the literature on leaders engaged in the task of organizational transformation leaves important questions unanswered.

This study focused on one aspect of organizational transformation—the learning of leaders. The purpose of this study was to understand more fully the learning of two leaders who were responsible for organizational transformation. The research questions guiding this study were:

When leaders undertake the task of transforming an organization, what can be discovered about:

- The process of how they learn?
- What they learn?

The methods used to uncover, explore, expand, and penetrate the relationship between the leaders, their work, and their learning included several day-long observations of the leaders throughout their workdays, interviews with the leaders, and interviews with staff members of the leaders’ organizations. A summary of the findings generated by these methods follows.
Summary of Findings

Distinctive mental model

The distinctive mental model of the leaders in this study is informed by their work. Their concentration on work dominates their thoughts and actions and “seems to drive out the awareness of learning” (Morris, 1994, p. 127). The impact of the leaders’ mental model on learning is overwhelming. Because of their mental model, learning is relegated to secondary status for the leaders. Learning is accidental and incidental. Learning, while unplanned and incidental, occurs when events conspire to create obstacles which leaders have to overcome or when the leaders develop better ways to achieve goals.

How leaders work

Three factors influence how leaders work: the legacy of their predecessors; the leaders’ leadership experience and expertise; and the varied challenges they face. As a result of these factors, the challenge each leader faced and the way each leader dealt with the challenge was unique. For example, Mary’s predecessor began a process of organizational transformation upon which she built; whereas, James’ predecessor utilized a style of management that created problems with the staff that James had to overcome.

Organizational transformation

Mary and James sought to transform their respective organizations. Their transformation efforts succeeded to
varying degrees. Mary benefited from a visionary predecessor, previous leadership experience, and leadership expertise. As a result, she could build on existing momentum to maintain and continue the transformation.

James struggled to overcome the legacy of an autocratic predecessor, had less leadership experience, and had to develop more leadership expertise. As a result, during the period of this study James spent his time and effort in the early stages of organizational transformation.

Problem solving

Mary and James solved problems in a similar fashion. They involved others to broaden the resources brought to bear on the problems. They relied on people they knew well, were able to spend time on problem solving, and had the freedom to act upon their decisions to move ahead.

Mary and James problem solving styles were not identical, however. Mary demonstrated all the stages in Newman’s (1995) problem solving process; James demonstrated fewer of the stages.

Personal attributes influencing learning

Three personal attributes influenced the leaders’ learning: intuition, a belief in God, and a wealth of experience. Intuition helped the leaders’ learning by providing an additional, non-linear method for generating ideas and solutions. Their belief in God provided the leaders with the inner resolve and support they needed to
continue working despite challenges and obstacles. Their wealth of experience provided an intellectual, emotional, and experiential frame of reference that helped them select, implement, and measure their decisions and actions.

**The leaders’ expression of adult education concepts**

Three adult education concepts were evident in the behaviors and actions of the leaders in this study: self-direction, learning from experience, and reflection. The leaders expressed these concepts in ways heavily influenced by the leaders’ work-dominated mental model. The leaders demonstrated self-direction as a personal characteristic of responsibility; however, their responsibility pertained primarily to work rather than learning. Mary and James learned from experience as they solved problems and achieved tasks; their learning was embedded in and secondary to their work. Mary and James reflected during and after events, sometimes with the assistance of others. Their reflection was not transformative in the way discussed by Mezirow (1991) since they did not question deeply held values and beliefs.

**What leaders learned**

The leaders learned about themselves, improved how they solved problems, and achieved goals. The self-knowledge the leaders gained was confirmatory (they confirmed what they knew about themselves), and exploratory (they found out new things about themselves). The leaders also developed tactics and strategies for doing work better.
Conclusions

The above findings form the basis upon which the following conclusions are drawn. First, a brief review of the purpose of the study is in order. This study was exploratory. Its purpose was to understand more completely the learning of two particular leaders engaged in the task of organizational transformation. The study did not seek to confirm or deny models or to expand theory. The study explored the relationship between the task of organizational transformation and the leaders' learning. The study identified, explored, and expanded upon factors and processes influencing the leaders' learning and clarified the underlying mental model informing the leaders' approach to work and learning.

The following conclusions must be understood and evaluated in light of this purpose for the study. Two kinds of conclusions are drawn: one for the two leaders in the study and another for adult educators.

Conclusions pertaining to the two leaders

These conclusions pertain to the two leaders in this study and have relevance and applicability only to them.

Conclusion One: The leaders in this study were unaware of how they learn. They did not consciously use a model to direct their learning.

This conclusion was unexpected for two reasons. First, the adult education literature is replete with examples of
adults who learn consciously (Candy, 1991, Cell, 1984, Danis, 1992, Knowles, 1975, Kolb, 1984, Tough, 1978, 1979, 1982). Learning as conscious action looms large in the field of adult education. Consequently, the belief that learning for adults involves conscious action led to the expectation that the leaders in this study would learn consciously, too.

The second reason pertains to the researcher. The researcher’s background, beliefs, experiences, and formal training led to the development of a perspective in which learning is conscious. Because the researcher learns consciously, he expected the leaders to do so. For both of these reasons, the conclusion that the two leaders in this study did not learn consciously came as a surprise.

The conclusion should not have come as such a surprise; however, since there were indications in the literature review that learning by leaders is not always conscious. Morris (1994) and Mumford (1980, 1994, 1995) identified that leaders are unconcerned with and unaware of their learning and Merriam and Caffarella (1991) argued that leaders’ learning is often accidental and incidental.

**Conclusion two: The leaders’ knowledge was generally tacit.**

The leaders were not able to identify and explain what they learned on their own. Rather, their awareness of the knowledge they learned was hidden by their attention to work. They did not consciously think about or overtly discuss what they learned.
One explanation for the tacit nature of their learning is that the leaders’ attention is dominated by a concern for work. As Morris stated, “work seems to drive out awareness of learning” (1994, p. 127). The leaders in this study concentrated their attention on achieving goals and solving problems. Their attention on those activities drove out their awareness of learning. This conclusion supports the work of Simosko (1991) and Tennant and Bogson (1995), and others who contended that much of the learning by adults is tacit.

Conclusion three: The leaders employed intuition as an important tool for identifying alternatives to solve problems and achieve tasks.

Intuition has been defined similarly by Rowan as “knowledge gained without rational thought” (1986, p. 11), by Palmer as “knowledge that cannot be grasped by intellect or analysis” (1998, p. xxi), by Parikh as “a form of intelligence at a level we simply cannot access with rational thought” (1994, p. 35), and by Boucouvalas as “a way of knowing that seeps into conscious awareness without the conscious mediation of logic and the rational process” (1997, p. 7). In each case, intuition is outside the realm of logical, rational thought.

The leaders in this study relied on intuition as a key tool in the identification of alternatives. Rather than exclusively using logical or rational methods for solving problems or making decisions, the leaders in this study employed intuition as a key element in their efforts to find better ways to work.
The problem solving models identified in the course of this study (Chatfield, 1995; Kepner, 1997; Newman, 1995; Proctor, 1999, and Taylor, 1994) rely heavily, if not exclusively, on rational steps to solve problems. Intuition plays a minor or non-existent role in those models and was not discussed in Chapter Four when the problem solving styles of the two leaders was analyzed there.

The leaders employed and described intuition as a normal element in their problem solving style. The two leaders’ use of intuition mirrors Cappon (1994) and Weintraub (1998) who found that successful leaders use intuition to solve problems. Intuition engages creative faculties that enable leaders to better solve complex, difficult problems (Harbort, 1997; Parikh, 1994).

Another aspect of the role of intuition concerns the connection between intuition and tacit learning. The connection is not directly addressed in the adult education literature reviewed for this study. However, there are similarities that suggest possible connections. Both intuition and tacit learning occur outside the realm of logical, rational thinking. Intuition and tacit learning are not included as foundational elements of problem solving (Chatfield, 1995; Kepner, 1997; Newman, 1995; Proctor, 1999; and Taylor, 1994) or of the adult learning models of Cross (1981), Jarvis (1987), and Knowles (1980). The leaders in this study employed intuition and tacit learning. These similarities suggest that further exploration of this connection may prove fruitful.
The appropriate use of intuition, for leaders and others, is difficult to determine. As Boucouvalas writes, "The question of how much one can rely on intuition underlies and fuels much of the concern regarding its function as a valid source of knowledge" (1997, p. 12). The use of intuition by the leaders in this study suggest that it is a valid source of knowledge for them.

**Conclusion four: The leaders developed an understanding of some of the processes they used and the factors that contributed to their learning.**

The leaders' understanding resulted from dialogues of inquiry they created with the researcher. The leaders did not develop understanding on their own. Their understanding developed primarily because someone helped.

This is consistent with adult educators who discussed the value of providing assistance to adult learners. Argyris, Putnam, and Smith (1985) promoted action science as a vehicle to develop communities of inquiry. Kotter (1990, 1999) and Merriam and Caffarella (1991) found that leaders improve their learning with the support of networks. Tough (1979, 1982) found that his interviewees did consider themselves learners initially. Garratt (1987) argued for senior leadership teams directed toward learning.

In each of these cases, learners obtain help in their learning from others. In this study, the leaders received help from the researcher. The leaders and the researcher developed dialogues of inquiry. The dialogues identified
and explored the factors and processes influencing their learning.

It is not clear whether or not the leaders would have generated the understanding of their learning without the assistance of the researcher. The data generated by the observations and interviews provided no indications that the leaders reflected on their learning by themselves.

**Conclusion five: The leaders successfully employed a consultative method for achieving tasks and solving problems.**

The leaders in this study depended upon an extensive network of personal contacts they had developed during their careers. The leaders did not solve problems or overcome obstacles alone; they consulted others.

Two aspects of the leaders’ consultative approach merit discussion. First, the leaders’ consultation was not collaborative. The leaders did not seek agreement from those they consulted. The leaders decided what advice to accept, adapt, or reject based on their determination of the relevance and value of the advice. The leaders were the sole judges as to what to do about the advice they received.

The leaders’ consultative approach is noteworthy because it places control of the process in the hands of the leader. The leaders controlled what happened. They decided whom to call, what to discuss, and what advice to use. Having control is a distinct benefit for the leaders because
they can manage the time, contacts, processes, and outcomes to suit them and their situation.

The leaders’ control over the decision making process is analogous to the efforts in adult education to provide learners with influence over the learning process. Candy (1991), Cell (1984), Knowles (1990), and Tough (1979, 1982), all argued for learner control.

The leaders’ decision making process has its disadvantages. One potential disadvantage is that the leaders’ success is dependent upon whom they call. If the leaders call people with little or no valuable advice, the success is limited. A second possible disadvantage is that leaders may not ask the right questions. If the leaders do not ask penetrating, thought-provoking questions, the value of the advice they receive will be further limited. A third potential disadvantage is that the leaders may not select the best advice to follow. If the leaders do not evaluate the advice well, they may choose ineffective options to implement. This will compromise the results even more.

Thus, the success of the consultation may depend on the leaders knowing the right people to call, knowing what to ask, and being able to select the right advice to use.

The leaders’ consultative approach is noteworthy for another reason. The leaders’ array of resources to call upon is extensive. As professionals with more than twenty-five years of experience in their fields of work, the two leaders developed an extensive, specialized, and individualized Rolodex of names to call.
The extensive Rolodexes provided two significant advantages to the leaders. First, the Rolodexes provided an array of resources extensive in scope and depth. The collected experience of the people the leaders called is impressive.

Second, many of the names on the Rolodex were long-time friends and colleagues. The resources were not strangers. The resources knew the leaders well and knew their organizations, too. The advice and counsel the resources provided is based upon and informed by years of contact and knowledge. As a result, the advice was individualized, pertinent, and practical.

**Conclusion six:** The leaders relied upon and took sustenance from their prayers to God as a means of providing themselves with the support they needed to deal with the challenges of work.

Both leaders mentioned daily prayer as a critical factor enabling them to do their work while dealing with the challenges and obstacles they faced. Without prompting by the researcher or reference to the other leader’s remarks, both leaders in this study volunteered that they prayed daily.

This conclusion was unexpected also. There were no indications of the leaders’ spirituality by either leader when they were recruited for the study or during the early stages of the research. Their offices did not have icons, paintings, or other items representative of spiritual
beliefs or religions. Moreover, the leaders did not mention or refer to their religious beliefs during the initial meetings and interviews.

The leaders’ spirituality only emerged after the study had begun and the leaders had developed rapport and trust with the researcher. The emergence of the leaders’ spirituality occurred differently. In James’ case, the researcher noticed a greeting card on James’ desk with the words “I’ve got you covered” on the outside, and the words “with prayer” on the inside. When the researcher mentioned the card to James, the ensuing discussion led to James’ discussion of prayer. In Mary’s case, she volunteered her reliance on prayer during one of the interviews with the researcher in response to a general question what makes her able to do her job. She further noted that she only volunteered the information because she believed the researcher would be understanding of and receptive to her spiritual inclinations.

In both instances, the researcher played a role. The researcher’s impact on the study is difficult to assess. One argument is that the disclosure of the reliance on prayer as a factor in the working lives of the leaders would not have emerged without the researcher’s influence. The researcher contributed to the disclosure of prayer as a factor in the lives of these leaders.

The above six conclusions pertain to the leaders in this study. They are not the only conclusions to be drawn from this study. Extending the discussion beyond the lives of the two leaders in this study is also possible.
Adult Educators and Leaders’ Learning

Prior to drawing conclusions that extend beyond the two leaders in this study, it is helpful to review differences in the literature pertaining to the learning of adults in general and of leaders. Leaders represent a small segment of the population of adults. Identifying and discussing the differences in the literature as it pertains to a segment of the population, and the population in general, provided a foundation for extending the conclusions into other realms.

The major differences between the literature pertaining to the learning of adults in general and of leaders (as presented in Chapter Two) pertain to the areas noted below:

1. Adults (and leaders) learn from life.
2. Learning is conscious.
3. Reflection is important to learning.
4. Tasks influence learning.

The four areas are discussed in light of the findings of the study.

The first area concerns learning from life. According to the adult education literature presented, adults apply the attributes and processes related to self-direction in order to learn from life. According to the literature on the learning of leaders, leaders for the most part do not see themselves as learners and, as a result, tend not to use the skills and attributes of self-direction to their learning.
The literature on the learning of leaders was supported by the findings in this study. The two leaders in this study did not see themselves as learners. The leaders only applied the attribute of self-direction pertaining to responsibility and then only as it dealt with them. They did not act in a self-directed manner with respect to their learning.

The second area concerns the process adults and leaders use to learn. Adults develop and use a conscious process to reap learning benefits from their lives. According to the literature on leaders, leaders do not concentrate on learning consciously. Instead, leaders learn haphazardly and only when it relates to work.

The leaders in this study learned similarly to the leaders in the literature (Morris, 1994; Mumford, 1995). The learning of the two leaders was accidental and incidental and was embedded in and informed by work. The study did not provide evidence that the leaders learned via a planned process of learning.

The third area concerns the role of reflection. Reflection plays a key role in the learning of adults and takes many forms, including reflection leading to personal and perspective transformation. Leaders reflect on how to solve problems and achieve tasks. According to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, leaders tend not to reflect in ways that lead to transformations and do not reflect on their learning.
Once again, the two leaders in this study mirrored the leaders in the literature. They did not reflect in ways that led to personal or perspective transformation. With the exception of reflection about learning initiated by the researcher, the leaders reflected solely on their work.

The fourth area concerns the role of tasks on learning. Adults use tasks as the stimulus for learning, particularly in organizations that foster learning. Leaders learn from tasks mostly when they have to overcome obstacles getting in the way of task accomplishment.

Here, too, the leaders in this study paralleled the leaders in the literature. The two leaders learned from tasks when problems arose in the course of accomplishing tasks. When the problems arose, the leaders learned new ways to solve the problems.

In general, the findings in this study support the literature on the learning of leaders and contrast with the literature on adults’ learning in general. Leaders in general and the two leaders in this study learn differently than adults as portrayed in the adult education literature. Given the differences, an important question arises. Is it possible to explain the differences between the findings in this study (and the literature on the learning of leaders) and the adult education literature in general?

The differences between the findings in this study and the adult education literature can be explained in part by the different mental models. The two leaders in the study and the researcher provide instructive examples. The
leaders in this study demonstrated behaviors, and the corresponding mental model, of the literature on the learning of leaders. The researcher in this study identified (in the chapter on method) the values and beliefs indicative of a mental model consistent with the adult education literature.

Thus the two leaders and the researcher mirrored (though may not perfectly represent) the mental models of leaders and adult educators in general. The similarities are strong enough to suggest a possible explanation for the differences between the findings in this study (and the literature on the learning of leaders) and the adult education literature in general.

The following example drawn from this study demonstrates how different mental models can account for the differences in the literature.

During the early stages of data collection, the questions asked of the leaders used language consistent with the mental model of the adult educators and the researcher. The leaders were asked what they learned and how they learned. In most cases, the leaders’ responses were vague, general, and noncommittal. The leaders were unable to answer the questions to my satisfaction.

As the study progressed, the researcher’s frustration with the responses of the leaders’ responses grew. Eventually, the researcher and the two leaders analyzed the situation to determine what was happening. After considerable discussion, we concluded that the differences
in language were representative of differences in mental models.

The researcher used language reflecting a mental model of adult education inconsistent with the mental model of the leaders. The researcher used words familiar to adult educators but unfamiliar to and incompatible with the language (and mental model) of the leaders. The leaders and the researcher were speaking different languages and were unable to communicate effectively.

The two leaders and the researcher communicated effectively only after we recognized and accepted that we operated with different mental models. To communicate effectively, the researcher had to learn and to adopt the language (representative of the mental model) of the two leaders. The researcher, like a traveler in a foreign country, learned to speak the language.

In this study, different mental models help to explain the differences between the two sets of literature. Other conclusions can be drawn from this study that rely on the following argument:

There are important differences between the two leaders and the researcher stemming from the mental models that influence our learning. The fundamental difference is that leaders place work first and learning second; whereas, the literature on adults in general and the mental model of the researcher place learning foremost.
The differences between the mental models of the two leaders and the researcher in this study are similar to the differences between the literature of the learning of leaders and the learning of adults in general. The similarity suggests intriguing possibilities.

As an exploratory study, this research was designed to identify and uncover factors and processes that influence the learning of leaders. In the course of conducting the research, the researcher learned lessons that are instructive as well.

Lessons Learned by the Researcher

The researcher learned lessons about the topic studied and about the process of research.

The researcher learned about the topic concerns the connection between the specific and the general. In this instance, the specific was the researcher’s experience in studying two leaders and their learning and the general was the work of educators and practitioners to influence others.

What was learned about the connection? The connection between the specific and the general can be represented by the political adage, “all politics are local.” While there may be national elections, when it comes down to what affects voters, politics are local. This adage can be paraphrased to apply to learning; while there may be principles applicable to adults in general, all learning is influenced by the individual (local) situation.
Throughout this study, the researcher noticed that the four general principles identified in the literature review appeared repeatedly: adults learn from experience; adults benefit from a process to reap lessons from their experiences; reflection plays a key role in reaping those lessons; and particular events can trigger learning. The appearance of these four principles did not occur abstractly though; they occurred in the lives of two specific adults and then only in unique and distinctive ways.

The researcher learned about the connection between the specific and the general from this study; namely, the general principles pertaining to adults and their learning can be seen in the individual lives of adults. Conversely, the individual lives of adults demonstrate the four principles.

Moreover, while the specific and the general can be analyzed separately, they cannot exist separately. The four principles do not exist in and of themselves; they only exist as they are expressed in the lives of adults. They can be separated from the lives of individuals only because they are concepts. Thus the distinction between the specific and the general is the distinction between the actual and the conceptual.

The second lesson, about the process of research, concerns what the researcher learned about himself. As a qualitative study, this research did not lead only to lessons about the area studied, it also led to lessons learned about the researcher, too.
The lessons learned by the researcher mirror the lessons learned by the leaders; the leaders came to understand their learning better, they identified the factors that influence their learning, and they clarified lessons regarding self-knowledge and strategies and tactics.

In the process of engaging with the leaders and clarifying their mental model, the researcher clarified his mental model, too. He came to understand more clearly his fundamental beliefs and values; he confirmed the central role that learning plays in his life. For example, what the researcher learns is a key criterion in all career decisions he makes.

Moreover, the researcher, came to understand his learning better. He realized that his learning relies heavily on reflection with friends and family to identify and clarify lessons wrought from life’s experiences. For example, since the study began, the have initiated monthly evening sessions with three male friends to discuss experiences in our lives and to help one another make sense of them. The researcher also regularly talks with his wife and sister to discuss what is going on in my life so as to make sense of it.

A common element exists in the lessons learned about me as a researcher and my learning; meaning is constructed from an individual standpoint. Meaning is not absolute, meaning is not ordained by an expert, and meaning is not universal. Rather, meaning is constructed by individuals, having relevance and being applicable primarily to their lives and times.
Given the lessons learned by the researcher in the course of the study and the conclusions drawn from the findings, what would the researcher do differently if he were to conduct a follow up study? Before answering this question, it is necessary to identify two important contributions of the study.

First, the study identified characteristics, factors, and processes that influence the learning of leaders as they transform organizations: (a) the identification of the importance of the leaders’ mental mind set, (b) the role of intuition, prayer, and colleagues in the leaders’ problem solving, and (c) the role that adult educators can play to assist leaders in their learning.

Second, the study confirmed (unintentionally) the value of qualitative research. The qualitative methodology used in this study provided the tools and mechanisms that uncovered the characteristics, factors, and roles noted above and led to the richness and detail demonstrated in this study.

Acknowledging these contributions, the follow up study would be different for a variety of reasons. First, the study would be different because the researcher is different. Because the researcher learned and grew during the study, he would bring a different lens to the study.

Second, given the findings of this study, the purpose of a follow up study would be different, too. This study was exploratory. A follow up study would be designed to
focus other issues, namely the ability of an adult educator (this researcher) to forge a community of learning from a group of leaders.

To accomplish this, three elements would be different: the participants, the content, and the process.

The number of participants would change to foster rich group discussions. Six-to-eight leaders would be recruited into a community of learning to be forged and facilitated by the researcher. Like the leaders in this study, they would be senior executives leading organizational transformations.

The content would change, too. Rather than having learning of the leaders as the sole focus, the study would concentrate on two other areas: enhancing the ability of the leaders to solve problems collaboratively and understanding more about how the leaders learn as they solve problems.

The process would be modified to provide for the leaders to meet together as a community of learners organized and facilitated by the researcher. The leaders would meet on a regular basis to identify, analyze, prioritize, and solve problems as a group. This approach is similar to action inquiry as discussed by Torbert (1992).

In addition to facilitating the problem solving sessions, the researcher would identify ways the leaders learned in the course of the group problem solving. At the end of the study, he would share findings, analysis, and conclusions with the leaders. Then, the leaders and the
researcher could discuss what he found and recommend ways to improve their learning.

Recommendations

These answers to the question about how the study would be done differently also serve as recommendations for others. Inherent in the answers are the following recommendations that other adult educators may find valuable:

Accept that others operate out of different mental models.

It would be convenient if others thought like us. The reality, as this study demonstrates, is that people rarely think alike. The difficulty arises when we operate as though others think like we do. When we assume, falsely, that other people think like us, we fall into a dangerous trap; we overlook the differences in our thinking that contribute to misunderstanding and miscommunications.

By overlooking the differences in our thinking, we draw erroneous conclusions about what we experience. Until we recognize that others think differently, and take the time to investigate those differences, we’ll continue to mistakenly assess the causes and consequences of our actions. And that is a danger we can ill afford in the field of adult education.

Before helping others, first understand their mental models.
Once we recognize that adults operate out of different mental models, we then must take the time to understand how other persons think. That is not easily done. To understand others’ mental models, we have to put our own perspective aside.

Putting our own perspective aside demands two things. First, we have to be able to observe rather than judge. We have to be able to set aside our values and beliefs and see what others do through dispassionate eyes. Second, we have to construct a point of view that explains the behaviors and actions of the other persons. The point of view we construct must be valid for and accepted by the other persons.

Rather than imposing methods or solutions, find opportunities to help others improve what they themselves care about.

Many adult educators decide what they want to do and then convince someone else to go along with them. When we, as adult educators, become convinced of the rightness of an approach, it is not difficult to impose it on others. This is akin to the adage, “If the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail.”

In the course of their work, adult educators must understand how others learn.

Adult educators are trained to help others learn. Learning is their first priority. For most adults, and for
leaders in particular, however, learning is secondary is their awareness. The difference in these priorities presents a problem that adult educators must overcome.

Because work relegates learning to a secondary status, it is important to bring to light how the adults learn. Adult educators can use their knowledge to uncover and clarify how others learn, an important first step in improving how they learn.

Share with others what you have learned about their learning and help them find ways to work and to learn better.

After adult educators identify how adults learn in the course of their work, they can begin to influence the adults’ learning.

First, tell the adults what you have found out about how they learn. Find out what they think about your findings. Then, explore ways to help them learn in the course of their work.

These five recommendations are derived from the findings of this study, take into consideration the lessons learned by me as the researcher, and are informed by my experience as a practitioner.

These recommendations reflect two important elements of the field of adult education which require explanation. The first element is the concept of facilitation. Brookfield contended that “this concept has had an enormous and far-
reaching influence on the field of adult education practice” (1989, pp. 201-202). The concept of facilitation is evident in these recommendations in three areas Brookfield identified: by the paramount importance context plays; by the degree of ambiguity inherent in the process; and by the extent to which adult educators have to be flexible in the approaches they use.

The second element is the theory of adult learning based on an adult’s life situation proposed by Jarvis (1987). Jarvis’ theory is based upon the belief that all adult learning is situated in social settings. From that foundation, Jarvis argued that adults take one of nine routes to learning. The routes fall into three hierarchically organized categories: non-learning responses, non-reflective responses, and reflective responses. As adults move along the continuum of responses, they move from mechanical to tacit to conscious experimentation responses to the situation.

The value of Jarvis’ model (Figure 3) is that it provides a broad-based framework for understanding learning in a social setting. The model is not prescriptive. Jarvis’ model provides a framework for adult educators to evaluate a particular situation and determine appropriate steps to assist learning.
Figure 3. Jarvis' model.


The concept of facilitation and the situationally-grounded and flexible model of Jarvis (1987) inform the recommendations presented above.

Further Research

The findings, analyses, and interpretations of this study suggest several areas for further research:

Research the recommendations to determine whether they make a difference or not.

The five recommendations, informed by the concept of facilitation and Jarvis' model (1987), provide direction for
practitioners, but they have not been tested. One suggestion for further research is to conduct a study in which the recommendations are applied to a group of leaders (one segment of adult learners) in order to evaluate their relevance and applicability.

**Research the influence of God and prayer on leaders.**

In the last decade numerous books have been published in the popular press regarding spirituality and leadership (Bolman and Deal, 1995; Hawley, 1993; Jaworski, 1996; Orsborn, 1992; and Roskind, 1992). In general, the books contend that spirituality is an important characteristics of leaders.

American leaders have historically affiliated themselves with and discussed their belief in God, but little research has been done to determine the relationship between leaders and belief in God. This suggestion provides an opportunity to do so.

**Research the connection between tacit knowledge and intuition for leaders.**

As discussed above, the similarities between tacit knowledge and intuition offer ripe ground for research. As the field of adult education depends and diversifies its areas of interest and inquiry, the need for exploration in this area grows.

Leaders acquire knowledge tacitly and use intuition. However, the connection between the leaders’ tacit knowledge
and intuition has not been fully explored. For example, is there a connection between the leaders’ use of intuition and tacit knowledge? If so, what is it? What factors or processes influence the connection? If leaders were to use intuition more, how would that influence their tacit knowledge? The potential questions are extensive.

Merriam and Caffarella argue that “adult educators are moving from description to theory building” (1991, p. 316). This suggestion aligns with their argument and provides one avenue to enhance theory building.

**Research the incidental/accidental nature of learning.**

Marsick and Watkins (1992) explore the informal and incidental aspects of adult learning at work in detail. Their work does not address the particular ways that leaders of organizations employ (or fail to employ) informal and incidental learning, however.

Morris (1994) and Mumford (1980, 1994, 1995) come closer, but their work argued that leaders’ learning is accidental and incidental without going into detail as to how it occurs. This suggestion provides an opportunity to understand more about how accidental and incidental learning occur for leaders.

**Research other transformational leaders.**

This exploratory study concentrated on the learning of two leaders. Follow up studies with other transformational
leaders will enable researchers to expand and deepen the findings of this study.

Research other ways for adult educators to support and enhance leaders’ learning.

One of the conclusions of this study is that the intervention of one adult educator (the researcher) enhanced the ability of two leaders to become more aware of and knowledgeable about their learning. The need to assist leaders’ learning has been argued above. This suggestion provides the opportunity to explore additional methods to assist leaders’ learning.

Conclusion

Adult education is a field of endeavor plagued by a variety of definitions. Courtney writes, “It is rare to come upon a single sentence that will do justice to the full range of phenomenon or that will satisfy the many different kinds of practitioners who call themselves adult educators” (1989, p. 15). Bringing unity and commonality to the field is not easy given “its complexity and its tangled and interactive parts” (Houle, 1984, p. 321).

This purpose of this study was not to resolve the dilemma created by the diversity within the field. Nonetheless, this study demonstrated characteristics which contribute to the enduring strength and value of the field of adult education.
The review of the literature began with an historical overview that included the identification of four fundamental assumptions and beliefs:

- Learning is life.
- Adults learn from real situations.
- Experience is a valuable resource for learning.
- Adults use a process to learn from experience.

These four fundamental assumptions and beliefs underlie the field and are evident in the working lives of the two leaders in this study. The enduring quality of the field may be the result of what this study found, and what Lindemann argued in 1926, that learning and life are coterminous. This study provided specific details to corroborate and expand upon the foundation laid by Lindemann.

Though not intending to do so, the two leaders in this study demonstrated that learning and life are inextricably and unintentionally linked. The two leaders learned even though they did not plan to do so. They employed a process for learning even though they did not initially know what it was. They reaped beneficial lessons from their experiences even though they did not seek to do so or begin with that goal in mind.

What did this study accomplish? This study established that for the leaders studied:
1. The leaders’ learning is highly dependent upon the unique characteristics of the situation and of the particular leaders.
2. The leaders learn from challenges and difficulties at work.
3. The leaders used particular factors and processes to learn.
4. Adult educators can intervene to improve leaders’ learning.

More importantly, though, this study uncovered more questions than it provided answers, and maybe that is how it should be. The study was, after all, exploratory in nature. The ultimate lesson in this study may be the fact that despite the passage of time and change in circumstance, there is one enduring, enriching quality to human life, the opportunity that life affords for learning.
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Reflection on Unending Story Writing

Writing for a qualitative research study never ends. Too many factors and elements change, and keep changing, throughout the research to communicate the fullness, specificity, clarity, accuracy of the research. No matter how hard I tried I never felt that I had it quite right. Something to add, or change, or refine always came up. There was always one more thing to do.

The dilemma is familiar, especially in a post-modern world. Faced with the unending task of identifying, sorting, relating and communicating an ever-widening array of issues and elements, we make choices without having a universal truth to build on. And then, we have to explain our choices to others whose perspectives and viewpoints differ.

As I think about the choices I made in this study, I return to the idea of story. Stories are as old as humankind and are powerful and vibrant ways we communicate to one another. Writing this research has been like writing a story.

Stories carry meaning; the storyteller decided what to communicate to others. Stories have structure; the storyteller organized the story into a particular form. And stories have content: the storyteller decided on which characters, settings, and actions to include. Stories are constructed, they are not preordained; the storyteller had
to build the story, making choices about meaning, structure, and content along the way.

The storyteller and I are alike. We both make choices about what to say and how to say it. To make those choices, we must drive a post-modernist stake in the ground. The stake we drive provides a starting point from which our writing (and our being) results.

We begin by making a personal, metaphysical choice. We decide who we are and why we’re here. Only then can we make choices about what to write. Our writing does not come out of nothing; it comes out of us. And the us it comes out of is the product of our metaphysical decisions. The story we (storytellers and me) tell is always linked to who we decide we are.

Among the choices storytellers (including me) make concern the relationship between the story and the storyteller. To what extent and in what way are we part of the story? Qualitative researchers are more visible in their stories than positivists; autobiographers more than biographers.

Of course, that is only one of a myriad of choices. With any story, there are stories within. There are subplots to be identified and followed; there are themes to be explored; and there are characters to be drawn. And in the end, the story must hang together, be plausible, and engage the reader. The storyteller must construct a story that balances these (and many more) factors.
The storyteller, like the qualitative researcher (me among them), balances these factors, continuing to make choices with the understanding that the process never ends.

The choices are unending, or at least appear to be. In a post-modern world, the ground into which we drive our stake is itself ever-changing due to the passage of time and the evolution of trends and factors out of our control. Storytellers, especially qualitative researchers, are never done writing, we merely realize we have to stop.
Prior to beginning this study, I had never done formal academic research. I had, however, conducted numerous organizational development and human resource development projects as a consultant. I expected my work as a consultant to be helpful. What I couldn’t predict were the unintended effects.

The predicted effects occurred as expected. I expected my experience as a consultant to have positive effects in two ways that did proved to be the case. First, the two leaders in the study, Mary and James, participated in part because I was a consultant. The leaders believed my experience as a consultant could help them.

They knew that my study was academic and that my role was not to give them advice. Nonetheless, Mary and James looked forward to learning from our discussions. They both admitted they participated in the study because they thought they would learn something. They wanted to learn from our interactions.

Second, my experience as a consultant had developed interviewing and organizational assessment skills readily transferable to the research environment. I knew how to ask open-ended questions and pursue emerging threads in an interview; I knew how to observe and recognize organizational dynamics. The skills worked.
Unexpected effects occurred, too. For example, I had no idea how the members of the staff or representatives of related organizations would respond to the study. Their excitement and enthusiasm surprised me.

Nearly everyone I met was interested in and wanted to talk about organizational transformation. Most of the people I met expressed sincere interest in the topic and asked questions about organizational transformation in general. A few asked to talk with me privately about specific difficulties they faced in their organizations.

I had not expected the enthusiasm the topic generated nor the difficulty their interest created. The difficulty concerned their understanding of the study. The study was always introduced as pertaining to the learning of leaders as they transform organizations. The staff members and representatives from other organizations, however, focused on organizational transformation to the exclusion of the leaders' learning.

The difficulty involved balancing different interests. The people I met wanted to talk about organizational transformation; I wanted to focus on the leaders' learning (as they transformed organizations). A delicate balancing act ensued. I answered questions and talked about organizational transformation before redirecting the conversation to the leaders' learning without decreasing their active involvement in the conversations.
In the end, everything worked out. No one stormed out of the interviews or refused to talk; I gathered valuable information.

More importantly, though, I learned a valuable lesson. Qualitative studies have intended and unintended effects. Planning for the expected effects is one thing, being able to respond to the unexpected effects is a different thing altogether. Responding to the unexpected effects may be the greater challenge for qualitative researchers. By their nature, qualitative studies can’t (and shouldn’t) be controlled. Rather, qualitative researchers must rely on flexibility and creativity to respond to the unpredicted and unpredictable.
Reflection on Finding Participants [Click here]

Finding participants for the research was not what I had expected. I thought that it would be easy to find people to participate. Actually recruiting participants proved difficult. Eventually, I succeeded, but only with unforeseen assistance.

The search for sites began with questions to colleagues, friends, and relatives. Three criteria were used to select participants. First, the participant must be in the midst of transforming the organization. Second, the participant must be an effective leader of organizational transformation. And third, the participant must be capable of self-reflection and willing to discuss their experiences with me.

Within the first few weeks, colleagues, friends, and relatives suggested seven individuals. I met with each of the individuals to discuss the study, to determine if they might be appropriate participants, and to request their involvement, if appropriate.

Two of the individuals did not meet the criteria: one was not an effective leader of organizational change and the other’s organization was not changing dramatically enough to be considered transforming.

Three individuals met the criteria, but declined to participate. They thought the study was important and interesting, but they did have the time.
Eventually, after four months, I found two individuals who met the criteria and were willing to participate. They became the participants in this study. Their reasons for participating differed from one another and surprised me.

Mary (fictitious name) said she met with me and agreed to participate primarily because of my sister. My sister and Mary had served on the Executive Board of a statewide association of women administrators for nearly ten years and were close friends and working colleagues. My sister said to Mary that I was a lot like Mary’s husband (open, nurturing, thoughtful, and creative) and that Mary would enjoy meeting and working with me. The second reason Mary gave was that since I was a consultant, she might learn something from me about organizational leadership.

James (also a fictitious name) participated because a mutual colleague and long time friend said that it would be good for him to participate. James gave another reason. Several people had helped him throughout his academic life leading up to and including his doctorate. He wanted to return the favor.

While there were different secondary reasons, the primary reason for Mary and James’ participation concerned mutual colleagues or relatives. They participated because of their relationship with people I knew.

Surprisingly, Mary and James participated mainly because they liked and respected someone I knew, not because of the research. That was not what I had expected. I
expected the value of the study to be the reason for their participation.

   Ironically, scholarship depended more upon personal relationships than the study’s value. Without the relationships, the study would not have happened.

   I guess I shouldn’t have been quite so surprised, though. Little in life is predictable, surprises abound. Why should scholarship be any different?
Reflection on My Status as a Consultant

My work as a consultant contributed to the status afforded me during the study and influenced the way people interacted with me. The effect of my status began with the first introductions to the leaders before the research began and continued throughout the study. Ultimately, thinking about my status as a consultant led to a realization about my identity.

The effect of my status as a consultant began before the study started. The two individuals, when they introduced me to the leaders who later decided to participate in the study, referenced my experience as a consultant coaching leaders in organizational transformation. The leaders, in turn, agreed to participate because I was a consultant and had experience in an area they were interested in. Thus, status influenced the study from the start by contributing to the leaders’ decision to participate.

The leaders, when they introduced me to staff and representatives of other organizations, also referenced my experience as a consultant. The leaders’ reference to my work influenced how the people I met interacted with me. Most of the people I talked to were interested in and wanted to talk about my work. That was the good news; their interest made the task of beginning a conversation easy.

There was bad news, too, resulting from their interest in my work as a consultant; they wanted to talk at length about how organizations change, particularly how their
organization should/did change. Their interest in my work and their desire to talk about it made it difficult to talk about the learning of leaders.

The combined effect of their interest in and desire to talk about my work pushed the topic of organizational transformation to the forefront of our conversational agenda and relegated the learning of leaders to the back burner.

After a few interviews, when I realized what was going on, I found a way to deal with the diversionary effect my status as a consultant created. I allowed the interviewees to talk about their perceptions and conclusions about their organizations to establish rapport. When they asked for my opinion, I provided a general observation like, “Many organizations experience the same difficulties,” or “Resistance is a common issue when organizations transform.” This approach succeeded in establishing rapport with the interviewees and in avoiding lengthy discussions about my work.

Successfully avoiding lengthy discussions about my work triggered other thoughts about status and identity. For nearly twenty years, my work as a consultant had been a central element in my identity. The more successful I became in avoiding talk about my work, the more my identity came into question. If I wasn’t a consultant, who was I?

As my work played a lesser role in establishing my identity, other aspects increased in importance. In this study, my role as a researcher took on more importance. I spent large amounts of time thinking about how to be a
researcher. The more I thought about the research, the less I thought like a consultant. As the time spent thinking like a researcher increased, the importance of my work as a central element in my identity decreased. I became increasingly comfortable with and confident in my role as a researcher. I had become a researcher in practical terms by conducting this study and in defining who I was.

The experience of developing an additional element in defining my identity in this study is not new. Throughout my life, new elements of my identity have been added as I have taken on and learned new roles. Becoming a father, a sports referee, and a boss changed how I thought of myself. As I incorporated these new roles, additional ways of defining myself developed.

Conducting this study helped me remember that my identity is not founded primarily on my work. All the roles I play influence who I am.

I had forgotten.
Conducting this study was easier and more productive with the assistance of two key informants. The informants were close friends and professionals colleagues of the leaders. The informants, one per leader, introduced me to the leaders and helped enlist the leaders as participants.

Once the study began, the informants’ assistance contributed to the effectiveness of the research. To begin, they helped me gain entry into the organizations and gain acceptance by the staff. The informants had gained acceptance as insiders themselves resulting from long professional associations with the organizations and the leaders.

The informants’ status as insiders was transferred to me when they introduced me as a credible, worthy colleague. Thereafter, I made point of referencing my relationship with each of the informants to establish myself as an insider, too.

For example, when speaking with Mary’s secretary, Dorothy, I would mention that I had stayed at my sister’s house the night before, or that I had seen my sister recently, or that I would soon be seeing her, or that my sister had sent a message to Dorothy or Mary. My sister was a key informant regarding Mary and Starburst (Mary’s organization). The same approach worked in James’ organization in which the informant was a mutual colleague and friend of James and me.
By using references to the informants, I allied myself with someone the staff members knew and trusted. My relationship with the informants influenced the staff members' perception of me. The informants' mantle of trustworthiness as an insider enveloped me, too.

Once the study was underway the informants' assistance grew in importance. They provided insider information about Mary, James, and their respective organizations that I could not have obtained elsewhere. For example, my sister (one of the informants) told me about Mary’s bout with cancer and how it had changed Mary’s life. With James, our mutual colleague (the second informant) told me about James’ work in Africa and how that contributed to James’ values.

Armed with information only insiders knew, I asked questions that outsiders couldn’t. For example, I knew from my colleague that Reverend Lincoln’s son had been designated as James’ successor. When interviewing James, I asked him how long he would be in charge before the Reverend’s son replaced him and what problems he expected to confront in making that transition.

The questions (informed by insider information) elicited data not otherwise obtainable. In Mary’s case, I knew Mary had deepened her spiritual beliefs in the process of dealing with cancer. In our conversations, we talked about her illness. We also talked about how personal catastrophe sometimes fosters spiritual growth.

In a subsequent discussion, Mary volunteered that she prayed to sustain herself in her work. When I mentioned
that most leaders I know don’t talk much about prayer, she said, “I don’t talk about it, either.” When I asked her why she told me, she said that she knew I would understand since we had talked about spirituality in previous conversations.

Mary’s self-disclosure was the last link in a chain of events initiated by insider information given to me from a key informant. Without the initial proffer of information, the revelation about prayer (no pun intended) would not have occurred. Key informants’ insider information led to significant data that would not have been uncovered otherwise.

The key informants in this study played a critical role. Their influence must be understood. The key informants introduced me to the leaders and enlisted them as participants. They helped me gain entry into the organizations and to be seen as an insider. They provided insider information that initiated a sequence of events culminating in the acquisition of rich data.

In qualitative studies in general, it’s tempting to assign undue influence to the researcher, diminishing the influence of others. In this study in particular, the pivotal role of key informants must be established.

This study would not have happened without the key informants’ assistance; the leaders participated because the key informants enlisted them. More importantly, the study would not have the depth of insight and understanding that it does; the rich data emerged only because the key informants provided information that triggered exploration.
The key informants’ mark on this study is formidable and indelible; the study reflects their efforts as well as mine.
When I began my doctoral studies I asked for advise about selecting a dissertation topic. Everyone told me to choose something I cared about. I took their advice to heart; I chose leadership.

Recently, a faculty member mentioned that all researchers study themselves in some way. His comment got me wondering. What prompted me to study leadership? Did I want to study myself?

From the day I started my doctoral studies, I knew my dissertation would deal with leadership. Leadership, as a topic of interest, has been an integral part of my adult life. I can’t remember a time when the topic didn’t interface with my professional life.

In fact, it almost seems as though life has conspired to ensure that leadership as a topic for consideration remains in the forefront of my attention. Events in my life repeatedly bring leadership to center stage, as the following incident demonstrates.

"Take a seat, it’s time to begin and we have a lot to cover."

The 90 or so faculty in the cafeteria of the inner-city high school, carrying books, stacks of papers, various notebooks, pens, cups of coffee, and assorted other teaching paraphernalia take seats at the chairs that a few hours ago were filled with students.
Looking around, the Vice-Principal, Karl Schmitz, surveys the faculty as they settle in. Then, he begins, "We’ve got three important items on this month’s agenda: we’ve got to talk about report cards, statewide exams are coming up, and attendance reporting is still a disaster."

With this statement, the faculty, nearly en masse, groan aloud.

"Look," Karl says, a good deal louder than before, "I know you think this is petty foolishness, but we have to get this straightened out."

A tall, long-haired male faculty member from the Social Studies Department stands up, "Karl, we know the importance of tracking attendance because it affects the money we get from the state. But enough is enough. This is the fourth faculty meeting in a row that you’ve brought it up. Let’s get on with it? There are a lot more important things than attendance that we ought to be talking about."

A murmur of assents, a few amens, and a sprinkling of "Way to go," "Yes," and "power to the people," burst from the faculty.

"OK, OK, settle down." Karl waits as the comments ebb, and begins again, "I’d like to accommodate you, but this is not a community association or an activist group. This is a school. First and foremost, our job is to make sure that the students who are expected to be here are here. My job, whether or not you like it, is to make sure that we’re doing
what we’re supposed to do. And if that means we have to talk about attendance in every faculty meeting of the year until it improves, then that’s what we’ll do.”

With that, many of the faculty sit back, fold their arms, and stare ahead, blankly. Others begin to correct papers, some murmur to one another, a few shake their heads. One or two pay attention.

Karl continues; the faculty bide time.

This example occurred during my first job out of college as a high school teacher. The Assistant Principal, Karl Schmitz (pseudonym), regularly ran faculty meetings like the one above. Karl Schmitz was one of my first teachers of leadership, not by example, but by exception. He was not to be the last teacher.

Wherever I went (I’ve worked in four states in the last twenty-five years). And whatever I did (I’ve held more than eleven positions in that quarter century). The topic of leadership was brought center-stage. Sometimes, as with Karl Schmitz, it was a boss. Other times, it was clients. Regardless of the circumstance, however, life presented me with numerous opportunities to look at and study leadership.

After each experience, I tried to make sense of it. I talked about it with others, read books, took courses, and attended conferences. After a while, I began to teach others what I learned by leading seminars, conducting workshops, and speaking at conferences.
What began as an attempt to understand leadership led to a career focused on leadership. It wasn’t planned for, it just happened. I have yet to figure out why leadership has captured my attention for so long. I only know that it has.

Maybe that’s all that really matters anyway. Maybe I don’t have to know why. Maybe I can just accept things as they are, without questions. Maybe it’s enough just to know that leadership will always loom large in my life. Maybe I can accept not knowing why.

But I doubt it.
Reflection on Cultural Roadblocks [Click here]

On a recent vacation in Greece, I ran into a cultural roadblock similar to one I experienced in conducting this study. The roadblock resulted from differences in perspectives. One day my Greek brother-in-law traveled with my wife and I to a nearby city to do some shopping and to help us open a bank account in preparation for building our long-awaited Greek getaway.

We left at 8:30 A.M. so we could be at the bank when it opened. After the 45-minute drive, he suggested we get some coffee. We sat in the square near the bank, drank coffee, and read the paper before entering the bank at 10:00.

We left the bank at 10:30 and went our separate ways, agreeing to meet in the main square at 11:30. When we met at the main square, he said, “You have to have the yogurt with honey, it’s the best in Greece.” We ate the yogurt with honey (it was good) while he stopped at two or three shops around the square. We left at 12:15.

After 15 minutes, he suggested we stop for lunch along the way home at “this lovely little restaurant overlooking the bay. The calamari is fantastic.” We left the restaurant and arrived back in the village at 3:30 whereupon he asked, “I’m going down to the beach for a drink before dinner, would you like to come?

I couldn’t believe it! It had taken us a whole day to open up a bank account. We had spent more time drinking coffee and eating than anything else; as far as I was
concerned, we could have been finished and back in the village by noon.

Needless to say, the differences in how we approached time frustrated me. I wanted to get things done, quickly; my brother-in-law wanted to enjoy the day, leisurely. Eventually, though, (and with a little help) I realized that my brother-in-law’s perspective was neither better nor worse than mine. It was merely different. The real problem lay in my seeing his world through my eyes. My frustration occurred because I evaluated his behaviors from an American perspective on time.

A similar cultural roadblock occurred in conducting this study. During the initial stages, I became frustrated when my questions didn’t yield the kind of answers I anticipated. Adapting and refining my questioning techniques didn’t help. Like my brother-in-law, the leaders weren’t behaving as I expected them to.

Eventually (with a little help from the leaders) I realized the problem lay in my seeing their world through my adult education eyes. I planned for and expected responses consistent with an adult education perspective on learning. When the responses didn’t fall in line with my expectations, I became frustrated. The leaders’ responses reflected their perspectives, ones dominated by a concern for task accomplishment and problem solving.

In both situations, the problem was the same and lay within me; I evaluated their behavior using my values and beliefs as the standard. I used my perspective (informed by
cultural and educational influences) to judge my brother-in-law’s and the leaders’ behaviors.

The lesson I learned from the cultural roadblocks I ran into during my vacation in Greece and in conducting this study was not to judge others by my rules. It’s not easy to accept that others have different (and equally valuable) perspectives. But I’m working on it.
Reflection on the Researcher as Detective

Before I began this study, I thought research was a straightforward problem-solving process. Research courses presented logical, scientific processes. Success, I was told, results from thoughtful preparation; anticipate fully, plan thoroughly.

Now that the study is completed, I realize research is laden with the uncertain, the ambiguous, and the unexpected. Much of what occurs during research cannot be planned for. Success, I found, results when researchers function like detectives.

As a researcher, I had to function like a detective by probing into and behind the unexpected clues to solve the mystery by piecing together the clues to form a reasonable and reliable case. Functioning like a detective was not what I had expected to do. I had expected to utilize preplanned research methods to seek out, identify, explore, expand, and confirm or deny research questions.

The metaphor of researcher as detective proved useful. The metaphor influenced and improved the research strategies used during the study. The first influence the metaphor had was to redefine my role as researcher by providing a different mental model of how to conduct the research.

Initially, I was playing a straightforward, above-board game where all the cards were on the table and the moves were obvious to everyone in the game. Then, when I began to
approach the study as a detective, I played a more subtle game.

The clues (data) didn’t fall into neatly organized categories or form a coherent pattern. Unexpected, contradictory clues emerged and expected, confirmatory clues failed to emerge. Responding to the actual and unexpected clues required different rules (strategies) than dealing with expected and non-existent clues.

First, I sought to make sense of the clues by seeking patterns that could be built into possible explanations of what happened (models or theories). Then I tested the rival explanations to determine which ones were reasonable and coherent (valid and internally consistent).

In the course of solving the mystery, I had to uncover clues which the players (participants and staff members) were hiding, albeit unintentionally. A sophisticated interview strategy pried loose information (whether clues or data). The strategy required doing two things at once.

On the surface, the interviews concentrated on a topic the interviewees were interested in, the transformation of the organization. Beneath the surface, data (clues) pertaining to the learning of leaders were gathered for analysis later.

Eventually, the strategies worked, the mystery was solved. The study resulted in a reasonable explanation of the learning of leaders. Thinking and acting like a detective helped.
End Notes


Vita

Archie Tinelli

Currently, Archie Tinelli is a Manager at Arthur Andersen, LLP, responsible for the coaching and training of Partners. Prior to this work he held numerous positions:

- **Owner/Consultant of Coraggio Consulting**: Provided customized leadership training and coaching to managers.
- **Senior Consultant at Hockett Consulting**: Consulted with small businesses on management and marketing.
- **Director of Community Education at North Idaho College**: Lead two-year effort to put program on self-funding basis.
- **Owner/Consultant: HRD Consulting**: Designed and conducted customized training programs.
- **Trainer in the Geisinger Medical Center**: Designed and conducted leadership development programs.
- **Teacher in the Rochester, N.Y., City School District**.