

## Chapter I - Introduction

“Change individuals first and let them change the formal structure.”

Gilbert Fairholm, *Leadership and the Culture of Trust*, 1994

### *Background*

Visit a local bookstore. One does not need to be a scholar to know that, in both the public and private sector, leadership is perceived as a critical requirement for organizational success. Popular books on the market target the public interest in leadership. Major corporations invest considerable resources in an attempt to develop leadership in their personnel ranks. However, it is unclear exactly what makes a leader—how a person develops the capacity to lead an organization, helping it change to meet challenges that confront it. Much is unknown, and disagreement exists as to the answer to the previous question and to exactly what skills are necessary for effective leadership.

Bravery, courage, and the willingness to risk losing all combine in the art of leadership. We need people who are willing to take a risk, to innovate, to create a new paradigm rather than accept the old way of thinking. As John Gardner (1964) said in his book *Self-renewal: The Individual and the Innovative Society*: “If a society hopes to achieve renewal, it will have to be a hospitable environment for creative men and women. It will also have to produce men and women with the capacity for self-renewal” (Gardner, 1964, p. xv). More than thirty years ago, Gardner warned that a society decays when its institutions and individuals lose their vitality. This vitality takes the form of innovation, of fresh ideas and enthusiastic creativity. He talks about organizational change in a historical framework, noting that the revolutionaries—the people “who broke the iron frame of custom—were necessarily people of ardor and aggressiveness” (Gardner, 1964, p. 41). Karl Albrecht (1992) refers to Gardner's work in *Brain Power*, and suggests that one should make a habit of questioning the status quo when appropriate; asking why, why not, and what might happen if?

The Tofflers (1995) also talk about the “destiny to create” characteristic of this generation, and claim that these types of people are needed to build the 21st century, third-wave civilization. Bolman and Deal (1991) talk about leaders as architects, catalysts, advocates, prophets, and poets. Now and in the future, the need for enlightened leadership is clear.

As John Gardner (1964) pointed out, to be a candidate for renewal, an organization must be able to manage its deadwood and allow itself to be a seedbed for new ideas, protecting dissenters from the status quo. An organization has to have many points of initiative and decision to allow new ideas to have a chance of taking root. No society is likely to renew itself unless its dominant orientation is to the future and it looks to it with confidence. Leaders of tomorrow will have to help people see the possibilities that exist beyond what they know today. In *Where Have All the Leaders Gone?* Warren Bennis (1984) bemoans the serious shortfall of talented and capable leaders.

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 primarily focused on jointness and preparing military leaders. However, it was drafted in part to correct America's failure to produce strong civilian leadership for the national security community and country. What kind of leadership is needed? What does it look like? And, most importantly, how do we fill the gap?

The Defense Reform Initiative (1997, DRI) strengthened that aspect of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation. The DRI targeted the need to improve education for civilian leadership as an important area of consideration. This study reinforces the goals of the DRI in promoting quality educational experiences for civilian employees. It helps fill the gap identified in the Goldwater-Nichols legislation by adding to the body of knowledge on strategic leadership development, especially as it applies to the Department of Defense (DoD) civilian workforce. Educators and program planners may find the model developed from this study and accompanying suggestions useful in designing and executing leadership development programs.

Many leadership courses exist today. Programs that attempt to develop leadership potential acknowledge that learning is not solely based on classroom studies. Success is highly dependent on contextual and environmental factors. The full benefit of the educational experience may not be realized for years. Key experiences outside of an educational setting help mold the individual. Given these circumstances, how does one design and execute such a program? Delivering a program that is truly providing the developmental experiences necessary to cultivate leadership is a challenge.

For fiscal year 2005, over three billion dollars were requested to support educational opportunities afforded to military and civilian employees of the DoD (Roth, 2004). According to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (1998), the fiscal year 1998 budget for Military Professional Development Education was \$896 million. In 1997, DoD civilians benefited from approximately \$200 million spent on post-secondary education and professional development. In its commitment to developing a talented, capable workforce, great effort and resources are expended. By the nature of its mission, the DoD must concentrate educational efforts toward this goal. The courses it offers must provide the stimulus that allows students to excel and become the future leaders the country needs. Professional military education (PME) programs' primary concern is education and development. However, like other programs of higher education, they are concerned with assessing program quality and ensuring that the programs' stated goals are met. The same holds true for programs designed to develop civilian leadership. What leadership expectations exist for civilians?

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has defined a number of Senior Executive Service qualifications (see Appendix A). They include "Leading Change" as the first of five categories and identify eight associated competencies. The remaining four categories of "Leading People," "Results Driven," "Business Acumen," and "Building Coalitions/Communications" each have their respective competencies. According to the OPM (1998), these competencies are considered important for senior leadership. How do we develop the civilian workforce of tomorrow? This study

suggests answers that may serve to guide educational endeavors directed toward this effort.

According to the Goldwater-Nichols legislation and the DRI, to build a strong civilian workforce—capable of providing the leadership the Department of Defense requires—it is necessary to provide educational experiences and opportunities comparable to those afforded the men and women of the armed forces. Civilian leadership must be groomed to have the requisite skills to provide solid recommendations and advice to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. In order to meet this challenge, leadership and professional development programs must be carefully planned and implemented. Existing programs must be scrutinized for effectiveness. Outcome measures must prove the worth of these programs. Constant screening of the environment must take place, and adjustments made to curricula should reflect the changing concerns of the DoD and those concerned with national security. A clear link must exist between the Defense Department requirements and workforce performance. All of this begins with clear expectations of what leadership is, especially with regard to national security.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

The literature is replete with definitions, theories, models, frameworks, competencies, and examples of leadership. While the literature points to outstanding examples of leadership in business, the military, and across government service, the focus has been broad. One area where it is lacking, however, is a particular attention to government leadership at the highest levels. Although the Office of the Secretary of Defense is certainly concerned with DoD civilian leadership, this has not been an area of concentration in the greater body of research on the subject of leadership. In fact, the government has spent considerable effort developing criteria for senior executives. However, little is known about how this type of leadership at the most senior levels is unique and how it might be developed. Leaders at the highest levels of government, both civilian and military, have had particular experiences during their careers resulting in reaching the level of strategic leadership. The challenge of examining these issues from the perspective of well-respected senior leaders—both from the military and civilian side of national security—may help to fill the gap in understanding.

#### *Research Questions*

The study addressed the following questions related to leadership development for the Department of Defense:

1. How do strategic leaders for the federal government describe effective leadership?
2. How do they explain the development of effective strategic leadership?
3. How do the described behaviors of strategic leadership compare to the Executive Core Qualifications established for civilian federal government leaders by the Office of Personnel Management?

### *Purpose of the Research*

This dissertation research seeks to understand the intersection of adult learning and cognitive development in reference to leadership development. While the literature points to outstanding examples of leadership, and identifies characteristics that are considered crucial, it is unclear as to what the appropriate developmental experiences are in cultivating such leaders. It has also been a goal of the Department of Defense to ensure that the nation has strong leadership, both on the military and civilian side, to meet the challenges the country faces today and in the future. Given that a large part of the senior civilian workforce faces retirement within the next few years and there has been great effort invested in trying to improve the personnel system, the issue of civilian leadership is keener than ever, yet outside of the Office of Personnel Management little attention has been focused on this group of potential leaders.

In an attempt to provide insight that may help close that gap in understanding, the study undertook an effort to talk to successful leaders from the national security arena and learn more about their experience with and views on leadership. The findings are summarized in a model of leadership that reflects the perspectives found in the leaders interviewed. It is a conceptual model, which focuses on views the leaders held and their personal experiences. The purpose was to better understand what a group of strategic leaders believed contributed to their personal development and might help others grow professionally. The findings are not intended to address curriculum issues in leadership courses, but might prove useful for developing desired program goals, appropriate developmental experiences, and indicators of success.

### *Significance of the Study*

Many definitions of leadership exist, along with various theories and models to describe them. Of most importance, the focus on the cognitive development process from the perspective of senior leaders in the national security arena is what makes this study unique and distinguishes it from other leadership studies.

Adult cognitive development, especially in respect to how an individual thinks and progressively develops conceptual skills (Kitchener, Lynch, Fischer, & Wood, 1993) and conceptual capacity (Lewis & Jacobs, 1992), is difficult to assess. In studying the development of leadership capabilities, this study examines what factors contribute to improvement in or increased cognitive skills and the ability to use those skills effectively when faced with challenges.

According to Zaccaro's (2001) survey of the literature, a slight 2% to 5% of the leadership research looks at top organizational leaders. Zaccaro attributes the neglect of attention to a number of possibilities. Empirical research with such leaders is more difficult to accomplish because of the challenge of studying them in action and the concern that few executives would be willing to commit the necessary time to such an effort. To document the effects of leadership would require extensive longitudinal analysis of historical data. Also, because of the complexity and future orientation of the

positions, the criteria for executive leadership are likely to be very different from those of lower levels of leadership, more ambiguous, and therefore more difficult to observe. Since this study is directed toward strategic leadership in the U.S. Department of Defense, it will help build the research base in this area.

The findings from this study augment OPM's (Eyde, Gregory, Muldrow, & Mergan, 1999, p. 11) previous research, which pointed out a need to apply what has been learned to educating leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This study offers new information to help the government recognize and promote incorporating appropriate developmental experiences into education and professional development programs.

Interviews with seasoned strategic leaders, exploring their views and experience, offer rich data to help bring light to these challenges. Based on the data analysis and the theory derived from it, the study proposes a conceptual model of leadership development that integrates the leadership literature with adult learning and development literature. The model informs existing theory and adds to the body of knowledge about leadership. Therefore, it should be useful to educators and program planners interested in fostering growth toward that end.

*Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era, Phase 1 Report* was released in April 2004. Section IV of that report is dedicated to “Strengthening Civilian Professionals in Defense and National Security.” The three major recommendations are as follows:

- Congress should establish a new Defense Professional Corps to attract the best and brightest civilians to serve in the DoD and to provide greatly expanded opportunities for professional development and career advancement.
- Training, education, and required interagency rotations for senior-level career appointments should become centerpieces of the new personnel system.
- To fully support professional development opportunities, Congress and DoD need to invest in a relatively small number of additional billets to allow for a personnel “float” analogous to the float that exists in the military personnel system.

Clearly, the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 set in motion a range of initiatives designed to improve effectiveness and efficiencies in the Department of Defense. There are eight reasons cited as Congress’s intent in enacting the Goldwater-Nichols legislation—the first one being “to reorganize the Department of Defense and strengthen civilian authority in the Department (100 STAT. 993).” The impact this legislation has had on the education system for both military and DoD civilians has been great, and continues to be a factor driving policy decisions. In particular, civilian education has stood out as a key area for improvement. Specifically, this study will add to the body of knowledge on civilian strategic leadership and will be helpful to policymakers and others who actively promote defense leadership development initiatives and programs.

*Abbreviations/Acronyms*

CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
DoD	Department of Defense
DLAMP	Defense Leadership and Management Program
DRI	Defense Reform Initiative
ECQ	Executive Core Qualifications
ICAF	Industrial College of the Armed Forces
NDU	National Defense University
OPM	U.S. Office of Personnel Management
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
PME	Professional Military Education
SES	Senior Executive Service
SST	Stratified Systems Theory

## Chapter II - Literature Review

“Only he is capable of exercising leadership over others who is capable of some real degree of mastery over himself.”  
George F. Kennan, as cited in Freeman’s *the Diplomat’s Dictionary*

A vast quantity of literature exists on the topic of leadership. There is general agreement as to what is important for success. Most would agree that leadership, especially at the senior levels, requires a complex set of skills. What is not clear is how to impart the skills or develop the cognitive abilities that enable strategic leadership. It follows that adult development and learning are important considerations when approaching this topic, which is often examined strictly in relation to workplace behavior. Although this literature review addresses leadership in general, strategic leadership, or the positions situated at the top levels of an organization, was the primary area of concentration. Theories of adult development and learning are integrated into the review for their contribution to our understanding of how this knowledge might be used to foster leadership development.

### *Leadership Defined*

Defining leadership is as complex as trying to understand human growth and development. Each of us has a unique background shaped by many factors. Each of us is an abstract combination of traits, attributes, skills, opinions, and beliefs. Our mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions interact and affect how we operate in the greater community and what we bring to our personal and professional worlds.

Likewise, in leadership, individual strengths must be capitalized on to fulfill various roles of the position. It appears that talented, effective leaders can perform in a proactive manner while maintaining a balance between the forces at play in the organization. At the same time, they must be cognizant of the dynamics outside of the organization. In the 1999 edition of *Learning in Adulthood*, Merriam and Caffarella dedicate an entire chapter to how society and culture impact adult development. This is a recognized factor in leadership development also (Jacobs & Jaques, 1990). Kegan (1982) discusses how people change over time and the need for developmental experiences that will facilitate their becoming more self-aware and confident about what they contribute to society. The mental demands of public life require that work and the need for personal growth and “self-expansion” (Kegan, 1994) be integrated. Not only must they manage their leadership responsibilities as individuals within a given environment, they must keep the organization united as it is impacted by change, cohesively moving toward the realization of its vision.

As cited in Yukl (1994, p. 2) the following are some of the key definitions:

1. Leadership is the “behavior of an individual when he is directing the activities of a group toward a shared goal.” (Hemphill & Coons, 1957, p. 7)

2. Leadership is “impersonal influence, exercised in a situation, and directed, through the communication process, toward the obtainment of a specified goal or goals.” (Tannenbaum, Weschler, & Mazzarik, 1961, p. 24)
3. Leadership is “the initiation and maintenance of structure in expectation and interaction.” (Stogdill, 1974, p. 411)
4. Leadership is “the influential increment over and above the mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organization.” (Katz & Katz, 1978, p. 528)
5. Leadership is “the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal achievement.” (Rauch & Behling, 1984, p. 46)
6. Leaders are those who consistently make effective contributions to social order, and who are expected and perceived to do so. (Hosking, 1988, p. 153)
7. Leadership is a process of giving purpose (meaningful direction) to collective effort, and causing willing effort to be expended to achieve purpose (Jacobs & Jaques, 1990, p. 281)

LTG Richard Chilcoat, USA (Ret.), defines strategic leadership as “the art of influencing people and organizations to formulate, coordinate and apply ends, ways, and means to promote the interest of the enterprise” (personal communication, June 1, 2000). More recent attempts to define exemplary leadership stress the importance of the affective domain or feeling aspects of leadership (Kotter & Cohen, 2002), emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002), and even moral purpose, knowledge building, and coherence-making (Fullen, 2001).

According to Fairholm (1994): “In reality, leadership is an expression of collective, community action. True leadership describes unified action of leaders and followers working together to jointly achieve mutual goals” (p. 3). Watkins and Marsick (1993, as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 40) note that inquiry and dialogue, along with collaboration and team learning, are essential to the organization that sets out to learn together. Fairholm (1994) says “Leadership is the task of creating harmony among the disparate, sometimes competing, organizational—human, system, program—factions. Leaders are identified, flourish, and grow when they and their followers share unifying values, ideals, and goals” (p. 7).

According to Kouzes and Posner (1987), “leadership begins where management ends, where the systems of reward and punishments, control and scrutiny, give way to innovation, individual character, and the courage of conviction (p. 32).” Management skills alone are insufficient to transform an organization and its people. Leaders are expected to have an attitude that challenges the existing paradigms, and they are intrinsically motivated to do so. They naturally seek out areas to improve and enjoy taking on a challenge. This is reflective of the humanist theory of learning, which will be discussed at a later point.

### *Strategic Leadership Defined*

According to Zaccaro’s 1996 study *Models and Theories of Executive Leadership*, the main body of literature refers to this level of leadership as “senior,” “executive,” or “strategic” leadership (p. 4). Zaccaro (1996) defines strategic leadership as:

That set of activities directed toward the development and management of the organization as a whole, including all of its components, to reflect long-range policies and purposes that have emerged from the executive leader’s interactions within and interpretations of the organization’s external environment (p. 14).

According to Stratified Systems Theory (SST, Jacobs & Jaques, 1987), the nature of leadership is different at the lower, middle, and top levels of an organization. It follows that leadership performance requirements change over time as one’s career advances. Requirements at the top level call for progressive collegial leadership, ability to understand and deal with complexity, long time horizon, integrative skills, system design skills, and conceptual ability (Industrial College of the Armed Forces, 1998). SST, which is described further in the strategic leadership theory section of this paper, breaks down the domains of leadership by seven levels (ICAF, 1998):

<b>GENERAL PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS BY ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL</b>				
<b>STRATUM</b>	<b>TIME SPAN</b>	<b>GENERAL TASK REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>MILITARY GRADE</b>	<b>DOMAIN</b>
VII	20+ YRS	Creates Complex Systems; Organizes Acquisition of Major Resources; Creates Policy	4-Star	SYSTEMS/ STRATEGIC
VI	10+ YRS	Oversees Operation of Sub-Ordinate Systems; Applies Policy	3-Star	
V	5+ YRS	Directs Complex Systems	2-Star	GENERAL COMMAND
IV	2+ YRS	Tailors Resource Allocations to Interdependent Subordinate Programs or Units	1-Star O-6	
III	1+ YRS	Develops and Executes Plans to Implement Policy/missions	O-5 O-4	DIRECT COMMAND
II	3+ MONTHS	Directs Performance of Work; Anticipates/solves Current Problems	O-3 to O-1	
I	LESS THAN 3 MONTHS	HANDS-ON WORK PERFORMANCE Uses Practical Judgment to Solve Ongoing Problems	Most of Enlisted	

Figure 1. General performance requirements by organizational level.

According to General Maxwell Thurman (1991), in the military model, a strategic leader is a three- or four-star General Officer who is held accountable by the institution for:

- The output of his/her entire organization

- Getting that organization to follow along in a common direction
- Getting his/her people to operate innovatively within proper limits while expressing their full individual capability

The military system is based on rank, whereby the number of stars a general officer wears speaks to the level of authority he or she holds. However, the civilian system is not nearly as straightforward. General Schedule (GS) government employees are limited to GS-15 level. The Senior Executive Service (SES) grades follow and are comparable to the general officer ranks. The State Department has its own ranking system, and political appointees are another component of the civilian leadership mix.

Although SES positions are listed as grades 1 through 6, they do not correlate with the one- to four-star general officer ranks. Rather, they refer to the pay scale of the individual and are not indicative of the level of his or her position. Jeanne Raymos, Deputy Director for Executive Personnel for the DoD Civilian Personnel Management System (personal communication, October 20, 1999), suggested that one way to identify “strategic leadership” in the DoD SES ranks might be to contact the Undersecretaries of Defense and ask them to identify those key individuals that they would consider strategic leaders. In other words, for the DoD, the best-qualified individuals to identify strategic leadership in the civilian ranks are the people who depend on that talent.

Strategic leadership involves creating a vision for the organization and planning how to get there, or, where a viable vision exists, maintaining a clear view of where the organization is going in the future. This concept is shown in Figure 2 (ICAF, 1998).

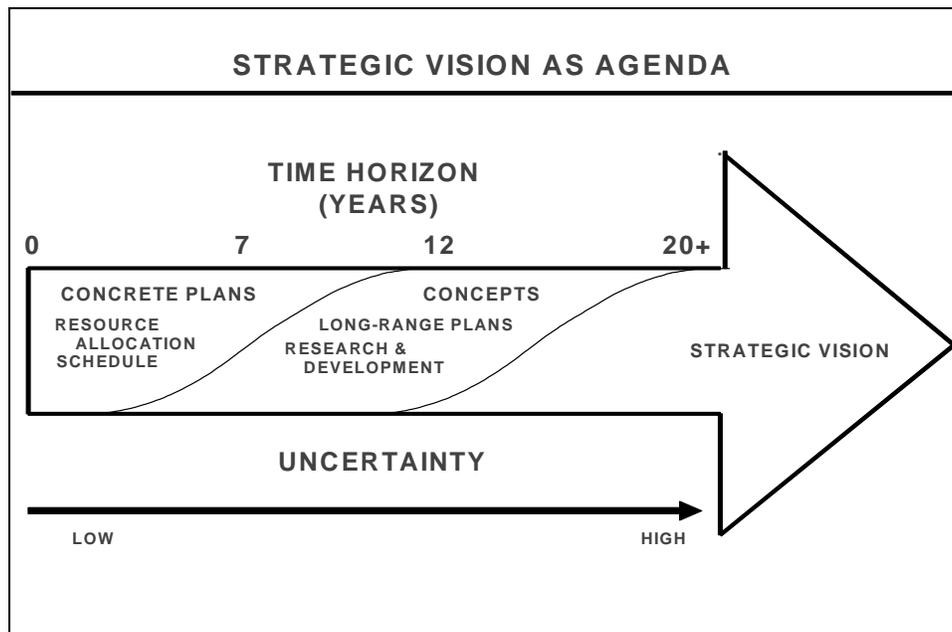


Figure 2. Strategic vision as an agenda.

Key to this study is the underlying philosophical concepts of SST which are identified as particular to strategic leadership: the nature of work and task complexity, and the nature of human problem-solving capacity. The ability for a strategic leader to balance the competing demands these concepts create will be explored as the study answers the research questions.

### *General Theories of Leadership*

General theories of leadership abound in popular literature, business publications, and academic research. In *Leadership that Matters* (2003) Marshall and Molly Sashkin sum up the leadership research succinctly, as do Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn (1997). The four basic stages of leadership theories evolved from trait, behavioral, situational, to attribution and beyond. The first four categories of leadership theory will be covered here briefly, followed by a more detailed analysis of strategic leadership and what the Sashkins (2003) refer to as the “new leadership paradigm.”

#### *Trait Theory*

The earliest recognized leadership theory is the “great man theory” in that it looked for factors which distinguished a great leader from his or her followers. Up to about 1945, it was believed that if certain attributes of an effective leader, such as height or intelligence, could be identified, it would be possible to select leaders based on these factors. Obviously, this approach falls short in that it does not incorporate behavior or differences in the leadership context. Yet, it laid the foundation for future discovery.

#### *Behavioral Theory*

Two studies provided the basis for the development of behavioral theories. The University of Michigan undertook a study in the late 1940s for the purpose of identifying the kind of leadership that led to effective employee performance. Two types of leaders were identified: employee-centered and task-oriented. The initial findings supported the notion that the leaders who put their employees first got better results. At the same time, a study being conducted at Ohio State University identified two dimensions of leadership, referred to as consideration and initiating structure. These dimensions were very much in line with the Michigan findings since consideration involved the leaders’ sensitivity to their employees’ concerns and initiating structure was also task-oriented. Sashkin (2003) credits Ralph Stogdill and the early Ohio State studies for starting the trend away from focusing on who the leader was, toward what he or she does.

#### *Situational Theories*

These theories, popular for about a decade starting in the late 1960s, operated on the premise that variables impact leader effectiveness and that the decision on how to lead should be contingent upon the situation. Four of the main situational contingency

theories are: leadership contingency, path-goal, situational leadership, and substitutes for leadership. They are summarized as follows.

Fiedler's (1964) *leadership contingency theory* (as cited in Yukl, 1994) looks at leadership traits and effectiveness from the standpoint of the leader's situational control, the impact on what the group will do, or the outcome of his or her effort. Fiedler developed a trait measure to predict leadership effectiveness by a Least Preferred Coworker (LPC) score. The LPC score represents the leader's motivation with regard to improving relationships or completing the task, and how that impacts his or her performance. *Cognitive resources theory* is a continuation of Fiedler's (1986) work. It examines the conditions under which a leader should use a directive or nondirective approach. He found that two factors, the leader's directive approach (including the group's need for it) and stress, affect the outcome of leadership interactions.

House's *path-goal theory*, simplified by Sashkin (2003), is that a leader's behavior is affected by how well the employee can perform the task and the leader only steps in to provide direction where it is needed. According to this theory (Evans, 1970; House, 1971, as cited in Yukl, 1994), leaders are effective because of their impact on subordinates' motivation, ability to perform effectively, and satisfaction. They serve to influence the subordinates' perceptions of their work goals, personal goals, and paths to goal attainment. The leader adjusts to situational variables in such a way that they compensate for what is lacking in the setting (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 1997).

Hershey and Blanchard's *situational leadership theory* posits that there is no single best way to lead (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 1997). Four leadership styles are identified: delegating, participating, telling, and selling. The leader must be able to determine the needs of the specific situation and respond with the most appropriate behavior. Most importantly, the readiness of the follower is a factor to be considered. The leader may need to set the conditions to encourage participation.

### *Attribute Theory*

Starting in the 1970s, psychological research on basic dimensions of personality identified groups of traits that work to facilitate or derail leadership. The well-known Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, or MBTI, has been the most popular instrument used to help identify and explain individual attributes or preferences. A number of the related theories and research in this area will be addressed in a later section on leadership characteristics.

Jacobs and Jaques (1987) credit Yukl (1981) for providing an overview of traditional positions of leadership according to power/influence, traits/attributes, behavior, and situational. They go on to say that, before leadership theory achieves full maturity, it must demonstrate utility beyond descriptive purposes and in reference to how it impacts dependent variables.

## *Strategic Leadership Theories*

Strategic leadership, for the purpose of this study, is defined as leadership at the Lieutenant General level or above for military and the equivalent for civilian federal government executives. Zaccaro (1996) found that a survey of leadership literature from the disciplines of psychology, public administration, and strategic management suggests four major conceptual perspectives of strategic leadership:

1. conceptual complexity
2. behavioral complexity
3. strategic decision-making
4. visionary/inspirational models

*The Nature of Executive Leadership: A Conceptual and Empirical Analysis of Success* (Zaccaro, 2001) provides a full analysis of these perspectives, which are discussed below.

### *Conceptual Complexity*

According to the conceptual complexity perspective, senior executives must possess higher order cognitive abilities and skills to effectively deal with multiple stakeholder groups and their competing interests. These groups, within and outside of the organization, request information related to their interest and pursue their individual agendas, which tends to increase the complexity of decision-making. Often, the problems executives face are not well defined or easily solved. Conceptual complexity is based in Stratified Systems Theory (SST, Jacobs & Jaques, 1987), and Interactive Complexity Theory as it applies to organizational leadership (Streufert & Driver, 1967).

As noted previously, Stratified Systems Theory differentiates leadership performance requirements by organizational levels: lower or production levels, mid or organizational levels, and the top or strategic levels. Strategic leaders are responsible not only for setting the course of direction for the organization but for coordinating the efforts to get there. A focus on the nature of work, and how it changes as one moves up the hierarchy, is a key component of this theory.

The structure, rather than content, of information processing is the main focus of Interactive Complexity Theory. Two variables, individual differences and environmental conditions, are important factors impacting leadership effectiveness. At the higher levels of the organization, a manager must be capable of dealing with a heavier information load; dealing with more organizational units, each with multiple goals; and the external environment. Although this theory does not offer a formal stratification like SST, it does address the qualitative changes in leadership requirements (Zaccaro, 1996).

The question is how do we develop capacity to move from one level to the next? How does one evolve from being a “good” to a “great” leader? How individuals think and, in particular, how they develop conceptual skills and the capacity to use those skills

to meet the challenges they are presented with has been of keen interest to educators since 1933 when John Dewey published his seminal work *How We Think*. More recent research (Kitchener, Lynch, Fischer, & Wood, 1993; Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972; Lewis & Jacobs, 1992) suggests this development happens in progressive stages over time. In *Learning in Adulthood*, Merriam and Caffarella (1999, pg. 94) note that some researchers theorize that stages are age-specific (Havighurst, 1972, Levinson & Levinson, 1996). For other developmental psychologists (Erickson, 1963, 1982; Vaillant, 1977) a "life period" such as middle age defines stage boundaries. Life transitions, with major changes such as marriage or divorce, are also believed to force movement through developmental stages. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) point out that there is disagreement with regard to what causes the movement between stages, and whether movement occurs only in an upward fashion rather than back and forth between stages.

Collins (2001) describes leadership development as a process of moving through various stages from one to five. He characterizes the Level 5 leader as one who puts the organization's interests above his own, and is ambitious for the institution. This type of individual "manifests a paradoxical blend of personal humility and a professional, almost maniacal will."

Each of these perspectives has implications for education and leadership development. It may be that what happens between activities, in the quiet time when one can reflect on experience, is as important as the experience itself. What happens during the transition is also of interest to researchers (Fischer & Bidell, 1997) in the field of cognitive development. Researchers (Kitchener, Lynch, Fischer, & Wood, 1993) have examined how "high-support" conditions in the classroom setting can lead to spurts in development of critical thinking skills. Understanding how one makes meaning of experience, how perception is changed, is a basis for learning. Examining how these changes occur is a critical aspect of designing appropriate developmental experiences.

### *Behavioral Complexity*

This theory grew from three separate sources: Mintzberg's (1973, 1975) integrated managerial role set, Tsui's (1984) multiple constituency framework, and Quinn's (1984) competing values framework. According to Zaccaro (1996) this perspective's central focus is on the "social demands that must be considered by the executive when formulating action, and the resulting need for the executive to have the capacity to display behavioral complexity" (p. 171).

According to Zaccaro (1996), Mintzberg characterizes executive work as action-oriented and filled with many different, brief, and discontinuous tasks. His research showed that executives make quick decisions often based more on trust than analysis. Mintzberg (1973, 1975) developed an integrated managerial role set that incorporates ten leader behaviors under the categories of interpersonal, informational, and decision roles. On an interpersonal level, a manager serves as a figurehead, leader, and in a liaison capacity. In informational roles, the manager monitors effectiveness within the internal and external environment, disseminates information throughout the organization, and acts

as spokesperson. Decision roles include entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, and negotiator. Mintzberg places emphasis on the need for all the roles to be performed by a strategic leader, in a way in which they form an integrated whole.

Tsui (1984) incorporates Mintzberg's roles into a multiple constituency framework. However, she saw the leader's effectiveness as a function of his or her reputation. For each role, Tsui contends that there are role senders, people who have expectations of the leader that must be satisfied. Meeting as many expectations as possible and maintaining a balance between competing expectations are viewed as measures of successful leadership.

Quinn's (1984) competing values framework focuses on the conflict created between the various roles. Quinn suggests that a leader must master and display the appropriate behaviors of each role to achieve a balance with opposing roles. Mastery of the ability to balance these requirements is seen as critical to leadership effectiveness.

### *Strategic Decision-making Perspective*

According to Zaccaro (1996) the focus here is primarily on "executive decision-making processes and the characteristics that facilitate these processes" (p. 265). He goes on to say that research on this perspective, from the various models, is lacking. The research undertaken in this dissertation will add to that body of knowledge. Although empirical evidence is scant, these models place a heavy emphasis on environmental impacts and the culture of the organization and see the executive role as a major factor in organizational performance. Implications stemming from environmental factors will be covered in more detail later in this chapter.

### *Visionary/Inspirational Models*

These models were developed based on the work of House (1977), Bass (1985), Conger and Kanungo (1987), Sashkin (1988), Nanus (1992). Visionary/inspirational models incorporate transformational and charismatic theories. Both charismatic and transformational forms of leadership are commonly discussed in terms of the effects that the leader has on followers and in terms of the relationship that exists between them.

The charismatic leader is described as someone who by the sheer force of personality is capable of having profound effects upon followers. Followers unquestionably and enthusiastically heed the requests of such leaders. They generate extremely intense loyalty, passion, and devotion. The relationship between the leader and follower is emotionally based, and psychological in nature. Charismatic leaders characteristically have a strong sense of self-confidence, a strong conviction of the rightness of their own beliefs and ideals, and dominance. They tend to model or demonstrate a set of values and set high goals and expectations for meeting them. They show confidence in their followers' ability to attain goals and articulate exciting visions of the future.

Transformational leaders make large changes in organizations in their attempt to improve them. Their personal values, vision, passion, and commitment to a mission energize and move others. According to Bass (1990), the transformational leader may exhibit many of the behaviors and attributes of the charismatic leader. They achieve their results by inspiring others by personal example; they may meet the emotional needs of their followers through individualized consideration, and/or intellectually stimulate them by stirring within them an awareness of problems, insights into solutions, and the passion to bring about the resolution.

### *Leadership Characteristics*

Although evidence shows that traits, such as drive, the desire to lead, honesty/integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and knowledge of the business do matter, they do not guarantee success. Kirkpatrick and Locke (1995) contend that, in order to lead well, one must take effective action. By formulating a vision, role modeling, and setting goals, a leader can use his or her talents to build a successful organization. Traits, such as those mentioned above, make it more likely that the leader will be successful, but they do not take the place of strategic planning and the ability to generate enthusiasm and motivate people to work toward the mission.

Senge (1990) sees leaders as designers, teachers, and stewards. He identifies the requisite skills as: the ability to build shared vision, to bring to the surface and challenge prevailing mental models, and to foster systematic patterns of thinking.

In *The Only Thing That Matters*, Albrecht (1993) reminds us that “everything you do communicates” and suggests that contradictions in behavior be identified and eliminated. He believes that sharing the vision, educating leaders, and employee training is essential to empowering employees.

### *Strategic Leader Characteristics*

In a textbook prepared for a course in Strategic Leadership and Decision-Making (ICAF, 1997), key competencies a strategic leader must possess are discussed. These are categorized in conceptual, technical, or interpersonal skill areas. Conceptual skills include thinking skills that allow one to deal with the complex, changing environment, while at the same time considering various frames of reference and ancillary effects of possible courses of action. Technical competencies involve understanding the environment in all its component parts, plus also understanding the effect each part may have on the organization. Communication skills and consensus building are considered key interpersonal skills.

What flows through each of the categories is awareness of environmental influences, including the people operating in that environment. The ability to accurately ascertain the environmental effects and relationships, from multiple points of view, is considered critical to effective leadership. There is relationship comparison and connectivity in reframing one’s understanding of an issue from various viewpoints. Four

of the five skills noted in *A Guide to the Strategic Leader Development Inventory* (Jacobs, 2000): conceptual flexibility; political sensibility; quick study; and complex understanding, are instrumental in this process.

As shown in Table 1, Zaccaro (2001, p. 292) categorically lists individual qualities which research suggests foster executive leadership:

Table 1

Requisite Executive Characteristics.

<b>Requisite Executive Characteristics</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Skill</b>
Cognitive Capacities	Intelligence
	Analytical reasoning
	Flexible integrative complexity
	Metacognitive skills
	Verbal/writing skills
	Creativity
Social Capacities	Behavioral flexibility
	Negotiation skills
	Conflict management skills
	Persuasion skills
	Social reasoning skills
Personality	Openness
	Flexibility
	Adaptability
	Risk Propensity
	Locus of control
	Self-discipline
	Curiosity
Motivation	Need for achievement
	Self-efficacy
	Need for socialized power
Expertise and Knowledge	Functional expertise
	Social expertise
	Knowledge of environmental elements

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM, 1998) conducted research that led to the development of executive core competencies (ECQ). They include:

- **Leading Change:** Creativity & Innovation, Continual Learning, External Awareness, Flexibility, Resilience, Service Motivation, Strategic Thinking, Vision

- **Leading People:** Conflict Management, Cultural Awareness, Integrity/Honesty, Team Building
- **Results Driven:** Accountability, Customer Service, Decisiveness, Entrepreneurship, Problem Solving, Technical Credibility
- **Business Acumen:** Financial Management, Human Resources Management, Technology Management
- **Building Coalitions/Communication:** Influence/Negotiating, Interpersonal Skills, Oral Communication, Partnering, Political Savvy, Written Communication

In underscoring the importance of developing civilian leaders, OPM director Janet Lachance stated, “The demands and challenges of the new century will be very different than they were in the past, or even today. Our ability to take the government forward will depend on the leadership skills and values of our senior executives” (as cited in Eyde, Gregory, Muldrow, & Mergan, 1999).

#### *General Environmental Impacts*

Intellectual freedom must exist for an organization to benefit from innovative ideas. Yet, the old guard often fights for the status quo. Systems do not embrace change. When people exercise academic, intellectual, or any type of freedom that threatens the current system, resistance tends to flare up. Managing these defense mechanisms takes maneuvering. A strategic leader, especially in the world of tomorrow, will need to recognize roadblocks to new ideas, learn from what he or she has to add to the decision-making process, and capitalize on turning resistance into an advantage. Environmental factors must support disclosure; the organization has to allow for new information, even if it challenges existing assumptions.

Senge (1990) points out the need for an organization not only to adapt to a changing environment, but also to go beyond adapting to a generative learning approach that allows for growth. Building an organization where people are continually expanding their capabilities to shape their future is the key responsibility for leadership. The adult learning literature supports this. Watkins and Marsick (1993, p. 8, as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999) describe it as follows:

The learning organization is one that learns continuously and transforms itself. Learning takes place in individuals, teams, the organization, and even in the communities with which the organizations interact. Learning is a continuous, strategically used process—integrated with and running parallel to work.

Merriam and Caffarella (1999, p. 40) go on to say that the organization’s capacity to “respond quickly and in novel ways” is what allows it to foster innovation and change.

Fairholm (1994) identifies the following operational processes as elements of culture in organizations: communications, cooperation, control, conflict, commitment, cohesiveness, trust, and caring (p. 31-33). He points out that common values build trust, which is the foundation of cooperative action. In a climate of trust, individuals can give open, candid reactions to what they see as right or wrong. In trust cultures there is little manipulation, few hidden agendas, no unreasonable controls, nor saccharine sweetness that discounts real problems. Instead, there is a congruency in concepts, conduct and concern, a unity appropriate to group membership that does not risk individuality. Without trust, cultural values can become strictures, impeding individual and group progress. Useful knowledge is the basis of trust (p. 11).

Burke (1994) suggests new paradigms of leadership. He sees major shifts in organizational dynamics as:

- from growth to consolidation
- from moderate to warp speed
- from moderate to high complexity
- from strategic planning to strategic implementation
- from consultant jargon to popular, accepted concepts
- from management to leadership
- from top-down to participative management
- from little to high concern for ethics
- and from a micro to a macro perspective

What does this mean to leadership? Naisbett and Aburdene (1985) talk about the ways corporations will be reinvented, which has particular ramifications for the type of leadership needed:

1. The best and brightest people will gravitate toward the corporations that foster personal growth.
2. The manager's role will be that of coach, teacher and mentor.
3. The companies provide ownership to their employees.
4. There will be more third-party, contract labor.
5. There will be networking, people-style management.
6. There will be entrepreneurship within the company, which helps revitalize it.
7. Quality will be paramount.
8. Intuition and creativity will be the mentality.
9. Large corporations will emulate the positive and productive qualities of small business.
10. The information economy will foster a massive shift from attention to facilities and capital investments to a focus on quality of life issues.

Kanter (1977) takes a slightly different view. She sees innovative organizations as having work responsibilities described in terms of results, with flexibility in the way they are achieved. They will have unallocated resources, such as time and money, available for projects beyond formal job descriptions and business plans. There will be

abundant and visible recognition for a variety of achievements, not just a few occasional rewards for superstars. They will have ongoing budgets for frequent and continuing education and training, plus special assignments that challenge and stretch people. They will place an emphasis on communicating business plans and market conditions, through all levels of the organization and with advance warning of policy shifts. They will encourage cross-fertilization of ideas and talent, with opportunities for employees to move between departments. Finally, organizations will create a networking structure through special project teams and allow for frequent trials of new concepts and ideas.

Burke (1994) takes a much simpler view, saying that effective organizations will be less hierarchical and network more. Such organizations will involve organizational members in decision-making, and they will be more people-oriented.

Kouzes and Posner (1987) stress the fact that plans alone will not assure mission accomplishment. To succeed, a philosophy—a set of high standards by which the organization is measured—and principles are necessary. The philosophy defines the culture of the organization. Plans should “lay down milestones and put up signposts” (p. 187). If the plans are clear and understandable, people will be more committed to the mission and goals of the company. In their 2002 edition of *The Leadership Challenge*, Kouzes and Posner emphasize how important understanding the environment is in the post-9/11 world. In this new context, heightened security, inner connectivity, the need to develop social capital, speed of technological advances, the changing workforce, and people’s more intense search for meaning in their lives combine to stress the importance of environmental factors.

It becomes increasingly clear that the quality of an organization’s top leaders is a critical influence on its overall effectiveness and continuing adaptability (Katz & Kahn, as cited in Zaccaro, 1996). The type of leadership required in these scenarios would be one in which the leader was strong in his or her ability to develop and inspire the individual members of the workforce.

### *The Strategic Environment: Alignment and Interaction*

According to an article by D. C. Hambrick (1995) entitled “Putting Top Managers Back in the Strategy Picture,” there are four areas of strategic leadership that deserve more attention. The four dimensions are concerned with external and internal spheres, ambiguity and change, multifunctional aspects, and the task of managing through others.

Moving the organization toward the vision takes work and involves constant monitoring of the environment. Figure 3 (ICAF, 1998) shows a model for the strategic frame of reference. The future objective state will be realized over many years of cycling through a variety of activities necessary to bring about transformation.

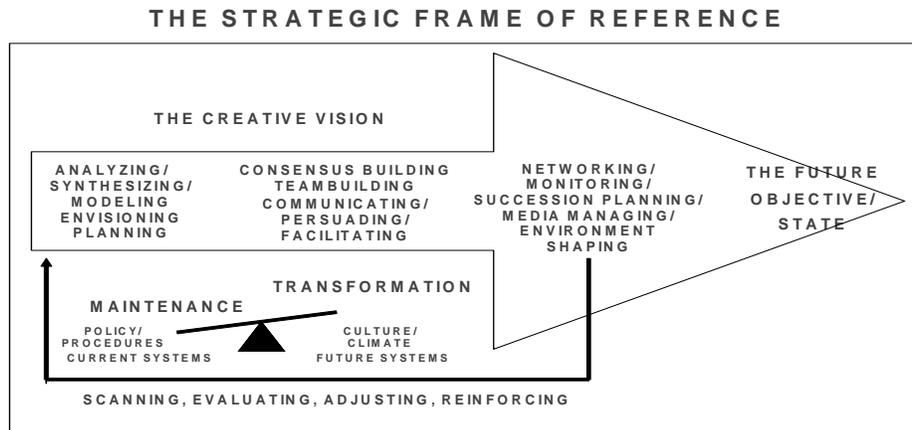


Figure 3. The strategic frame of reference.

In managing the internal and external components of the organization, the manager needs to align the current and expected external environment with consideration of technology, market trends, regulatory forces, competitor actions, etc. Watkins and Marsick (1993, as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 41) call “connecting the organization to its environment” an action which is imperative to sustaining a learning organization. In addition to external relationships, an internal environment that has an adaptive capacity and is in line with the strategic thrusts of the firm must be created.

The leadership task is multifunctional, in that it cuts across marketing, operations, finance, and other activities. The leader must integrate tasks throughout the organization. The complexity of the organization’s tasks could create a knowledge asymmetry in that the subordinates know more about components of the organization than the manager does. This has important implications for information exchange, reward and control systems, and top team composition.

The leader must deal with constant ambiguity, complexity, and information overload. There is far more information coming in than can be processed effectively. Often this stimulus can be vague, ill-formed, and competing. Sometimes there are interconnections that are difficult to grasp.

In large-scale organizations, leaders manage through intermediaries. They serve as conduits and agents for the leader. Leadership comes from members taking roles to carry out the group’s mission. Group leadership involves helping the group determine its mission, goals, values, and means of attaining its objectives. It requires the leader to act as a moderator and facilitator for the group process, in an effort to make it more cohesive and productive. Figure 4 demonstrates how these environmental factors, along with others, help define the work of a leader.

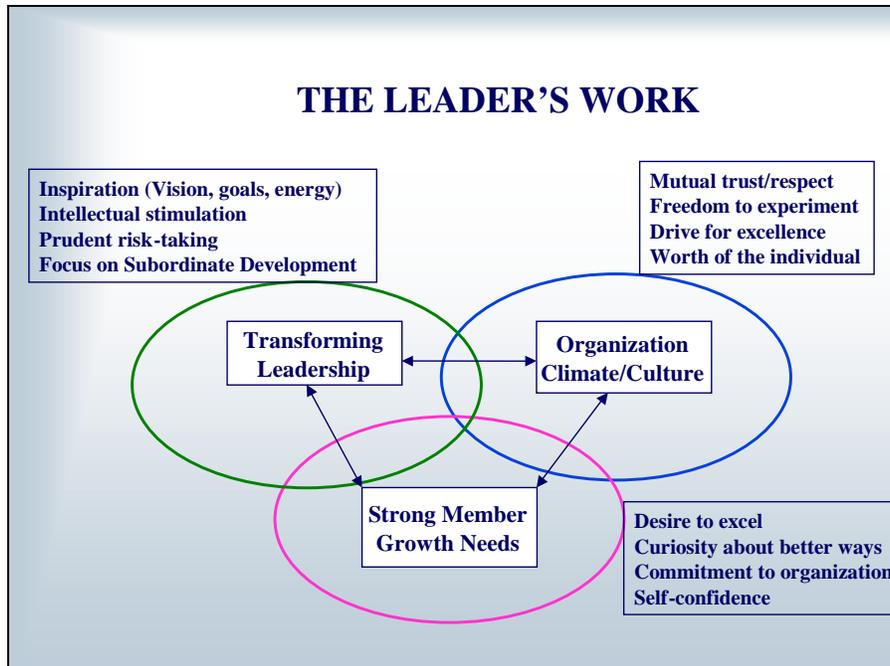


Figure 4. The leader's work (Jacobs, 2002).

### *The Struggle for Balance*

Margaret Wheatley (1994) looks at the dynamics of natural living systems to come to a new understanding of fluctuations, disorder, and change. She also refers to the research on chaos theory as helpful in appreciating the relationship between order and chaos. In her words, “These two forces are now understood as mirror images, one containing the other, a continual process where a system can leap into chaos and unpredictability, yet within that be held within parameters that are well-ordered and predictable (1994, p. 11).” She points out that disequilibrium causes one to change, and that change stimulates creativity and leads to growth. If this is so, it follows that an individual who could manage such unbalance and leverage fluctuations or challenges to learn would be at an advantage. She notes that under certain circumstances “when the system is far from equilibrium, creative individuals can have enormous impact (p. 95).” Although beyond chaos theory there is not a great deal of literature specifically addressing this need for balance, it was apparent in the findings that this was important on a personal level with the leaders interviewed. Wheatley speaks about balance here as it relates to organizations, yet it can be extrapolated to beyond the living systems to individual lives and work.

### *Leader Development*

In an attempt to show business leaders what they can learn from Army leadership, Sullivan and Harper (1996) use the metaphor of “the Jazzman” to describe what they refer to as the “learning leader.” They view the Jazzman as an individual grounded in fundamentals, disciplined, a team builder, innovator, passionate, and compassionate

toward others. The learning behaviors include giving meaning to the future by defining it in understandable terms, teaching through explanation vice direction, and by shaping the manner change impacts the organization.

After analyzing the data, it became clear that research supported the findings. Buckingham and Clifton (2001) believe that organizations place people in positions where their strengths are utilized, yet the greatest room for growth is in one's areas of weakness. They define a person's strength as "consistent, near-perfect performance in an activity" (p. 25). Skills and capacities, coupled with talent, are required to build strengths. Talents are defined as naturally occurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior. Skills are defined as the steps in an activity, and knowledge consists of facts and lessons learned. Together, these create what is referred to as "a strength." They consider talents innate and maintain that skills and knowledge can be acquired. Although overcoming or strengthening a weakness may be more difficult than improving a strength, the overall benefit would be greater. The important contribution is that a development program must factor this natural proclivity to stress and build on strengths rather than identify and address weakness and determine whether development is possible. The authors suggest three tools to help us think about and leverage this concept:

- Understanding how to distinguish natural talent from things that can be learned.
- A system to identify dominant talents.
- A tool that constitutes a common language to describe talents.

In understanding how to distinguish natural talent from things that can be learned, it is important to realize the difference between factual knowledge and experiential knowledge. Factual knowledge is required in striving for excellence. Buckingham & Clifton (2001) provide examples of experiential knowledge as understanding the importance of setting the stage for whatever needs to be done, or knowing the right people to influence to achieve the desired goal. Values and self-awareness are included in experiential knowledge. They consider self-awareness vital to strength building because as it grows over time it allows for identification of natural talents that might be developed as strengths. The authors note that skills bring structure to experiential knowledge, but point out that some things, like empathy, cannot be broken down into steps.

To follow the argument made by Buckingham & Clifton (2001), to effect change, there must be a system for identifying a person's dominant talents. At the same time, a weakness must be identified as genuine also. Once the weakness is found, it is important to know whether it is skills, knowledge, or talent that is lacking. Skills and knowledge can be enhanced more easily than talent, and they offer five strategies for dealing with a talent weakness:

- Get a little better.
- Design a support system (e.g., a new habit or tool like a Palm Pilot).
- Use one of your strongest themes to overwhelm your weakness.
- Find a partner (i.e., someone whose skills or talents are complementary).
- Just stop doing it.

Kaplan and Kaiser (2003) suggest that the root causes of imbalance between strength and weakness are:

- Uneven skill development
- Skewed mental models
- One-sided values
- Fear of inadequacy
- The tendency to polarize

They suggest strengthening the weak side and moderating the overused side can make improvement. Their duality-oriented concept of leadership is helpful as it addresses beliefs and feelings that underlie an individual's approach.

In the preface to the third edition of *The Leadership Challenge*, Kouzes and Posner (2002) explain that while the content of leadership has not changed significantly since their first edition, the context certainly has. They claim that the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and interpersonal skills are much more important now than in the past. They describe leadership first as a “personal journey of exploration and then as a rallying of others” (p. xxvi) and state that the successful leader will be the “more collaborative person who values people first, profits second” (p. xix). The core theme that is woven through the 2002 edition, supported by the finding of this study, is that regardless of anything else “leadership is a relationship” (p. xxvii). The next question addresses ways to facilitate the personal journey of self-understanding so that others may be brought along.

Klein (2003) has suggested ways for developing intuition as a way to “translate our experience into action.” He notes that our experience lets us see what is going on, make judgments, and react (p. vi). In order to help people use intuition to facilitate decision-making, Klein developed training programs, which identify and work on barriers to intuitive decision-making:

- Organizational policies whereby paper credentials may outweigh experience.
- Rapid turnover which reduces the amount of experience gained on any one task.
- Accelerating change which leads to obsolescence of experience.
- Procedures which make training easier but may forego need for judgment calls.
- Metrics that are not appropriate for the results sought.
- Information technologies that focus on the equipment rather than the thinking (pp. 23-24).

Klein (2003) describes the basic elements of mental conditioning as the ability to identify and understand the decision requirements of the job; practicing the difficult decisions in context, and measuring the event to refine one's judgment skills; and reviewing decision-making experiences. This process helps turn experience into expertise, and facilitate the development of intuition, and allowing for better decision-

making (Klein 1998). Developing skills requires repetitive practice and feedback. Fully developed capacities of dialectic thinking and practical logic (Brookfield, 1991, 2000) would help a person become a talented decision maker. These types of mental gymnastic exercises could be simulated through on-line learning, giving the student the option to practice at their discretion and in a private setting.

Howard Gardner (1995, p. 36-38) identified four factors that appear crucial to the practice of effective leadership. The first is a tie to the community (or audience), whereby the relationship with followers is typically ongoing, active, and dynamic. The second is there is a certain rhythm to their life, through which they are in contact with community and self. They need the tie to community, but they also must know their mind, including changing thoughts, values, and strategies. He mentions that it is important that leaders find the time and the means for reflecting, for assuming distance from the battle or the mission. Fully developed leaders need both isolation and immersion. Third, Gardner argues: “Leaders exercise their influence in two principal, though contrasting ways; through the stories or messages that they communicate, and through the traits that they embody” (37). There should be a relationship and congruence between the stories and embodiments—their actions should follow their words. Last he talks about the centrality of choice, whereby the leader does not rely on his or her position or power to influence others. But, people choose to follow such leaders.

#### *Key Factors in Strategic Leadership Development*

Stratified Systems Theory (Jacobs, 2002) suggests the following factors are highly relevant to the progression of strategic leadership development:

1. performance requirements are different at higher levels than at lower levels, with change lying primarily in complexity and time frame;
2. at least some attributes are important for the capacity to perform; and
3. these attributes may change as performance requirements change.

Adult learning theory on human development, in particular cognitive development and stage theory, offers some explanation of how one learns and advances to levels of greater capacity. With SST in particular, the performance requirements at the higher levels of leadership might correlate with psychological theories such as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and transformational learning theory. Mezirow (1977, 1981, 1990, 1998) offers a great deal to the transformational learning literature. Siebert (1994) offers suggestions on how to develop a “survivor personality” that will allow one to gain strength from adversity, thrive under pressure, continually improve, handle difficult people, recover from illness, surmount disruptive change, develop inner resiliency, and convert misfortune to good luck—all important aspects effective leadership.

#### *Adult Learning Theories: Implications for Leadership Development*

In *Learning in Adulthood*, Merriam and Caffarella (1999) say that, while definitions of learning generally include concepts of behavior change and experience, it is

what happens when learning takes place that is the basis of adult learning theories. In this text, they chose to include five basic orientations: behaviorist, cognitivist, humanist, social learning, and constructivist. Each will be described briefly below in respect to the basic construct behind the theory and how it has influenced adult learning.

### *Behaviorist Orientation*

This orientation is the oldest, stemming from work done by John Watson in the early part of the twentieth century, although the names most often associated with this school of thought include Thorndike for his contribution to stimulus-response theory (connectionism) and Skinner for operant conditioning (reinforcement). For behaviorists, three basic assumptions about learning are held to be true (Grippin & Peters, as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 252):

1. Observable behavior rather than internal thought processes is the focus of the study.
2. Environment shapes behavior.
3. The principles of continuity and reinforcement are central to explaining the learning process.

Educational practices grounded in behaviorism include the systematic design of instruction, behavioral objectives, notions of the instructor's accountability, programmed instruction, computer-assisted instruction, and competency-based instruction (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

### *Cognitive Orientation*

Around 1929, Gestalt theorists challenged behaviorist orientation. They believed that to understand learning one must look at the big picture rather than a single event, and focus on internal processes rather than external influences. Their work led to cognitive or information processing learning theories. The key contributions from Gestalt theorists were the identification of the role of perception, insight, and meaning to adult learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Those experiences of making sense of the environment, along with problem solving, were key underpinnings of their beliefs. Learning was believed to be within the learner's control.

Cognitive studies have made contributions to research and theory building, information processing theories, work on memory and metacognition, theories of transfer, mathematical learning theory models, the study of expertise, computer simulations, and artificial intelligence (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

### *Humanist Orientation*

The humanist orientation incorporates both the affective and cognitive dimensions of learning. The humanist orientation, originally informed by Freud, rejected his view of the subconscious and the behaviorist's environmental influence. Rogers and Maslow are

the names most often associated with the humanist perspective. They framed their theory on the assumptions that people can control their own destiny; are inherently good and will strive to better the world; are free to act; and possess unlimited potential for growth and development (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 256). Roberts (1983) looks at the state-of-consciousness psychology and one's capacity to learn.

Other main contributors include Maslow, who saw self-actualization as the goal of learning and considered the desire for such as the motivation to learn, and Rogers with his client-centered therapy that is reflected in student-centered learning. Knowles' theory of andragogy is based on this perspective (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

Educators have benefited from the humanist influence through the concept of self-directed learning, and the value placed on the role of experience in the learning process.

In leadership theory, much attention is given to research on motivation, which fits in this learning domain. According to Margaret Wheatley (1994), people are more enticed by the intrinsic motivators inherent in work than by external rewards. She says we are "refocusing on the deep longings we have for community, meaning, dignity, and love in our organizational lives (p. 12)."

### *Social Learning Orientation*

Miller and Dollard first explored social learning in the 1940s (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 259). This view combines elements from the behaviorist and cognitive orientations, and posits that people learn from observing others in a social setting. From the behaviorist view they borrowed the concepts of stimulus-response and reinforcement and imitation as a way of learning. In the 1960s, Bandura's influence introduced the cognitive orientation. He did not believe that imitation was required, rather that people can learn vicariously from watching others. In fact, self-regulation is a key Bandura concept, in that one can visualize the consequences of behavior and act according to their best interests. More recently, Bandura (1995, 1997) added self-efficacy, or our estimate of how competent we will be in a particular environment.

Social learning theory is significant to adult learning in that it brought attention to the fact that people are influenced by and in turn influence their environment. The value added includes its influence in the areas of motivation to engage in learning activities, context and the learner's interaction with the environment to explain behavior, and the nature of mentoring.

### *Constructivism Orientation*

In this view, learning is a process of constructing meaning; it is how people make sense of their experience. Other assumptions involve the nature of reality, the role of experience, what knowledge is of interest, and whether the process of meaning-making is primarily individual or social (Steffe & Gale, as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 261).

The constructivist school of thought influences the following: self-direction, transformational theory, andragogy, cognitive apprenticeships, situated learning, reflective practice, and communities of practice. It has also impacted continuing professional education and human resource development (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

All this is about changing individuals for the better, or in a way that brings them closer to realizing their full potential. How does that change occur? On what level and in what way does one take in information and go through experiences, internalizing it in some way to derive a benefit from it? The final section of this chapter will explore how that might occur.

### *Adult Learning*

In Brookfield's (2000) attempts to discern which capacities of lifelong learning are specifically relevant for adults in learning effectively, he identified four strands:

- the capacity to think dialectically,
- the capacity to employ practical logic,
- the capacity to know how we know what we know,
- and the capacity for critical reflection.

Dialectical thinking involves exploring the contradictions and discrepancies in general information, such as rules, as juxtaposed with the contextual realities of the situation. He notes that this skill is learned over time with experience and is one of the key indicators in the research on how wisdom is developed. This is an important aspect to meaning-making in that, while considering the context and validity of the situation, the values and general beliefs we hold are paramount to our understanding.

Practical logic is in the order of critical thinking, yet in a way that is deeper and context-specific. It is distinguishable from dialectical thinking because of the attention to internal features, and is seen in research related to how people develop job expertise.

Knowing what we know, or epistemological or self-conscious awareness of how we come to know what we know, provides us with an evolved understanding of what it means for us to know something. Kitchener (1983, 1986) describes this as epistemic cognition, which she finds "includes the individual's assumptions about what can be known and what cannot, how we can know, and how certain we can be in knowing" (Kitchener, 1986, p. 76). Mezirow (1998) identifies epistemic critical self-reflection as an important domain of transformative learning. He notes that this occurs when the learner "sets out to examine the assumptions and explore the causes, the nature, and consequences of his or her frames of reference to ascertain why he or she is predisposed to learn in a certain way or to appropriate particular goals" (p. 195).

Brookfield's (2000) fourth strand involves the capacity for critical reflection, whereby adults become critically reflective of the assumptions, beliefs, and values gained

through their childhood and adolescence. Brookfield (1994, 1995) and Mezirow (1977, 1981, 1990, 1998) argue that this process can only occur as adults pass through experiences in their interpersonal, work, and political lives that are characterized by breadth, depth, diversity, and different degrees of intensity. Perspective transformation happens in incremental movement rather than in dramatic shifts; it occurs in a series of fluctuations marked by overall movement forward (Mezirow, 1991).

### *Reflection as a Key Factor in Adult Learning*

As described by Boyd and Fales (1983), reflection is defined as “the process of creating and clarifying the meaning of experience (present or past) in terms of self (self in relation to self and self in relation to the world). The outcome of the process is changed conceptual perspective (p. 101).” Most people have difficulty explaining what reflection means. In a study conducted by the authors, even self-professed “reflective” counselors had difficulty answering that question.

In Patricia Cranton’s (1996) book, *Professional Development as Transformative Learning*, the author notes key contributors to the current understanding of reflection. Dewey (1933) wrote about reflection in the context of thinking and problem solving. Mezirow’s (1991) critical self-reflection is similar. Boud, Keough, and Walker (1985) added the affective domain (feelings and beliefs) to the description. Schön (1983) provides an alternate and influential view of reflection. Unlike Dewey’s description of reflection as a rational process, he sees it as largely unarticulated and intuitive. Schön’s description rounds out the definition of reflection. He points out the limitations of technical rationality and attempts to explain how people “think on their feet” or “just know what to do.” Reflection could be, for different people, unarticulated intuitions, a detailed review of an experience, a logical analysis, or an evaluation of feelings (as cited in Cranton, 1996, p. 77).

Daudelin (1996) describes reflection as a highly personal cognitive process leading to learning. He defines reflection as “the process of stepping back from an experience to ponder, carefully and persistently, its meaning to the self (and to others key to oneself) through the development of inferences; learning is the creation of meaning from past or current events that sees as a guide for future behavior” (p. 40). In reference to strategic leadership, reflection is the meaning-making tool that produces understanding. Reflection is the essence of systems thinking (T.O. Jacobs, personal communication, March 25, 2004).

The concept of reflection has been associated with adult learning and human development since ancient times. In *The Adventure of Reason: The Uses of Philosophy in Sociology*, Rickman (1983) states, “Since the 17th century, it has been argued that the foundations of knowledge inevitably involve self-knowledge, because what is at issue is a critical scrutiny of the mind’s cognitive powers. This scrutiny, called epistemology or theory of knowledge, has become one of the main preoccupations of philosophy since Descartes” (p. 11). Socrates may have been one of the first to utilize reflection in his use of questioning techniques. Challenging the statements and beliefs of his students forced

them to develop the ability to reflect (Daudelin, 1996). According to Daudelin, other early proponents of reflection as a way of learning include Sophocles, who declared that one learns by observing what one does time and time again, and John Locke, who believed that knowing is purely a function of thoughtful reaction to experience.

More contemporary researchers also recognize the importance of reflection as a learning phenomenon. According to Mead (1934), mind and self are additions to the body that are acquired through the process of social living; that is, they are both a learned phenomenon. Mead argues that consciousness emerges as a result of social behavior (as cited in Jarvis, 1992, p. 36-37). This is consistent with Bandura's (Reed & Stone, 1991) social learning theory, and Freire's (1973) theory on critical consciousness.

Jarvis (1992, p. 76) agrees that learning tends to be culturally reproduced. Non-reflective learning involves rote memorization and learning basic functions or operations. Reflective learning involves the process of internalizing knowledge and incorporating it into one's perspective, which can lead to a new way of thinking. Jarvis points out that, although it is suggested that nonreflective learning reproduces the social structures of society, this is not the case with reflective learning. This has important implications for leadership development in that it would follow that reflective learning allows for generation of new ideas and fosters change.

### *Developing the Capacity for Reflection*

The late Paulo Freire (1973), who made his lifework helping people develop their thinking skills, believed that what we need is an education "which would lead man to take a new stance toward their problems. . . an education of 'I wonder,' instead of merely, 'I do'." That wonder is found in the act of reflection. Boyd and Fales (1983) take the following perspective: "The process of reflection is the core difference between whether a person repeats the same experience several times, becoming highly proficient at one behavior, or learns from experience in such a way that he or she is cognitively or effectively changed" (p. 100).

Mezirow (1991) describes a "disorienting dilemma" which often precedes transformative learning. Boyd and Fales (1983) found that the process of reflection begins with a sense of inner discomfort. Jarvis (1992) describes this as the disequilibrium of an unsolved problem, which, in the struggle to solve, tends to generate learning. He discusses how a situation becomes problematic, whereby the process of reflection stimulates learning.

Jarvis (1992) employed Kolb's (1986) experiential learning model in a research project. The model was presented to groups after a learning intervention. They were instructed to adapt it to reflect their experiences. The research results identified three forms of learning: Nonlearning (presumption, nonconsideration, rejection), Nonreflective learning (preconscious learning, skills learning, memorization), and Reflective learning (contemplation, reflective skills learning, experimental learning). Each of the reflective forms of learning can have two possible outcomes, conformity and

change. Of the three forms of reflective learning, contemplation is the most common. Contemplation can be described as the process of thinking about an experience and reaching a conclusion about it without necessarily referring to the wider social reality. Contemplation can involve not only meditation but also the reasoning processes of the philosopher, the activities of a pure mathematician, and even the thought processes of everyday life. What distinguishes contemplative learning from the process of thinking itself is the fact that a conclusion is reached (Jarvis, 1992, p. 77).

The literature clearly supports the position that it is possible to teach someone the skills needed for reflective learning. Reid and Stone (1991), discuss “cognitive instruction,” which is rooted in the cognitive theories of Vygotsky and Piaget. The authors claim cognitive instruction, which treats students as apprentice learners who solve problems collaboratively, works because it forces them to consider other aspects of a problem through the exchange of dialogue and reap the benefit of observing other students’ ideas and problem-solving skills (p.17). They maintain that it is crucial to challenge the student cognitively, and that this is best achieved through verbal and nonverbal interaction. In discussing evolutionary studies of learning, Marchese (1997) identifies apprenticeship as the most natural form of learning known to man. He points to the research being conducted in neuroscience as moving the study of cognition to a blend of psychology and biology as recent advancements in the study of learning. Morrison (1996) suggests ways to incorporate journal writing into the learning process as a reflective activity.

Transformative learning occurs when an individual has reflected on assumptions or expectations about what will occur, has found these assumptions to be faulty, and has revised them (Cranton, 1996; Mezirow, 1991). A number of authors support the belief that critical reflection is the key to learning from experience (Brookfield, 1987; Boud & Walker, 1991; Freire, 1973; Tennant & Pogson, 1995). To aid the professional in practicing reflective thinking, Cranton (1996, p. 86) developed the following list of questions to help one determine sources and consequences of assumptions:

- Was there a time when I did not hold this belief?
- Can I remember when I first believed this?
- Was there an influential person in my life who held this belief?
- Was this belief prevalent in my family, my community, or my past educational contexts?
- Is this a commonly held belief in the organization or institution in which I work?
- Do I associate any special incident with this belief?
- If I did not believe this, how would I act differently?
- If I continue to believe this, how will I act?
- Do these actions feel right for me?
- What other people are affected by my believing this?

The corporate world, which has historically placed a higher value on action than reflection, is placing a newfound importance on reflective thinking. Working with upper-level managers as subjects, research findings by Daudelin (1996) led him to conclude that

“Managers need support in their efforts to make sense out of the events and transfer the learning to new situations, and that this support may be found in a process that has helped people learn since ancient times: reflection” (p. 36). The power of questions in the reflection process and the role others can play in guiding reflection are critical aspects to consider. His findings from a field study, which involved the application of a four-stage model that uses reflection as a learning tool, suggest that guided reflection can, indeed, increase learning.

Daudelin (1996) claims that many of the tools used in the quality movement are actually processes of reflection. He believes that the trend toward greater employee involvement in corporate decision-making has changed the relationship between leaders and followers in corporations. Daudelin notes that companies such as AT&T, PepsiCo, and Aetna are developing ways to introduce the reflective practice into their management development programs. In addition, Exxon, Motorola, General Motors, and Hewlett-Packard are just a few of the companies that are using a system called Action-Reflection Learning (ARL) to explore and find answers to important business problems (as cited in Daudelin, 1996, p. 39).

Boyd and Fales (1983) developed a list of components which they believe make up the process of reflection. They constructed this list by taking abstracts from their research data. Three separate studies were conducted with the following samples: (a) a five-item questionnaire administered to 21 graduate students in adult education and 12 practicing counselors, (b) interviews and questionnaires with 69 adult educators, (c) interviews with nine counselors, (d) the author’s experience and reflection. The process can be understood through the following six stages:

1. A sense of inner discomfort
2. Identification or clarification of the concern
3. Openness to new information from internal and external sources, with ability to observe and take in from a variety of perspectives
4. Resolution, expressed as “integration,” “coming together,” “acceptance of self-reality,” and “creative synthesis”
5. Establishing continuity of self with past, present, and future
6. Deciding whether to act on the outcome of the reflective process

The ability to reflect is critical to fostering higher-order thinking skills, and a process to be fostered as an important part of personal development.

### *Leaders as Learners*

Although most efforts at developing leaders are geared toward developing self-awareness, teaching skills, and strengthening weaknesses, Kaplan and Kaiser (2003) suggest that the focus should be on balancing strengths and weaknesses. Their research has shown that a common problem with recently promoted senior executives is their inability to adjust their skill sets to the new position. Often, these individuals tend to overly rely on their strengths, and overuse one, resulting in an imbalance. They suggest

increasing versatility by guarding against this lopsidedness. Two dualities were identified that need to be balanced in order for a leader to be versatile: forceful as opposed to enabling leadership, and strategic as opposed to operational leadership. Although these seem to be very different, Kaplan and Kaiser point out that they actually complement each other, with the strategic-operational duality representing the work itself and the forceful-enabling dichotomy describing how one goes about his work. Wheatley (1994) complements that idea. She notes that the two forces, freedom and order, act in opposition. The paradox is that their working against each other creates a dynamic which helps generate viable, well-ordered, autonomous systems.

### *Summary*

For this study, the most relevant leadership literature was found in the strategic leader theories, specifically the literature addressing conceptual complexity and visionary and inspirational models. The ability for the leader to think in a way that broke from the custom of following orders and directions, taking in many factors from the environment, people, history, and most strongly from his or her personal experience, was evident. The emphasis on others and the importance they gave to dealing with people in a fair and reasonable manner, and inspiring them to succeed in their own right, made others strive to do their best and give their full support to help the leader accomplish the mission. It is important to note that it was not just charisma that made people want to follow these leaders, it had more to do with their skill in developing and leveraging relationships, and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.

In the literature on adult learning, the most important had to do with cognitive development and reflection, with forcing oneself to challenge assumptions and extend beyond the limits of their current situation. Each of the orientations discussed in this review; behaviorist, cognitive, humanist, social learning, and constructivism all have a role in how people learn. It is not sufficient to choose one orientation and build a program based on that. However, any educational endeavor that helps develop self awareness and strengthen skills in managing oneself on a personal level and in relation to others was important. In all of this, it would appear that reflection is the primary activity in meaning-making. Educational interventions that provide opportunity for reflection and enhance the reflective process would serve to strengthen strategic capability.

Further research must be done relative to the development of strategic leadership capability. The literature on adult human learning is directly relevant, and adds to the body of knowledge on leadership. Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) examine stage theory in an attempt to explain the progression from imperial, to interpersonal, transactional, and finally transformational leadership in conjunction with constructionist theory. They see a transactional leader as one who has gone beyond struggling with competing loyalties to achieving a “self-determined identity” (p. 653). This literature fits well with the finding from this study, in particular how these leaders were able to transcend conventional wisdom to achieve great things for the people they worked with and the organization. This is in line with the Saskin, Rosenbach, and Saskin (1997) discussion on McClelland’s four stages of maturation, in the manner in which power are utilized in the leader’s work.

A Stage IV leader would leverage power to transform people and organizations, which was clearly a skill held by these exemplars.

### *Closing*

Leadership is a complex subject, one that does not lend itself easily to analysis. Therefore, in spite of the focus this subject has received over the last thirty years, and the theories that have developed, it is still not clear exactly how one becomes a successful leader. Obviously, much literature in both leadership and adult learning exist. However, a great deal of research remains to be done. Theory as to how leadership development—the “learning” part—takes place and how to facilitate that process would be a valuable contribution, one which this study explores through the experience of seasoned strategic leaders. How do these luminaries become the shining example for others and inspire others to follow along in their path? What place does meaning-making and mental-model-making have in their ability to grow into strategic leaders? How might cognitive complexity and the process of reflection facilitate the mental model-making process for these leaders? This study analyzed the data from interviews with these “lamplighters,” juxtaposes it against the literature on learning, and in Chapter IV offers a model to represent key dynamics found in these individuals.

## Chapter III – Method

“If the artist does not perfect a new vision in his process of doing, he acts mechanically and repeats some old model fixed like a blueprint in his mind.”

John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 1935, p. 50

### *Introduction*

The study employed a qualitative research approach in an effort to better understand the phenomenon of leadership development. Sharan Merriam (1998) describes the philosophical assumption behind qualitative research as “the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds.” She goes on to state that researchers who use this methodology are interested in “understanding the meaning people have constructed” or how they “make sense of their world” (p. 7). According to Webster's dictionary (1966), a theory is a plausible or scientifically acceptable general principle or body of principles offered to explain phenomena. In the 2004 version, Merriam-Webster defines theory as the analysis of a set of facts in their relation to one another. Theory helps makes sense out of data. It tells a story about how the interrelations between elements are interpreted.

The approach taken here was inductive, interpretive, and naturalistic in nature. As inductive research, the intent was to pursue a new theory or explanation of leadership development, rather than testing existing theory. It was interpretive in that “understanding the meaning of the process or experience constitutes the knowledge to be gained...” (Merriam, 1998, p. 4) from the leaders interviewed. As naturalistic inquiry, examining the actual experiences of subjects, and drawing upon those individual experiences to explain how they relate to tell a collective story about leadership development, is the main learning objective.

### *Research Questions*

The study addresses the following questions related to leadership development for a specific group of established strategic leaders working in national security:

1. How do strategic leaders for the federal government describe effective leadership?
2. How do they explain the development of effective strategic leadership?
3. How do the described behaviors of strategic leadership compare to the Executive Core Qualifications established for civilian federal government leaders by the Office of Personnel Management?

### *Grounded Theory Explained*

The focus on the process of discovery, of looking for new knowledge about leadership development, drives the design of this study. The basic or foundational methodology employed is qualitative grounded theory. According to Strauss & Corbin (1990) grounded theory “is one that is inductively derived from the study of the

phenomenon it represents” (p. 23). Rather than testing theory, this research methodology sets out to build theory. Because the boundaries of the phenomenon being studied may not be clear from the start, grounded theory incorporates the context into its investigations (Yin, 1993). Data analysis involves coding strategies that break down, conceptualize, and reconstruct data. Emergent categories are identified, relationships are made, and stories are constructed which explain the data.

Miles and Huberman (1994) point out that qualitative data have often been advocated as the best strategy for discovery. The fact that Miles and Huberman focus on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings make qualitative data well-suited for locating meaning and connecting them to the social context.

As summarized by Strauss & Corbin (1990), the analytic procedures of grounded theory are designed to:

1. Build rather than only test theory
2. Give the research process the rigor necessary to make the theory “good” science
3. Help the analyst to break through the biases and assumptions brought to, and that can develop during, the research process
4. Provide the grounding, build the density, and develop the sensitivity and integration needed to generate rich, tightly woven, explanatory theory that closely approximates the reality it represents (p. 57)

The essence of grounded theory is that theory emerges from the analysis of data—it is contained in data and is discovered in data. The process begins with open coding, whereby concepts are labeled, grouped, and categorized. The researcher moves onto axial coding when categories and subcategories begin to show how they are related. Finally, selective coding explains how the categories are integrated, adds dimensions, and defines dynamics within the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The coding scheme is validated as part of the theory-building process. Researcher bias, accuracy of the data, support for the findings by solid data, and saturation of the codes are all important considerations for qualitative research. Triangulation of the findings by comparison with other theories, relevant literature, and other interview sources is appropriate. In this case, the findings were further validated through debriefing groups consisting of qualitative researchers and individual sessions with faculty members.

### *Research Challenges*

As with any major undertaking, there were challenges in executing this research. Each interview lasted approximately one hour, which is insufficient time to explore any one topic in depth. However, given the stature of the individuals participating in the study, it was not possible to schedule longer periods or follow-on sessions. Although it was not possible, shadowing the leader during his or her daily work would have been the ideal way to obtain rich data for analysis. The opportunity to interview others in the

leader's sphere of influence—coworkers and colleagues—would have been useful. In particular, talking to individuals the leader had mentored, or had been mentored by, would have added a valuable dimension to the study.

The question arises: how to study something important, where the subject's perspective is the sole data source? Since shadowing these high-profile leaders was not feasible, a backdoor or partial approach to the problem was taken. What was possible was to elicit responses about what the leader believed was important for effective strategic leadership to take place. In a way, those responses represent the individual's self-perception, or belief as to what contributes to his or her success. It cannot be construed that these perceptions tell the whole story; they are an important part, but one-dimensional. In order to complete the picture, other data sources would be required. The reader must keep in mind that the data from this study are self-reported. Although useful for understanding how senior leaders view strategic leadership, the study did not allow for a 360-degree view of the individuals interviewed. A series of leader interviews generated enough data to provide findings and a conceptual model to help explain them. It is still important to note that the data speak to the particular group of leaders from this study and that further research would be needed before generalizations could be made about overall leadership behavior.

#### *Subject Group and Basic Procedures*

As noted above, this was a qualitative study using grounded theory methodology. In order to define strategic leadership for the purpose of the study, Stratified Systems Theory, which states that strategic leadership occurs at the three- and four-star levels in the military (as illustrated in Figure 1) was chosen to determine the boundary for who would participate. Therefore, interviews were conducted with persons who qualified as strategic leaders either by their highest military rank or comparable civilian grade and the positions they had held. With this criteria established, subjects were recommended to the researcher either by leadership professionals or referrals from those leaders interviewed.

Although there was no intention to analyze the data based on demographic factors, to provide for multiple points of view, a deliberate attempt was made to have a diverse selection of subjects. A total of fifteen interviews took place, each lasting approximately an hour. Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties, only fourteen of the interviews were suitable for analysis. A total of twelve interviews were fully or partially transcribed for analysis. Because of the stature of these individuals, only one interview was requested from each participant. With their permission, the interviews were taped so that they could be transcribed and analyzed. The subject group consisted of individuals who had completed military service at a three-star level or above, and civilian subjects who had served in high-level positions in the Department of Defense or State or both. It is important to note that while prior military affiliation may be a factor in strategic leadership development, it was not a goal of this study to differentiate the findings based on that demographic. Table 2 lists the basic characteristics of the subject group.

Table 2

Subject Characteristic by Civilian Grade or Military Rank

<b>Subject Leader#</b>	<b>Civilian or Military</b>	<b>Civilian Grade or Military Rank</b>
LDR1	M	3*USAF, R
LDR2	C	Senior Executive Service
LDR3	C	Senior Executive Service
LDR4	M	3*USA, R
LDR5	M	3*USA, R
LDR6	M	3*USAF, R
LDR7	M	4*USA, R
LDR8	M	4*USN, R & Ambassador
LDR9	C	Senior Executive Service
LDR10	M	3*USA, R
LDR11	M	4*USN, R
LDR12	M	3*USN
LDR13	C	Senior Executive Service
LDR14	C	Ambassador
LDR15	C	Senior Executive Service

Note: \* indicates number of “stars” for military officers; 3=Lieutenant General/Vice Admiral, 4=General/Admiral, R=Retired

For the purpose of this study, in the text, all subjects are referred to as “Leader” followed by the number in which they were interviewed (i.e., Leader #). Where the data are referenced the labels are abbreviated (i.e., LDR#). To protect the anonymity of these individuals, gender is not listed in Table 2. Although there might be reason to believe that there is a gender difference in leadership, it was not explored in this study because of resource and time constraints. While Table 2 lists basic characteristic, the subject group is described more fully below based on the level of their rank and position. The majority of the contacts were made on a referral basis from previous subjects or individuals who have accomplished careers in the field of leadership development.

On the military side, the overall group contained six three-star Lieutenant Generals: two retired Air Force, three from the Army (mix of active duty and retired), and one active duty Navy Vice Admiral. Among the four-stars, there was one retired Army General and two retired Navy Admirals. Although these individuals are referred to as “retired,” all have continued to serve the country in various capacities, some in high-visibility, full-time positions, others through consulting and lending their expertise where and when it is needed. It is important to note that all nine of these individuals were gracious and generous in giving their time to discuss their leadership experience. In addition, in one way or another, each one spoke of the important responsibility a leader has to identify and help develop the next generation of leaders.

The five strategic leaders with no prior military service served in positions at the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense level and above or as an Ambassador for the State Department. They were either Presidential Appointees or experienced Senior Executive Service members. Although this was not a selection criterion, it became clear in the interviews that the majority of these individuals had been active proponents of some type of career development program and were responsible for important initiatives in that area. Many could be called champions in carrying out the charges of the Defense Reform Initiative (April 1997). These representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) deserve credit for some of the progress made to date in improving the opportunities for future national security leaders.

*Selecting Subjects*

A professor of leadership from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces referred the first subject, a retired Lieutenant General, with whom the first interview was conducted. At the end of that interview, the subject was asked to suggest individuals he considered exemplars who might consent to being interviewed. While the interview did yield excellent referrals to other subjects, only a limited number could be interviewed due to time constraints and the desire to have a balanced group from a variety of sources.

Table 3

Subject Selection by Contact Source

<b>Subject Leader#</b>	<b>Nominated By</b>
LDR1	Professor
LDR2	LDR1
LDR3	Exemplar
LDR4	Professor
LDR5	Professor
LDR6	LDR1
LDR7	LDR5
LDR8	Professor
LDR9	Exemplar
LDR10	Professor
LDR11	Professor
LDR12	Professor
LDR13	LDR10
LDR14	LDR10
LDR15	Exemplar

Interview subjects were selected from a number of contact source nominations. Table 3 indicates which subjects were selected based on referrals from an interview of a strategic leader, recommendations from leadership exemplars, or seasoned professionals associated with leadership development programs (referred to as Professors). One of the

interviews was unusable because a new microphone purchased to improve the quality of the recording malfunctioned.

The final interview, with Leader 15, proved to be the most promising. The grounded theory research methodology was an evolutionary process, which brought one from simply sensing the value of what the leader was saying to an ability to bring it into focus in a meaningful way through the analysis process.

### *Data Collection*

The data collection process began with the researcher contacting the potential subject, normally with a letter letting him or her know the nature of the study and who recommended them as an exemplar. Of the twenty interview requests, all but five agreed. Most interviews took place in the subject's office; two took place in private homes. In each case, before the interview started, the subjects were asked to sign a consent form agreeing to participation in the interview and the taping of the session (see Appendix B).

The general interview protocol began with a short explanation of the research project, followed by a query as to how the subject described strategic leadership. The format was not a structured or formal plan. Rather, the intent was to provide guidance as to areas of discussion, with the understanding that the interview would vary by individual based on what he or she indicated was relevant. The interviewer was interested in having them talk about their personal experiences and how they behaved as a leader, what influenced them in their development as a leader, challenges they faced, how they approached them, and their retrospective on what is needed for future leaders to be successful. As much as possible, subjects were encouraged to share examples and specifics from their careers and discuss areas that they considered important for leadership. As the interviews progressed, there was an effort to validate and further explore topics of interest from earlier interviews.

### *Data Analysis*

After the interview, the data were transcribed for analysis. Due to expense and time constraints, not all interviews were transcribed. Of the fourteen usable interviews, ten were fully transcribed, and four were partially transcribed, focusing on areas of interest to the researcher.

As noted above, the coding process begins with open coding, where concepts are named. Categories and subcategories are defined with axial coding and selective coding explains how the categories are integrated and defines the dynamic between them. Each stage is explained more fully below. During the coding process the researcher created a separate folder, or project, to preserve the data in different stages of development. These project names appear in Table 4. The transitions between projects are noted as the analysis is described in the remaining sections of the chapter.

Table 4

Projects Established During Evolution of Analysis

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Interview Data Analyzed</b>
LEADER15	LDR15
EUREKA	LDR15
DDSCHEME	LDR15
CROSSWALK	LDR15 + Remainder

*First stage of data analysis: Open coding.* The primary tool used to analyze the interview data was Ethnograph, a qualitative research software package. After the interviews were transcribed and reviewed for accuracy, the text file was imported to the Ethnograph program. Ethnograph is a program that allows the researcher the following functions: to code the data, edit and modify codes, categorize data, add memos, search for and display data according to specific criteria, and arrange and define relationships between data.

Analysis started with initial coding, whereby the researcher went through the interview line-by-line in search of meaningful information. That information is marked in the text and "named" for later reference. Initial coding was done in iterations, as codes changed and evolved as the researcher passed through the data repeatedly and found areas for further exploration and development. Extensive editing of codes took place in this stage of making sense of the data and categories were formed in an attempt to explain emerging concepts. For examples of Ethnograph files in various stages of coding see Appendix F, which includes selected text from a number of the Leader interviews.

*Second stage of data analysis: Axial coding.* By this time data were coded by categories and subcategorized as necessary. Concepts regarding relationships of the data to theory were being drawn from the analysis. Axial coding is where the data, after being broken down and examined, are put back together in new ways that make connections between a category and its subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). At this point, a new project was created so that the original work could be preserved separately and referred back to when documenting the process evolution. The second project was named EUREKA, where a copy of the Leader 15 interview as it was currently coded was placed. For EUREKA project codes and memos on the coding evolution at this point, see Appendix C.

After initial coding and further efforts to make sense of the data through axial coding, the core category or central phenomenon began to surface, yet still remained elusive. At this point the coded Leader 15 file was copied to a new project where the relationships between the categories, which seemed to have opposing yet complementary aspects, could be further analyzed. The new project was named DDSCHEM for "dialectic dimensions scheme." The idea of the dialectic dimensions comes from the

dynamic of seeking balance, which was apparent in the leader's behavior, or approach to things. According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2000), dialectic means "the art or practice of arriving at the truth by the exchange of logical arguments" and captures the ability of the leader to "juggle" contradictions or pulls in the opposite directions. This phenomenon eventually led to a preliminary diagram representative of the findings, with leadership traits and experience as its major components. For DDScheme project codes and memos, see Appendix D.

The transition between the EUREKA and DDScheme projects came about in an attempt to examine characteristics found in Leader 15 in a way that tied to behavior and specifically the way a balance occurred while managing the complex environment and people in the workplace. The concepts of growth and learning, while helping and mentoring others, were key themes found in the data. As the data were analyzed and refined, actions in the form of approaches or ways of communicating became dominant.

*Third stage of data analysis: Selective coding.* After the major concepts were developed using the Leader 15 data, previous interviews were selected and were added to a new project named CROSSWALK. These interviews were analyzed with Ethnograph using the same process applied to the Leader 15, using the same coding scheme and developing it further. The additional subject data helped enhance the major concepts and allowed the researcher to organize the core concept symbolized by the "Lamplighter" and summarize the findings in a model, which is discussed in Chapter IV. Admittedly, this was an unorthodox use of the method, as one usually moves forward through the interviews, analyzing along the way, rather than going back to earlier subjects to augment the findings. Yet the previous interviews served to add to and enhance the Leader 15 findings, and develop a fuller story.

The major shift in the categories occurred when the DDScheme theme of experience, with the balance and growth dynamic, and the strategic leader traits evolved into the Lamplighter themes of accountability, advocacy, affirmation, ally, and wakefulness (awake). In the CROSSWALK scheme, the concept of growth, along with learning and teaching, became underlying dynamics of how these leaders interact with and maintain a balance with their environment. The comparison between the two projects is explained in more detail in the CROSSWALK memo in Appendix E. The more the codes were reviewed and compared to the other subjects, the more they lent themselves to the development of a model of leadership development.

This backtracking also provided the opportunity to look for recommended actions and performance indicators, to make suggestions to accompany the mind-space model. In answering the research questions, ancillary codes Q1 through Q3 were added to the CROSSWALK project to mark data that would help give examples of leader data that pertained to the question at hand.

### *Validation of Findings*

As mentioned previously, the researcher worked with a group of other students conducting qualitative research projects enrolled in a coding class under the guidance of a research professor serving on the doctoral committee. In this group, which met each week during the semester, students shared data and reviewed coding schemes, receiving valuable feedback from the group. The researcher attended these sessions off-and-on as her interviews were conducted and during the analysis stage of the findings. This period lasted for approximately three years following the proposal defense.

As the analysis began to take shape, independent meetings were conducted with the committee chair and occasionally another student to review and discuss the findings. This individual intense focus, for up to two hours a session, caused a breakthrough in the analysis. The regular meetings lent themselves to accountability.

### *Proposed Model*

Theory development was the goal of this research method. Models are often created to help explain theory. A model (Webster, 1966) is a “description or analogy used to help visualize something that cannot be directly observed.” The Lamplighter model, described in the next chapter, is a symbolic representation of the phenomenon studied, with suggestions provided to answer the study’s research questions, illustrate how the model can be applied to practice, and guide leader development efforts.

### *Summary*

Chapter III described the qualitative research method used in the study. The following chapter will discuss the findings from the interviews conducted with the subject group of strategic leaders. Suggestions as to the implications for theories of strategic leadership and its development are offered in Chapter V.

## Chapter IV – Findings

“I could tell where the lamplighter was by the trail he left behind him.”  
Harry Lauder (Wallis, 1965)

### *Introduction*

Before the days of electricity, a lamplighter was an essential character in society, the key person in bringing illumination to a city’s inhabitants once the sun set in the west. In the same way, strategic leaders provide the vision and guide the way for others to reach for and fulfill their purpose. As John Gardner (1964) said: “Institutions are renewed by individuals who refuse to be satisfied with the outer husks of things. The man who wants to get back to the sources of his own vitality cuts through the false fronts of life and tries to understand the things that he really believes in and can put his heart into” (p. 17). As will be shown in this chapter, the individuals interviewed for this study are such leaders—those putting their hearts into getting past limits and forward to accomplishments that stimulate growth and renewal.

The findings presented here are explained according to the content analysis from twelve leader interviews. Key categories are examined and the themes they represent are explored in Section A as the findings are presented. In Section B the findings are summarized in a symbolic representation and conceptual model. Section C presents the researcher’s perceptions of the leader interviews. In respect to the research questions the findings are addressed in Section D, followed by the chapter conclusion.

### *Section A: Findings Presented*

As explained in Chapter III, the interviews are initially broken down into “codes” whereby sections of data are marked and named for future reference. The coding process evolves over time as the data are analyzed. Eventually, major concepts emerge which are classified as categories for further analysis.

For this study, the subjects were unique in that their experience was predominantly from the national security arena of the federal government. Most of the subjects were affiliated with the Department of Defense, a highly hierarchical organizational system. In this respect, a context different from those found in private or even non-profit organizations exists. The reader should take into consideration that the individuals interviewed come from a structured hierarchical system with a long history of command and control orientation. The military subjects in particular may have had up to forty years operating in what could be called a “combat culture” (M.G. Cline, personal communication, April 24, 2005). In this type of environment, unlike the private sector, the very lives of soldiers and the outcome of wars are dependent on this hierarchical system working—of people giving and taking orders as directed. The leaders speak from their experience in this environment and from their personal perspective.

It is also important to keep in mind that the interviews are comprised of self-reported data on both the leaders' individual experiences, their experience with others, and their opinions and beliefs in general. Although these leaders' views on leadership are important and can provide insights that may not be clear in other literature, the observation that the data are limited and provide a restrictive view of the subject is warranted. With that caveat, a discussion of the findings follows.

*Content Categories*

As the analysis of the data progressed, five major areas or categories emerged which helped explain leaders' orientation, approach to life, and their responsibility as leaders. Before the categories were established, a lengthy process of reviewing the data and capturing concepts and behaviors as named codes took place. Eventually, relationships between the codes emerged. As those relationships were analyzed further, they naturally fell into groups, or categories, which help explain the findings from the study. These five core categories—Awake, Ally, Affirm, Advocate, and Account—are summarized in Table 5 and described thereafter.

Table 5

Category Definition and Associated Codes

<b>Category: Definition</b>	<b>Associated Codes</b>
Awake: Living consciously with awareness >	Experience, Humility, Mobility, Reflection, and Stamina
Ally: Connecting with influential others to form mutually beneficial relationships >	Mentee and Recruited
Affirm: Keeping one's word or agreements; maintain to be true >	Capable, Credible, Integrity, and Trust
Advocate: Speaking up for and helping others succeed and grow >	Career development, Concern, Mentor, People work, and Recruiter
Account: Being responsible for one's actions and errors	Feedback, Responsible

*The Awake category described.* This category is signified by self-awareness and the tendency for these individuals to stop and think of what they were doing, and to consider relationships and the effects of their actions on others or their organization. There was a sense of conscious living, of being fully present in their current reality while being cognizant of future possibilities and their effects and implications. There was clearly a sense of personal strength and stamina to their character, an ability to remain humble while enjoying the personal experiences in their work and with others. This

sense of humility was coupled with an acceptance of the need to stretch beyond their comfort zone and risk taking chances on new experiences and challenges.

The Awake category was the most dominant in the coding scheme. Table 6 illustrates the codes that help define the category. The leaders' experience, coupled with willingness to take on new and more challenging assignments, constitutes the bulk of the coding, with proclivity to reflection being a main factor in helping them gain from that experience. The associated codes are identified during the initial coding stage and become assimilated into the categories through the coding process.

Table 6

Awake Category and Associated Codes

AWAKE	Associated Codes
	EXPERIENCE
	HUMILITY
	MOBILITY
	REFLECTION
	STAMINA

The description “living consciously with awareness” that accompanies Awake is supported by codes such as Experience, Humility, Mobility, Reflection, and Stamina. Experience gives them the foundation and breadth of knowledge required for awareness. Much of this broadening experience came from taking advantage of opportunities for new experience, which the Mobility code addresses. Stamina gives them the energy and strength to endure and sustain during challenges. The softer side of this awareness comes from Humility, the ability to make ego subservient to their higher self and not interfere with working toward what is ultimately best for the organization. Their talent at developing relationships on a personal level and being vulnerable enough to open themselves to others helps them be more open also. Reflection, and their natural practice of it, is the key to developing Awareness.

These codes are further illustrated by a few of the leaders as follows:

LDR2: *...I think energy is important too, because you've got to stay ahead of the curve. And the only way you can do that is to spend the time... If you don't sustain energy you lose* (Stamina code, see Appendix F, p. 123, lines 819-837).

LDR4: *...The challenge for strategic leaders is to find time to get their heads out of their in-box and out-box and be able to sit back. Because this is the 24 to 48 hour perspective... And really what I get paid for doing is thinking about the next 5 or 10 years that have to do with this [organization]* (Reflection code, see Appendix F, p. 124, lines 217-224).

LDR8: ...*And then what graduate students say is they learn that you don't know everything. It's not what you know that amazes you; it's what you don't know that amazes you* (Humility code, see Appendix F, p. 133, lines 357-361).

LDR13: ...*A lot of strategic leaders in the military side and civilian also have grown up with their own views, perspectives, etc. ... There is an inherent bias in what you view and do... Your future visions are shaped by what you bring with you* (Experience code, see Appendix F, p. 155, lines 53-60).

LDR15: ...*You have to get out and about. You have to understand... working in a place like the Pentagon or working at [place] running a staff, you have to understand the fruits of your labors or the exact opposite—that what you're doing is creating a stranglehold on folks* (Mobility, see Appendix F, p. 161, lines 195-202).

*The Ally category described.* This category is one that is seen in other categories and is affiliated with the Learner code. What is unique in this category is that it involves the relationships that develop whereby the individual creates alliances with others, becoming mentored himself or herself, or actually being called upon to take on challenging assignments. The fact that they welcome guidance and learning opportunities, even when a risk is involved, stands out in this area.

These leaders look for more information and take a fill-in-the-gap approach to understanding. These leaders do not hesitate to question their own actions and admit when they don't know the answers. They seek out help, whether it is from others or in educating themselves. There is a strong self-directed learning process in place, whereby they actively seek experiences that will broaden their understanding. Leader Eight talked about this open-mindedness and critical thinking as it operated with Kemal Atatürk, a Turkish soldier who rose through the ranks and brought Turkey into the modern age:

LDR8: ...*The mind is like a parachute, it doesn't do you much good if it won't open when you need it. ... to keep that kind of open mind is hard. And I'm not suggesting it's easy, but flexibility of mind is actually imperative for strategic leadership. ... [Kemal Atatürk] was a professional military officer and all his education was in the military. But he never lost his independent mind and to see how he transformed the Turkish military. He grew up in the military but he was very, very independent-minded. And just through the force of his mind he prevailed. ... His achievement was just so incredible. But he had a very, very flexible mind. He understood that circumstances change* (see Appendix F, p. 133, various lines 525-937).

These leaders promote constructive controversy. They recognize that when thoughtful dissent is encouraged, the result is much more than a heightened sense of collegiality and better decisions are made. They are not arrogant; therefore they are open to the ideas and inputs from others. They recognize that they are not supreme and cannot accomplish their mission without the help of other people in their sphere of influence. Leader One explains how this worked for him:

LDR1: ...*I think you come into the position with a certain amount of modesty and realism about the extent to which you don't understand the precision, what that capability is all about. And you listen very carefully to those in the organization who have the guts to say, "Sir, this is dog shit."* (see Appendix F, p. 117, lines 601-609).

As Leader Eleven expresses, it is not necessary for agreement between parties, but it is important to build relationships that promote cooperation:

LDR11: ...*You try and work with these guys, you try to build a sense of personal camaraderie... we can fight politically about what we think is right or wrong, but as human beings we've got to try and work together* (see Appendix F, p. 154, lines 198-203).

Being the person who fosters collaboration and being mentored by others are important to these individuals. They actively look for others whom they can assist and recruit those people to be on their team, which relates to the Advocacy category of codes. They are not afraid to ask for help or ask if someone else requires help from them. Both being mentored by others and having someone recruit them to work for their organization is not uncommon with these individuals. They often spoke of the value they found in the teachers they had throughout their lives and careers

Table 7

Ally Category and Associated Codes

ALLY	Associated Codes
	MENTEE
	RECRUITED

The Ally category is defined as “connecting with influential others to form mutually beneficial relationships.” Although the previous quotes from this section demonstrate a strong sense of individuality and autonomy, the fact is that the leaders in this study often spoke of individuals they had been mentored by and even recruited by for challenging new assignments. This was a topic of conversation through the majority of the interviews. Leader Fifteen talked extensively about her experiences being mentored by others and how she tries to provide that to people in her sphere of influence:

LDR15: ...*I've been very fortunate. They've been great jobs. But, in addition to the substance or the subject matter, I've always had tremendous bosses who have been great mentors. I've kept mentors from other places* (see Appendix F, p. 164, lines 663-669).

The same leader repeatedly gave examples of situations where she was actively encouraged to step up to various positions. In two of the examples she gave, she did not feel qualified for or ready for the responsibility. Yet she took on the challenge and succeeded, just as the person recruiting her trusted she would:

LDR15: ...When I was at [agency], I was asked to run one of eight tasks forces in setting up a new agency... So, I volunteered to go do that outside my comfort zone. ... I was tagged. I mean, I could have said no. So, I said, “Sure, I’ll do it.” So, yeah, I guess I didn’t really didn’t volunteer to do it. I was asked if I would do that. And I’m glad I did (see Appendix F, p. 161, lines 218-254).

LDR15: ...And a year later, an opportunity just simply presented itself. A new position was created on the Chief of [name] Operations Staff for [organization] and it was an office that I had dealt with my whole career at the [organization]. And in fact, the boss of the office actually called me and told me about the job, which told me that he would look positively certainly upon my application. And I applied and was selected (see Appendix F, p. 164, lines 324-335).

*The Affirm category described.* These leaders had a strong conviction about the importance of keeping their agreements and being considered trustworthy by others. They modeled a set of values and set high goals and expectations for meeting them, both for themselves and for the people in their line of responsibility. This is where the bulk of the discussion on integrity took place, on the importance of being consistent in one’s beliefs and ideals, and actions. Not only did they need to be seen as capable leaders, they wanted to be seen as credible and committed to the people and the organization. Integrity was a crosscutting factor that appeared throughout the data and was associated with each of the five main categories. The capability of the leader and his or her trustworthiness were important dimensions of the Affirm category. Table 8 shows the associated codes for Affirm.

Table 8

Affirm Category and Associated Codes

AFFIRM	Associated Codes
	CAPABLE
	CREDIBLE
	INTEGRITY
	TRUST

The definition for the Affirm category, “Keeping one’s word or agreements; maintain to be true.” The associated codes of Capable, Credible, Integrity, and Trust all support this in their own way as seen below.

Leader Eight emphasizes how important it is to be seen as Capable by others:

LDR8: ...If you want the very first building block in getting the trust of the people is to make sure they know that what they’re doing, you can do too and hopefully you can do it better than they can. And once they’re convinced of that, why then a lot of your problems fade away (see Appendix F, p. 132, lines 126-133).

Leader Ten discussed the issue of Trust at great length and in varying contexts:

LDR10: ...*Trust has so many variations on how to describe it—the rapport between individuals, you trust yourself to do certain things, from a physical standpoint, you trust yourself from an emotional standpoint, trust with your kids, you trust other folks, there is a whole litany of things, I think, that trust falls under* (see Appendix F, p. 148, lines 366-375).

Leader Fourteen lays out how she acquired the Trust of others she worked with and was therefore seen as Credible:

LDR14: ... *there were people on the Hill who knew that when it had come to [subject], I had never lied. I had never over-promised. I had never not delivered. And so I had people on the Hill who would say to other people on the Hill, “listen to this gal, she knows what she’s talking about”... She’s credible* (see Appendix F, p. 159, lines 1906-1918).

Integrity was often mentioned as fundamental to leadership, often in relationship to building trust and credibility:

LDR6: ...*I think [integrity is] a very important part of leadership. That's what I say. You're before people and they get to see who you are and what you represent, and there is nothing, I don't think, more important than integrity in getting people to say, yeah, I'll do it because he says so, and I know if he didn't believe it he wouldn't say it* (see Appendix F, p. 130, lines 87-96).

Consistency and stability, or a “what you see is what you get” behavior was important to these leaders and was apparent in the way they described how they presented themselves to others.

*The Advocate category described.* Following on from the Affirm category, it is a given that these leaders considered people important. A great deal of the interview data dealt with discussions on relationships with individuals to whom they were mentors, and other people in their lives, both on a professional and personal level. Friendships, partners, and colleagues were instrumental in their success and they were most grateful for all the benefits they received through these relationships.

They were dedicated and committed to bringing along and “giving back” to the people in their organizations. It was important, to the point of being a core requirement of their position, to be concerned with and facilitate the development of others. Succession planning, and making sure there was someone in the organization that could do their job when they left, was critical. As shown in Table 9, working with people, and their role as a mentor or recruiter of others as team members, were important aspects of how they approached their work. Their concern for others was a personal characteristic, as was their interest in others’ career development.

Table 9

Advocate Category and Associated Codes

ADVOCATE	Associated Codes
	CAREER-DEV
	CONCERN
	MENTOR
	PEOPLE-WK
	RECRUITER

The definition “Speaking up for and helping others succeed and grow” expresses the heart of this category. Codes such as Career Development, Concern, Mentor, People Work, and Recruiter capture quotes which represent behaviors that these Advocates put in practice with their employees and others, as can be seen in the quotes in this section.

LDR11: *...You do need to groom people, season them, and train them well. ...You don't change things overnight. And a good sense of humor helps to be able to relate to them in ways they will understand... I think that part of strategic leadership is finding the right buttons to push, and learning about people, what they can and can't do* (see Appendix F, p. 152, lines 107-122).

A deluge of data exists on the subject, and several quotes are shown here as representative samples of the codes supporting the Advocate category:

LDR1: *...So you had this kind of cyclical process of just taking care of people, and replacing good with more good. One thing that fascinated me was that he went for younger — could have gotten by with loads of Colonels, but he preferred to work with Majors* (see Appendix F, p. 120, lines 1291-1298).

LDR2: *...I mean the trick really is to find the young people who are 10 or 15 years younger and develop them. And what we did was, we kept the second rank of leadership, the division chiefs, in place for a year. And then at the end of that year we had a very comprehensive change of the younger leadership* (see Appendix F, p. 121, lines 98-106).

LDR9: *... I always felt it was my obligation to share with their bosses or levels in between who I thought was talented and needs to be brought along. So I think part of that is the obligation of leaders to cultivate the next crop of leaders. Look down one, two kinds of levels to say, you know, who are promising and are they getting the career opportunities that you want them to have?* (see Appendix F, p. 145, lines 770-781).

Succession planning is a deliberate part of the work of these leaders and requires them to empower others to act. The willingness to empower others can be seen in the following statements:

LDR6: ...*To me, the essence of leadership is applying what you know about interpersonal relationships to both yourself, be the kind of person that instills confidence, and being able to explain things in a way that makes people want to support you* (see Appendix F, p. 129, lines 55-61).

LDR9: ...*But my job with strategic leadership is to make sure the right people are on the job and then to give them the right marching orders. And then it's to get out of the way or to help clear people out of their way so that they can get that job done* (see Appendix F, p. 140, lines 50-57).

LDR14: ...*More than yourself at any level to include the ability to inspire, to encourage, to create in other people a desire to go along with you to wherever you say you're going* (see Appendix F, p. 156, lines 124-128).

At the same time, Leader Nine understood that you empower people by helping them face challenges and learn from them:

LDR9: ...*It's the people that you want to lead organizations, you know, you have to basically push them through the process so they themselves—you know, see them as learners, not teachers. You know, they are out trying to get in front of a problem by understanding it* (see Appendix F, p. 145, lines 738-746).

One aspect of transferring the power to act to others is providing proactive feedback on their performance. Leaders not only have to be able to ask people to step up to the challenge; they need to provide follow-on support by observing the way they handled the responsibility and helping them grow from the experience. This requires the leader to be able to address problems, and show the person how to be effective. It requires reading between the lines, listening to what is being said, and what might be missing in the communication:

LDR9: ... *I've only had two or three instances that I know of that someone actually lied to me. But what really happens instead is they'll either say absolutely nothing and then you have to listen for the silence to try and get a sense of what's going on. What's not being said? Why isn't the dog barking? The other thing that you need is to listen carefully to the adjectives people use. The way they characterize—or, when somebody calls it a success-oriented schedule it means they're totally behind schedule and they're in trouble* (see Appendix F, p. 143, lines 477-492).

On the other hand, Leader Fourteen understood that responsibility for one's actions works both ways:

LDR14: ...*You become an advocate. That's right. You really do. And you fight for them. And then when they screw up, you call them in and, sometimes it's not gentle. But, I mean, it's constructive* (see Appendix F, p. 158, lines 1455-1460).

As can be seen from these examples, advocacy does not come without accountability. On the contrary, it supports and even demands it.

Leader One describes how one of the civilian mentors he knew went about building a team:

LDR1: *...He took only the very best, only those who had some spirit. They were not free spirits, but who were capable of pushing the envelope... risk-takers. He took marvelous care of them while they were there, he knew the system, he knew where you got Brownie points in the uniformed military, and he knew how to get you those Brownie points. So his people were promoted early. And then probably most importantly he placed them when they left. He had the foresight to put them in jobs where they could continue to grow* (see Appendix F, p. 120, lines 1268-1286).

Leader Two talked about his most recent mentee:

LDR2: *...There's a young lady who works for me now sitting across the hall ... I was here for a few weeks and she does—basically she started out writing speeches for me—I usually do my own speeches; so we got—she got to know the style and all that. And then I finally discovered that she's a hell of a lot brighter than I thought... so I talked her into doing a Ph.D. She's in a program over at GWU and she's doing very well. And that one is also going to get into the SES for sure now... and it didn't take long really for me to figure out that she could do that, that she had the horsepower to do it* (see Appendix F, p. 122, lines 631-649).

Leader Fourteen describes one of the ways she finds people who are worth targeting for development:

LDR14: *...Just to look at the last page of a paper and see who wrote it. Not who was on the front page sending it to me because that would be the person next in rank to me ... But turn to the back page and see who wrote it. It always comes with a telephone number. Pick up the phone. The first time you do it, you scare people. Call that person and say, "Look, I've got this paper. Come on up and talk to me about it." I think most people may go down the hall to throw up. But, I've done that myself. I remember what it was like* (see Appendix F, p. 157, lines 635-649).

A number of leaders, as expressed by Leader Nine below, talked about “breaking rank” or working around the hierarchy to promote junior personnel rather than the next in line or even the current incumbent when they felt that a specific job required that to occur. It comes to mind to question what the fallout of that strategy might be. If tradition holds that a particular rank or grade employee would be responsible for certain duties, would they take umbrage with being skipped or passed over for a less-experienced individual? Issues such as this were not addressed, but may have proved interesting.

LDR9: *...But I also believed in finding the key leader... that may not just be the Under Secretary or the Assistant Secretary. I would go down 3, 4, 5 levels if I found that, for the*

*job that I wanted done, those were the people who were working on it. And I found those people enormously encouraged that somebody cared enough to get down to that level (see Appendix F, p. 141, lines 191-201).*

He continued on to say:

*....Leaders have to create an organization in the sense that they have to grow talent for the future... what you've got to do is find a way so that you're growing the talent so that ten years from now, so that whoever is the [position] in ten years has talented people that he's using because, I made sure the system brought them along—not that I brought them along but that the system brought them along (see Appendix F, p. 146, lines 854-870).*

Leader Fifteen talked extensively about her experiences being mentored by others and how she tries to provide that to people in her sphere of influence:

*LDR15: ...And that's just one of a couple of things like that where you're in your job and somebody says, hey, do you want to go do this for a couple of months? And I've always recommended to anyone that I'm mentoring that they do that. Go outside your comfort zone. Make new contacts. You build that network. Plus, you learn a tremendous amount by doing that (see Appendix F, p. 162, lines 254-264).*

An important question to ask would be: “What about people they didn’t like?” The leader interviews covered much in respect to helping others advance in their careers. They did not deal with employees who may have been overlooked or felt slighted. To get to the truth as to how these leaders treated people in their command, more information would be required.

*The Account category described.* Accountability is very much partnered with the Affirm category, but it is differentiated by the search for validation through feedback and taking responsibility for one’s actions. It demonstrates how these leaders not only faced the fact that they were human and made mistakes, but their willingness to admit them and search for proactive solutions. This is a key to learning, and will be discussed in more depth in a later section of this chapter. As can be seen in Table 10, the main aspect of the Accountability category was that these leaders actively engaged in seeking feedback to make sure what they were doing was on track.

Table 10

Account Category and Associated Codes

ACCOUNT	Associated Codes
	FEEDBACK
	RESPONSIBLE

The Account category definition of “Being responsible for one’s actions and errors” is supported by data coded under both Feedback and Responsible.

In being Responsible, a leader must be able to admit a mistake and make adjustments, hopefully in a supportive environment.

LDR14: *...I've been wrong in my career, but I've been called in privately. People didn't attempt to make big public exhibition over it to build themselves up. I've been called in and it's been both a reprimand and lesson, you know. And it's been at all levels of my career. But again, I felt I was entitled to take chances* (see Appendix F, p. 156, lines 281-289).

In reference to the Feedback code, there are data throughout the leader interviews that address this. Aspects of feedback include being open to it, knowing how to get it, and then being able to process it and grow from it. Often it is not a conscious practice and busy executives do not factor it into their day. When asked how he finds time to get feedback, Leader Ten described how he approaches each day with an internal query for feedback and how important it is in relationships:

LDR10: *... I do it when I'm shaving... "Did you screw up last night, or yesterday?" "What are you doing today?" There are too many places where people won't tell you, unless you try and find out. It's very difficult to go up to your boss and say, "You know, you really screwed up." And if you have the kind of rapport, trust, that allows you to do that, you have a great working relationship* (see Appendix F, p. 151, lines 543-559).

Obviously, reflection is an aspect of feedback, as is making an effort to ask questions about yourself and your work. Leader Five points out the importance of asking:

LDR9: *... As a leader you've got to have the sense to know if something is working or not. You know, you've got to have enough feedback mechanisms to say that plan sounded good but it isn't working. And you do have to make adjustments. But first of all you'll never know it's not working if you wait for the system to come back and tell you it's not working you'll never find out* (see Appendix F, p. 141, lines 191-201).

As the leaders below state, to be objective, sometimes an outside view is necessary:

LDR5: *... First, we have to have some criteria by which we evaluate how we're doing, and then we have to have behavioral feedback. Almost no system really is good on these two necessities. One of the problems with adult education is that you and I are not going to get better at whatever we're doing if we don't know currently how we're doing based on what we should be doing* (see Appendix F, p. 128, lines 958-967).

LDR15: *...you need to learn from it... And I think that it's real important to always do those lessons learned. Sometimes it's just you sitting down and reviewing what you did and what things went wrong. Sometimes it's bringing folks in from the outside and saying, please look at my outfit. Look at my process, at whatever it was. Tell me* (see Appendix F, p. 168, lines 1139-1148).

The categories and codes described here can be better illustrated with a conceptual model showing how the coding scheme works together. An additional code that was not discussed in the previous section is the Learner code. Learning was a dynamic that was facilitated through the categories. Along with learning, these leaders tended to serve as a teacher to others, which is represented in the Advocate category and in the data from its associated codes. The two behaviors, teaching and learning, facilitated the growth of the leader and lead to their success.

*Section B: Conceptual Model to Summarize Findings*

*Lamplighter Symbol*

The Lamplighter symbol, shown in Figure 5, represents a conceptual view of leadership in reference to the group of subjects that participated in this study. It is an effort to describe with symbolism the service these people provided to others, and their gift at illuminating the way, not only so they could see where they needed to go, but so that others could find their way. It is meant to be representative of the mindscape or mind map they seem to operate with.

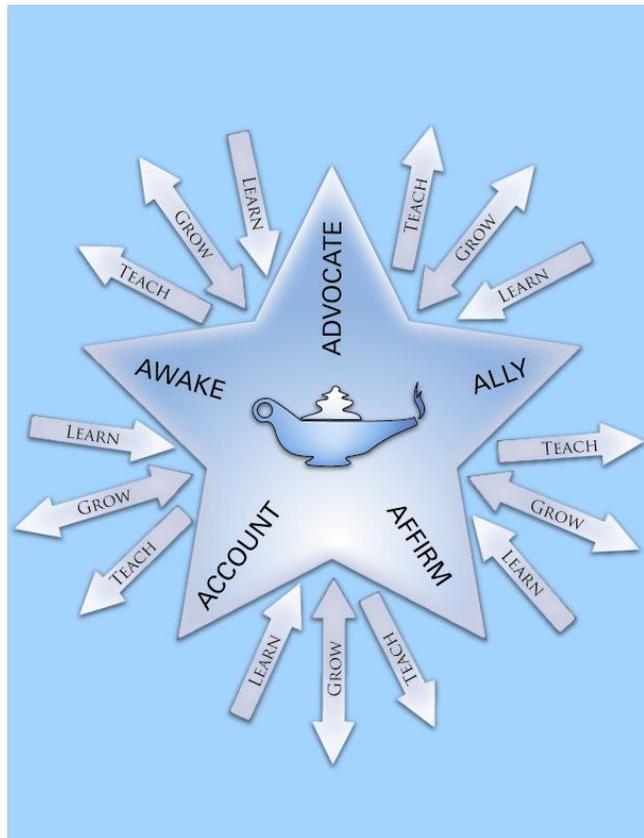


Figure 5. The Lamplighter Symbol of Leadership.

The basic idea represented by the symbol is that the behaviors of these leaders—as defined by the five content areas—are the way they interact with their environment. They represent how these people live their lives and the persona they present to others. The arrows show the process of teaching and learning, and how they cause individual growth and development.

*The core.* In designing crests and seals, the lamp is used to represent knowledge, and is often found on those designed for educational institutions. Therefore it represents the findings about these self-learning teachers, as indicated in the title of the study and graphically displayed in the core of the symbol. The star, representing both leadership and light, was chosen as the central shape.

*Five categories.* The words surrounding the star indicate core approaches these leaders used in managing themselves and their environment. They were discussed previously and are defined in the American Heritage Dictionary (2000) as follows:

Awake—“to be aware or cognizant, also vigilant; watchful”

Ally—“to unite or connect in a personal relationship...”

Affirm—“to declare positively or firmly; maintain to be true”

Advocate—“to speak, plead, or argue in favor of”

Account—(as idiom 2 under verb) “to hold answerable for”

These codes exemplify themes regarding what these leaders expected of themselves and the way they approached life.

*Outer Perimeter.* The outer perimeter stands for reflection and growth. The words chosen to make up the shine in the star represent the role these leaders took as learners and teachers, and the growth that occurred because of it. In these roles, they not only took in light (energy) from others, but also provided it within their sphere of influence. There is cohesion and fluid movement among the parts of the symbol, and it reflects their interaction with the external environment.

### *Lamplighter Model*

The model as shown in Figure 6 helps to illustrate the manner in which the main categories shown in the Lamplighter symbol interact with each other, and how additional codes help explain the data from this study. It demonstrates the natural pairing of a number of the concepts and how they fit into the way these leaders approach their work. Much of it has to do with trust and leveraging relationships, while at the same time monitoring one’s own actions to make sure they are facilitating effective action. While both task and relationship are important, there exists a need to balance the two, yet the relationship side is dominant.

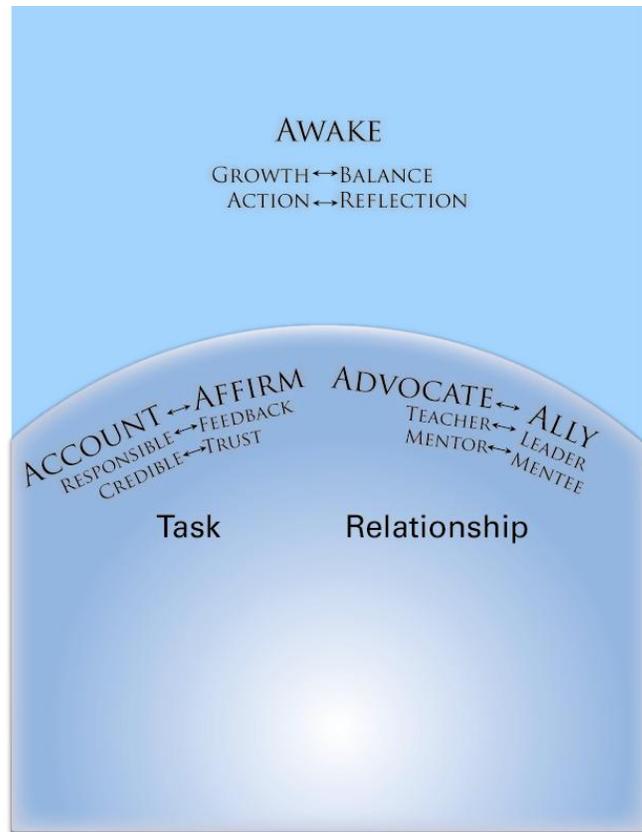


Figure 6. The Lamplighter Model of Leadership.

The Awake code configuration in the top portion of the model represents the awareness aspect of these leaders' personas, and how it was an overarching theme in the data. This space makes up the contextual experience or fabric of their mindscape, or way of thinking. In particular, an awareness of themselves in relation to others was a strong dynamic throughout this and the other components of the model. The stretching to grow and the need for a balance in their lives was shown in the way they approached life, as was the natural tendency to be action-oriented while understanding the value of reflecting on decisions and their potential outcomes. In their mental activity, these two areas seem to be thought processes that could counter each other, but tended to foster effective leadership behavior. In the Lamplighter symbol the concept of growth is an underlying dynamic of how these leaders interact with and maintain a balance with their environment. Reflection is the key to the understanding necessary for growth and self-awareness. The self-awareness that resonates through the Awake category provides the basis for the rest of the category of behaviors to be effective.

Below the horizontal curve in Figure 6 are two areas that are more behavior-oriented in nature, and operate under the umbrella of the Awake dimension. These are the pairing of the need to be accountable with the need to affirm that their behavior and actions were effective. In respect to accountability, the need to be seen as responsible and credible were key factors supporting the sense of accountability. These codes were task-oriented and were more closely tied with how others viewed them. On the

relationship side shown on the right below the curve, the act of advocating for others as their allies had advocated for them defines their approach to relationships. These individuals seemed just as willing to learn from others above or below them as they were to show the way to those who could benefit from their expertise or influence. They spoke highly of people who had served as mentors to them over the years, and looked for opportunities to mentor others.

The discussion as to the goodness of employee-centered versus task-oriented leaders began with behavioral theories of leadership. Some form of that dichotomy has appeared as a recurring theme in various theories of leadership, such as the Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid (1961) and the discussions on transactional versus transformational leadership. The findings from this study naturally fall into that framework as well.

### *Dynamics of the Model*

What was clear from the interviews is that effective leadership begets effective leadership, as represented in Figure 7.



Figure 7. The Lamplighter Model Interaction.

There were a number of dynamics of the model discussed in the previous section. Interaction between the main components of the model and their affiliated codes, and the push-pull effect of focusing on task versus relationship were key findings. What could be seen in these leaders' interviews was that they tended to help others in the way that others had helped them. The circular motion in Figure 7 represents that dynamic, of which the core or central feature is that understanding and respect for oneself and others.

## *Section C: Summary of the Researcher's Perspective on Leader Interviews*

### *Balance*

Throughout the study, and particularly when working with the data from these leaders, the researcher felt an awareness of a dynamic of equilibrium, a sense of them striving toward accomplishment while simultaneously working toward balance. The two major forces behind this play for equilibrium came from aspects of the leaders' experience, and from the way they managed themselves and others. The force of their experience led to growth, whereby the leader served as both a facilitator to others and, at the same time, an avid self-directed learner. The force of the need for balance, found in their personal and professional approach to life, provided the stability for them to be successful. These leaders were aware of the need for balance between work and play, although few admitted to having had to learn this. These leaders said they had to check themselves on it occasionally. They felt responsible for making sure the people who worked for them were recognized for what they were outside the office, and encouraged to enjoy other aspects of life.

### *Enthusiasm*

These leaders had a remarkable capacity to enjoy what they were doing, and seemed to thrive on the energy generated by work. Integrity, coded in the Agree category but found referenced in some way throughout the data, was a key area that they defined as important, for themselves and for others. Their ability to deal with people, and their concern for and care of others, was another defining aspect of the way they worked. They were very aware of the importance of others, not only due to their positions and responsibilities, but also as contributors to their own success and learning.

They also seemed to have a sense of vibrant purpose and drive. Given the positions they held, there was no question that these individuals had full, demanding days, yet in the interviews they came across as composed, focused, and pleased to have the opportunity to talk about leadership and their own careers. A number of them had appointments immediately following the interview, yet they remained relaxed and attentive to the discussion until the end. The Stamina code captures some of this, but much of it was sensed by being in the physical presence of these leaders, who communicated with strong, positive, yet steady energy.

### *Development*

These leaders were on a continuous path of change and growth. They were constantly in search of meaning and understanding, in being fully prepared to handle their responsibility. One aspect of their personality was the importance of facilitating growth in others, of looking out for opportunities for them and encouraging them to take on new challenges. This was also how they approached their own career, and gave credit to people who had helped them and encouraged them to get out of their comfort zone. Therefore they acted as both a facilitator of the growth of others while learning for

themselves along the way. Mentoring shows up both in their role as a facilitator, mentoring others, and in their role as a learner, being mentored; it was a concept prevalent throughout the data. This played out in the codes in both the career development opportunities of which they took advantage, and in their insistence on developing people to take their place in an organization.

### *Risk-taking*

Two interesting behaviors contributing to these leaders' growth were found in the data. One was their willingness to move and take on new risks, to accept opportunities that required mobility. The other was their need to get out to where the work was being implemented to check or validate that what they were doing had the expected and positive impact in the field. Searching for feedback—through questioning, and checking assumptions—was a natural part of their personalities and approach to challenges. This ability to be critical as they looked at themselves in reference to the mission—challenging themselves to excel while having the courage to stop and ask “did I do it right?”—was another defining characteristic. Although there are examples of risk-taking demonstrated in the data, in many instances the material could not be included here due to privacy concerns. Those instances predominantly dealt with taking on additional or new work challenges, or taking advantage of educational opportunities that removed them from the mainstream for a period of time.

The main categories as shown in the Lamplighter symbol—Awake, Ally, Affirm, Advocate, and Account—reflect aspects of their persona that are represented in the data, not only from what they talked about, but from the behavior and examples they described, which are listed throughout Chapter IV in the findings. Interestingly, these are traits that appear in the leadership literature, and relate to the current literature on personality theory.

### *Section D: The Findings in Respect to the Research Questions*

The remainder of this chapter addresses the research questions, providing examples of leader interview data and associated literature.

#### *Question One Asked, “How Do Strategic Leaders for the Federal Government Describe Effective Leadership?”*

Much of the research as reflected in the literature review deals with skills and capacities, even naturally born talent. It is important to note that the subjects interviewed had a background in public service, either in the military, civil service, or both. The approach to answering this question will be to highlight opinions that were reflected in the data from the leaders who participated in this study. As Leader Eleven observes, job qualifications are fundamental, as is leveraging employees' contribution:

*LDR11: ... What still really counts is the old basics: knowing your job, understanding the situation, and what power you have or do not have to apply to that situation you are*

*faced with, and knowing the strength and weaknesses of your people, and a good open relationship so they can voice their concern to you because you do not have all the good ideas that are out there (see Appendix F, p. 153, lines 157-167).*

The Awake category identified in the model and explained earlier in this chapter documents that self-awareness was an area of continual pursuit with these leaders. The rest of this section will cover a number of talents the leaders possessed: mentoring others, achieving a balanced life, embracing and thriving on change, and transcending their egos.

These leaders were active in planning for their own succession and espoused that preparing the organization for the future is an essential responsibility of a leader.

*LDR5: ...Any good system of developing people requires some sort of a mentor system. And it's interesting here, in some cases, we find that the mentors learn more than the people who are being mentored (see Appendix F, p. 128, lines 1170-1175).*

*LDR10: ...I maintain that every person who works for me should be developing the person to take their, his or her, place. And I used to make a point about that (see Appendix F, p. 149, lines 406-409).*

It would be interesting to explore this further to determine why this is so important to them and if they are perceived by others as actually doing this. It would also be interesting to determine if this is more important to those leaders in the Department of Defense, where rank has its privileges and the senior leaders' staffs serve to guard their bosses from what they may feel is unnecessary to warrant their attention. Regardless, it meant a lot to these leaders to occasionally break rank and get to the "troop" level to find good people to encourage and employ to get the job done right.

Another important dimension found in the data was the way these leaders consciously and actively tried to maintain a balance between their daily work and their vision of where they were taking the organization.

*LDR5: ...But it seems to me that the strategic leader must have both a capacity to work immediate problems and also the capacity to integrate things and to describe things that are relevant to what may take place in some future time. So there is some time horizon and difference, and there is an intellectual complexity difference between the tactical and the strategic level (see Appendix F, p. 126, lines 184-194).*

*LDR10: ...and then we get to the last item, "keep things in perspective," because, if you can't find that balance, you've got a problem (see Appendix F, p. 150, lines 437-440).*

*LDR15: ... I am a firm believer in outside of work is just as important as work. You can't work seven days a week, 14 or 16 hours a day. You can, but you're going to burn out. You're not going to like it. You're going to make mistakes. And, you will be less rich. I mean, what you learn outside of work. You know, whether it be your family life, your*

*church life, your hobbies, whatever your interests are or all of the above, adds to you as a person which then you bring more to the job. And I think that's real important (see Appendix F, p. 166, lines 738-755).*

With each one of these leaders, the willingness to move, to be open to new opportunities and experience, was seen as an important aspect of leader development. It also was something they considered important in their own careers, and an attribute they looked for and encouraged in others. These individuals not only sought out, but thrived on, change. They proactively looked for new growth opportunities.

*LDR14: ...They could be strategic leaders in acquisition, but if you're looking for thinkers that are going to move that Air Force, thinkers who are going to move Boeing Corporation. ... you can't reach way down to acquisition. You're going to have to find a person who's been moving across the corporation. Probably has had a home. It can be acquisition. It can training. It can be whatever. But, they have moved out of that and off to other type of work... And you take a certain set of skills with you, but at some point, you can't be a fighter pilot any longer. A lot of guys don't like it. At some point, you can't be a political officer any longer in the State Department. You have to know economics. You have to know a whole lot of things (see Appendix F, p. 157, lines 967-992).*

*LDR15: ...So I had the opportunity to experience and see what was going on at multiple echelons and understand what the drivers are at those echelons. I think it's real important for you to understand your environment and understand those that you're working with and working for and what their environments are (see Appendix F, p. 160, lines 157-165).*

In the interviews, these leaders were self-aware and did not come across as being arrogant or egocentric. In fact, their focus on relationships, others, and the mission they were responsible for made them appear to have transcended their egos. They were quick to admit that, in spite of their position, they were as subject to human frailties as anyone else. Being able to admit mistakes, work to correct them, and move on was a natural part of their behavior.

*LDR10: ...The point I am making is that, we all do something wrong, and in many cases the people we are working with know we did something wrong. So what's wrong with saying "Hey, I screwed up." ... As Creighton Abrams said many times, "Bad news does not improve with age." It doesn't get any better, might as well get it out. I maintain there is a certain catharsis that takes place when you are able to say, "I screwed up. OK, I was wrong" (see Appendix F, p. 147, lines 327-350).*

Rather than evaluating leader performance by numbers and accomplishments, the subjects spoke of gauging their success by how they developed capacities in others that filled organizational needs. Leaders' thoughts follow:

LDR8: ...*The main function of leaders is to train other leaders. They sort of look at it as one of the functions from his outfit. ...So his main job is to train his own relief and his own people that come from behind* (see Appendix F, p. 139, lines 1144-1154)

LDR15: ...*And this is all about raising the next generation of leaders. I don't want to be in this job forever. I want to bring somebody in behind me. I want to bring multiple somebody's in behind me who have multiple folks who are ready, willing, and able to compete for my job. And that's the way I've always felt. If I can't walk away and know that there are X number of folks who can do my job, then I haven't succeeded. Again, it's that delegation, empowerment, holding accountable, giving them the responsibility and the tools* (see Appendix F, p. 166, lines 931-945)

These senior leaders felt it was imperative that a leader be held accountable for developing his or her workforce. They believed that leaders should hold employee development a priority and have a succession plan for the organization.

*Question Two Asked: "How Do They Explain the Development of Effective Strategic Leadership?"*

In looking at this question through the lens of the five main categories, developmental opportunities which would facilitate growth in these areas are as follows:

- Awake—increase self-awareness
- Ally—build and leverage relationships, people skills
- Affirm—prove yourself trustworthy and trust others
- Advocate—generate opportunities for others
- Account—make sure you get and give valuable feedback

This question requires awareness and action, as can be seen in the following leader's approach to identifying a genuine weakness and the approach he took to overcome it:

LDR6: ...*You're not necessarily born with it, no. It is performing in front of people over a period of time in a manner in which they have confidence in what you do and what you say. ... You can talk about exuding self-confidence, and demonstrating integrity and so on, but if you don't have self-confidence, how do you exude it? And you can't—and it's awfully hard to teach self-confidence. ...I'm a shy person. (pause) Still. And I looked up to people who could speak in public, thinking "Oh, my goodness, they are so good, how could I ever achieve that?" And then when I finally got to the White House and looked around, I came to the conclusion that everyone screws up, just like I do. ... And that gave me self-confidence. ...A lot of people are smarter than I am. But they stumble just as often, and when we know that, it helps* (see Appendix F, p. 129, lines 70-74; 323-329; 371-393).

These leaders were consciously learning and actively seeking out ways to build their strengths. They were aware of their developmental needs and worked to improve them or bring in someone who could be a partner in work and a model to learn from:

LDR14: *...I called somebody with the same standards. I knew what skills I did not have. I knew what I could do. I knew what I couldn't do, what I didn't know. And I called a person that I had worked with before that I knew had the background in economics that I did not have. And the two of us, at the top of an embassy, would have it all covered in terms of experience* (see Appendix F, p. 158, lines 1125-1135).

The question of feedback goes back to the characteristic identified under question one—being able to admit mistakes, learn from them, and move forward. Leader 15 expresses that as follows:

LDR15: *...But everybody makes mistakes, I mean from day one, through year one, through year one hundred. We're human. And for anyone to not say they haven't made a mistake in their career, I don't think is being honest. No matter how small, it's a mistake...That's one of a dozen examples or more that I can come up with. Pretty significant mistakes, errors. You admit it. You fix it and you go on. You can't dwell on it* (see Appendix F, p. 167, lines 1104-1139).

It is interesting to note that, while a number of leaders spoke of the benefits they derived from graduate studies, they did not mention leadership programs as having an impact on their development. This is not to say that the programs they attended, if any, were not effective, but the omission does raise the question. Given the focus on and money spent on leadership development programs, this is a finding that warrants further exploration. While aspects of such programs may be beneficial, these leaders did not talk about actual courses taken as having an impact on their abilities as leaders. It could be that, with the military in particular, leadership courses were such an ingrained part of their career training that they didn't think to mention it. Or, it could be that what they viewed as important was centered in the career opportunities and challenges they took on. Whether a program they attended helped shape them as leaders cannot be determined from this study; however, it will play a factor when leadership programs are discussed in Chapter V.

They did stress graduate education and continuous learning as being critical for success. A few leaders specifically mentioned their experience with graduate education and attributed it to their writing and analytical thinking abilities. This emphasis on learning is exemplified in the quote below:

LDR11: *... The person who has quit studying has lost the ball game. I don't think you can ever quit studying and still play in today's world. You never know it all. The person who thinks they know it all is fooling themselves. The world is ever evolving. We learn more about what we can and cannot do. I really feel that education and studying is an important facet of leadership* (see Appendix F, p. 154, lines 246-256).

They stressed informal education and self-directed learning as important:

LDR8: ...*You know, when somebody asked Harry Truman what he could do to help prepare himself for life, he would say the number one thing is to read history. And it's interesting, you know, in the list of Presidents but certainly in the list of post-war Presidents, the least educated one was Truman. And he was the best, the most knowledgeable on the history of the Presidency of any President. He had studied it personally and was by far the most authoritative on the history of the Presidency as anybody* (see Appendix F, p. 139, lines 1223-1237).

Professional development is necessary for most career areas if one is to stay current or advance in a field. These leaders emphasized that overall learning is important, but without field experience whereby the knowledge is applied, it may be hollow and not lead to growth.

LDR1: ...*I think Defense needs to give mind to a kind of career progression, which includes both job diversity and professional military education... I'm not a real fan of the notion that Washington area provides sufficient diversity. The beltway is the beltway. ... as a general rule I would say that, in an ideal system for preparing SESs there would have been at least one opportunity over a twenty-year period to spend at least five years outside the beltway* (see Appendix F, p. 118, lines 772-776; 828-837).

LDR4: ...*And part of learning from the past is reviewing your experience, both success and failure, and developing lessons learned and be willing to take those lessons learned and change behavior of the organization, and individuals within the organization. So all of that requires a willingness to really look back and say, "Okay, how did we do there? And how can we improve?"* (see Appendix F, p. 125, lines 1195-1205).

Based on the implications from the findings, Chapter V offers suggestions as to components and approaches that might be useful for leadership development programs.

*Question Three Asked: "How Do the Described Behaviors of Strategic Leadership Compare to the Executive Core Qualifications Established for Civilian Federal Government Leaders by the Office of Personnel Management?"*

The Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) provide the basis for Senior Executive Service selection. Prospective civilian leaders complete an application in which they write how they fulfill the following ECQs:

- Leading Change
- Leading People
- Results Driven
- Business Acumen
- Building Coalitions/Communication

The ECQs corresponding leadership competencies serve to define the skills and behaviors expected from senior government leaders. The competencies are as follows:

1. *Leading Change*: Continual Learning, Creativity/Innovation, External Awareness, Flexibility, Resilience, Service Motivation, Strategic Thinking, and Vision
2. *Leading People*: Conflict Management, Leveraging Diversity, Integrity/Honesty, and Team Building
3. *Results Driven*: Accountability, Customer Service, Decisiveness, Entrepreneurship, Problem Solving, and Technical Credibility
4. *Business Acumen*: Financial Management, Human Resources Management, and Technology Management
5. *Building Coalitions*: Influencing/Negotiating, Interpersonal Skills, Oral Communication, Partnering, Political Savvy, and Written Communication

*Similarities.* Although the ECQs and the Core Categories found in the research data do not match one-for-one, they might be associated as shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Comparison of SES ECQs and Study Categories

EXECUTIVE CORE QUALIFICATION	LAMPLIGHTER CATEGORY
Leading Change	Awake
Leading People	Advocate
Results Driven	Account/Affirm
Business Acumen	Account
Building Coalitions and Communication	Ally

Because the nature of this research was focused on the leaders' experience and development and the categories were expressed as verbs, they do tend to correlate with the ECQs, which are behavioral in nature. By breaking it down by the leader competencies and codes, it is easier to see where they do complement each other. As can be seen in Table 11, although named differently, most of the qualifications have a corresponding code that is similar.

*Differences.* From the findings, the balance weighted toward the Advocate category. The relational and social aspects, their concern for and caring about others, were highly represented in the data from this group of leaders. Attributes like empathy, trust, and stamina are not easily taught, but are of high value to the leader and those

working with him or her. Training on skills such as how to listen effectively or how to give and receive feedback are seen as too soft or ambiguous to spend time on; yet these leaders had managed to develop these areas and leverage them to their advantage. Most importantly, making time for and a habit of reflecting on experience, and having a natural proclivity toward that, not only aids understanding, but also provides a restful balancing effect, and helps leaders re-center themselves and approach problems with a fresh perspective.

*Implications.* Based on findings of this and other research, it may be productive to shift the emphasis from developing behaviors specific to the individual to those that help the person learn and proactively develop others. Adding emphasis on relationship and “people skills” as a leadership competency is desirable. It is interesting to note that, while a number of these leaders did talk about the value they felt they received from graduate studies, classroom-based leadership development programs were not mentioned as a factor in their success. Chapter V includes recommendations in reference to executive development in the federal government.

### *Conclusions*

Five major categories dominated the findings: Awake, which describes leaders living consciously with a sense of awareness; Ally, whereby they are sought out by others; Affirm, in keeping with the value of honesty; Advocate, where they work to advance others; and Account, where they actively self-validate their behavior. These come together as a symbol to represent illumination, knowledge, and the dynamics of growth and learning. From these main categories, a hierarchy exists whereby the Awake category represents their cognitive, contextual experience as the fabric within which the behaviors are operating.

A set of behaviors associated with how the individuals want to be perceived, how they go about finding out the effects of their behavior as part of a self-validation process, exists. This set of behaviors is related to the actual performance of the individuals, and therefore can be considered task-oriented. The second behaviors are relationship-based, and involve the active participation of others, both giving and receiving support in mutually beneficial ways. Throughout the Lamplighter model, the dynamic of self and others, along with the reciprocity of relationships begetting development of the individual, are defining aspects of the findings.

Chapter V will offer additional insights to what was learned from this study and offer recommendations for learning, leader development, and future research.

## Chapter V– Conclusions

“The spirit is never at rest but always engaged in progressive motion, in giving itself a new form.”

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 1967

### *Introduction*

The purpose of this study was to understand what might facilitate leadership development, specifically through the experience and beliefs of successful senior leaders from the national security arena. The study proposed answers to the following questions:

1. How do strategic leaders for the federal government describe effective leadership?
2. How do they explain the development of effective strategic leadership?
3. How do the described behaviors of strategic leadership compare to the Executive Core Qualifications established for civilian federal government leaders by the Office of Personnel Management?

In this final chapter, a summary of the procedures and findings, implications for learning, and recommendations are offered.

### *Procedures*

To answer the research questions, the study employed grounded theory as the primary analytic procedure. The subjects interviewed during this study were from areas of the federal government dealing with national security, predominantly the Department of Defense. Both military and civilian individuals participated. Data were analyzed using the qualitative research program Ethnograph, findings were presented, and a conceptual model of strategic leadership behavior was developed from those findings. The focus on the process of discovery, of looking for new knowledge about leadership development, drove the design of this study.

The subject group consisted of individuals who had completed military service at a three-star level or above, and non-military subjects who had served in high-level positions in the Department of Defense or State Department. Interviews were conducted with persons who qualified as strategic leaders based on their rank or grade and the positions they had held. Because of the stature of these individuals, only one interview was requested from each participant. With their permission, the interviews were taped so they could be transcribed and analyzed. These were unstructured interviews, which allowed for exploration of various topics based on the leaders’ interest and experience. It is important to remember that the interviews are self-reported data, which reflect the leaders’ personal experience, values, beliefs, and opinions. The subject group had defining characteristics in that they worked for the federal government, mostly in Defense-related positions. This cultural frame of reference is an important lens by which to view the findings.

## *Leadership Development and Adult Learning*

The literature review began with a general review of leadership research, from the definitions and descriptions of the theories to the characteristics of leaders and the environmental factors that impact their work. Given that general leadership provides the foundation for strategic leadership to be developed, both were examined.

The definition of leadership which is most descriptive of what was found in the study was: “Leadership is a process of giving purpose (meaningful direction) to collective effort, and causing willing effort to be expended to achieve purpose” (Jacobs & Jaques, 1990, p. 281), which is most apropos as the authors developed Stratified Systems Theory, by which the boundaries of the study were established. The definition captures the essence of what these leaders were about with the references to “meaning” and “purpose.”

Although the theories of leadership all have their place and relevance, there were two strategic leadership theories that were most aligned with the findings. The first was the theory on conceptual complexity, which is interesting considering that the final model represented a mind map of the leader perceptions. The second was the visionary and inspirational models, although the findings were more oriented toward relationship skills, trust, and credibility than charismatic leadership.

The literature on leadership development focused on determining what needs to be developed as a precursor to general efforts to “teach” leadership. Having a system in place to identify talents and the needs in respect to what can be learned, a way to describe and communicate this so that it is useful, is necessary (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001). Developing skills through practice and in partnership with others was stressed, as was developing soft skills such as intuition and the ability to use reflection not only to improve understanding, but to gain distance from a problem in order to make better decisions on how to approach a solution.

The adult learning literature, in particular the theories on human development and stage theory, were the most aligned with the key factors in strategic leadership. The various orientations to learning—behaviorist, cognitive, humanist, social learning, and constructivism—all have roots in what can be found in reference to leadership development. However, an important connection between the research and the findings is found in the fact that constructivism theory holds that individuals make meaning in order to learn, whereby strategic leadership is also focused on meaning-making. Critical reflection was predominant in the research on adult learning and was clearly a major factor in the growth and development of the leaders interviewed. A tremendous amount of growth was attributed to the ability to challenge preconceived ideas and beliefs, stepping out of one’s comfort zone and tackling new opportunities head on. The fact that much of this takes place in conjunction with others is not to be overlooked, as the humanist and social learning theories support.

## *Findings*

The findings revealed five categories that describe these leaders' perceptions: Awake, Ally, Affirm, Advocate, and Account. These five categories are summarized here along with references from the leadership literature which augment the findings.

Awake was the main, overarching category, which captured the sense of self-awareness and attunement to people and drove appropriate action. Margaret Wheatley (1994) succinctly expressed the phenomenon of the Awake category as follows:

“The motion of these systems is kept in harmony by a force we are just beginning to appreciate: the capacity for self-reference. Instead of whirling off in different directions, each part of the system must remain consistent with itself and with all other parts of the system as it changes” (p. 146).

The Ally category was where the leaders entered into mutually beneficial relationships, either by enlisting others in partnership with them or whereby others brought them on board. This category showed the individuals reaching out for help and support when necessary and leveraging relationships to help them succeed. Wheatley (2002, p. 43) notes “we can't be creative if we refuse to be confused.”

Kouzes and Posner (1993) wrote the book *Credibility* to present their research on how leaders earn the trust and confidence of their constituents. In their introduction, they say that credibility “is about what people demand of their leaders and the actions leaders must take in order to intensify their constituents' commitment to a common cause.” Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) describe Burns' view that transformational leaders “operate out of deeply held personal value systems that include such values as justice, honor, and integrity” (p. xvii). The Affirm code captured the essence of this view. The subjects of this study considered credibility, an important aspect of integrity, a core competence of leadership.

Torbert (1987) expressed that “managing is the art of making dreams come true” (p. xi). In this case, the Advocate code represents how the leader encourages others to realize his or her dreams of achieving. It requires a great deal of trust and affirms the confidence the leader has in his or her co-worker's abilities. Sashkin (1997) refers to Burns' (1978) work on transformational leadership in regard to instilling confidence in others. Burns believes that this type of leadership leads to “a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents.” Burns (1978) considers exchanges of trust, commitment, and respect as modal values that bond both leaders and followers, actualizing the needs of both.

The Account code refers to the leaders' sense of responsibility and how they actively used feedback to check on the affects of their behavior. Such leaders took risks and were gutsy and enthusiastic about accomplishing goals, but they also continuously sought to confirm that they were doing the right thing. John Gardner sums it up as

follows: “One of the reasons people are apt to learn less is that they are willing to risk less. ...We pay a heavy price for our fear of failure” (1964, p. 15). As Collins (2001) discussed in his research on strategic (level 5) leaders, “Most Level 5 leaders would understand that their report card only comes in when their successor succeeds.” The validation they got on their own work was dependent on the success of others. These leaders’ personal values, vision, passion, and commitment to a mission energize and move others.

The codes were summarized further in a symbolic figure and a model to summarize the findings. The findings show, as did earlier behavioral research, that the two aspects of task and relationship are important to successful leaders. In this case, both functioned predominantly in the leaders’ behavior, but under the fabric of their contextual experience built on their own self-efficacy and relations with others. It follows that more attention paid to developing self-mastery and strong relationship skills are in order.

As there have been far more studies done on military leadership than civilian federal service, the study examines the findings in relation to the established qualifications for senior civilian leaders and found that a gap exists. While the qualifications for senior executives are behavior-oriented, the research indicates a need for stronger focus on personal development, growth as an individual, and contributions made to the development of others. The relationship aspect of leadership does not receive the proper emphasis.

#### *Recommendations for Leader Development: What Should We Learn?*

Before beginning the discussion on leader development, it is important to note that “learning to learn” is really the basis of progress. Often it is taken for granted that, because adults went through the school system, graduated, and may have advanced degrees, they are capable learners. That is not necessarily so, and is certainly a factor when it comes to developing cognitive capacity and talents. In particular, reflection plays a key role, both in the progression to becoming a strategic leader and in transformative learning. As Phyllis Cunningham (1983) wrote in *Helping Students Extract Meaning from Experience*:

“Critical reflection is the central process in transformative learning. Our natural human interest in emancipation drives us to reflect on the way we see ourselves, our history, our knowledge, and our social roles. If we see we are constrained or oppressed by any of our perspectives, we may be challenged to revise them. And so human beings learn, change, and develop (p. 75).”

We need to find ways to help people become better learners, identify both their strengths and weaknesses, and consciously work toward developing talent. One clear talent that emerged from the data was the ability to be a mentor and teacher to others, to develop them and bring them along. This was most heavily seen in the Advocacy category and is an important manifestation of a person’s ability and skill as a learner.

Conger and Benjamin (1999) discuss training approaches taken by a number of organizations in their leader development efforts. In each case, the “training approach” was targeted toward conceptual awareness, feedback, skill building, and personal growth. Various learning methods were matched with the approach to bring about desired program outcomes.

What might also be an important skill is “unlearning,” that is, putting aside preconceived ideas and indoctrination to make room for a new understanding, a better way of approaching a task. This seemed to be a factor in strategic leadership, especially with the military subjects who were raised under a command and control culture. The leaders in this study apparently were able to delegate that style of leadership in order to become better leaders. They had the capacity to see the differences in the nature of the tasks they were doing and adapt to a transformational leadership style, which is typically more characteristic in the public and private domain.

### *Learn to Be a Reflective Thinker*

What are some avenues for incorporating a time and place to practice reflective thinking? In her writings on transpersonal psychology, Boucouvalas (1980, 1983, 1993) suggests pathways to allow one’s thinking to get beyond the individual ego. They can be categorized as classical (meditation and yoga), assisted (biofeedback, hypnosis, sensory and sleep deprivation), and awakening exercises (relaxation, centering, physical disciplines, mental imagery, visualization). Other possible avenues for awakening experiences that would apply in the context of this study include sports, relationships with others, music, and art. She maintains that one’s attitude and context or thought is crucial, and that if they can be connected with one’s “ultimate” values, any activity can be transforming (Boucouvalas, 1980, p. 43).

### *Learn How to Build Relationships*

As could be seen in the Advocacy category and other areas in the data, relationships—and fostering healthy ones—were of keen interest to the leaders interviewed. They actively worked at this and took responsibility for their contribution to making a relationship work. This was far more prevalent in the data than being a successful taskmaster. In fact, they described building a relationship as the basis of having people want to work to make the organization a success, in a self-initiated manner. As Margaret Wheatley (1994) expressed:

“We need to stop describing tasks and instead facilitate process. We will need to become savvy about how to build relationships, how to nurture growing, evolving things. All of us will need better skills in listening, communicating, and facilitating groups, because these are the talents that build strong relationships. It is well known that the era of the rugged individual has been replaced by the era of the team player...The quantum world has demolished the concept of the unconnected individual (p. 38).”

It is not necessary to go back to the days of transactional analysis, or start “touchy-feely” awareness sessions. What is needed is practice in real-world situations. It does take a great deal of self-awareness and personal honesty; however, relationship building can be fostered in a number of ways related to learning.

### *Learn How to Develop Talent—Yours and Others*

David C. McClelland (1961) talks about how education should be able to renew a person and serve to renew society. He says education should develop one’s versatility. This is important for developing talent, which requires an honest yet reflective look at oneself. He lists traits of creative people as openness, independence, flexibility, the capacity to find order in experience, and having a remarkable zeal or drive (pp. 36-40). These traits help one in developing his or her talents, and in having the skill to help others.

### *Learn How to Learn Collaboratively*

McKinley (1983, p. 13) discusses what he calls a collaborative learning process (CLP). He defines CLP as “a discussion in which learners cooperate in identifying and exploring the nature and perceived adequacy of each other’s perceptions, opinions, and beliefs in a given area of study.” He goes on to explain that the purpose is to help each other to identify and examine the nature and bases of their understandings and the possibilities of alternate views. In a CLP, the members are responsible for making all decisions regarding the discussions, content, process, and procedures (i.e., an autonomous learning group). He points out “collaborative learning begins as a cooperative process of exploring a subject of common concern, but it flourishes only when we help each other to struggle with ourselves to attain new insights.” He differentiates this from other discussion-type sessions which can be hindered because “Very little time is given to help the individual learner examine their particular views. The leader tends to end conflict by summarizing the ‘correct’ view, and competitive spirit tends to triumph (p. 14).” To be successful the group needs a knowledgeable trainer, participants committed to the goals of the program, open and voluntary communication, and appropriate normative controls. Normative controls are both task-oriented and maintenance-oriented. Task-oriented functions are behaviors such as initiating, information seeking, information giving, evaluating, coordinating, or summarizing. Maintenance-oriented functions include encouraging, harmonizing, consensus testing, and compromising. For a facilitator to manage the group effectively, Cunningham (1983) points out that he or she needs to clarify assumptions and adopt a rationale within the context of the environment and actively seek ways to enhance the group’s learning.

### *Learn to be a Self-Directed Learner*

Malcolm Knowles (1975) introduced the term “self-directed learning,” whereby he saw the learner as taking the initiative for diagnosing needs, setting objectives, selecting resources, choosing learning strategies, and evaluating progress (Cranton,

1996). Although Knowles was describing a situation where the individual learners take responsibility for their learning, Cranton says that Knowles was misinterpreted to mean that learners work independently, when he was actually an advocate for people working in groups. This is critical in understanding how to facilitate the way that adults learn. Knowles (1980, p. 135) points out that learning in groups provides for richer resources and motivation to learn. He discusses many formats, from action projects to trips and tours, which allow participants to interact and learn from each other. By working collectively with others, an individual has an opportunity to learn more about themselves.

People need to be able to be masters of their own learning, whether in a self-directed project or in a group. For self-directed learning to be effective, Mark Cheren (1983) lists seven major aspects that need to be addressed before beginning a project:

- What is to be learned?
- How is the learning to be used?
- How is the learning going to be accomplished?
- How is the learning to be consolidated, demonstrated, or shared?
- How and by whom is the learning to be assessed?
- How, if at all, is the learning to be documented?
- What is the time limit, or schedule, for the effort? (p. 26)

When educators are involved in helping someone come up with a self-directed learning plan, they take on the roles of the diagnostician and negotiator, helping the individual design and validate the learning plan.

### *Learn to Seek and Provide Feedback*

Margaret Wheatley (1994) talks about how disequilibrium leads to growth, and says that until now scientists have failed to notice the role of positive feedback and disequilibrium in moving forward. She refers to studies on open systems, whereby researchers specifically looked for influences that would support stability, and monitored feedback loops and how they operated to facilitate system stability (p. 78). This same concept operating in systems operates with humans in their ability to be self-aware and have healthy interactions with others. This is an important skill that should be learned early in one's career. Current leader development programs often include a self-assessment or even assessments that factor in feedback from peers, subordinates, and supervisors. This is an effective way of providing information to the student, as long as experienced facilitators can help them process the feedback in a non-threatening way and help them internalize it. A number of the instruments include additional information to help the individual address shortfalls and improve where needed.

### *Recommendations for Leadership Development Programs*

Given that the subjects of this study did not mention leadership programs they attended, it brings to question if existing educational experiences may or may not be effective in bringing about those competencies and characteristics. Program planners

must be able to answer the following questions: Are the program experiences the right ones to bring about the desired change in the student? How do you translate these experiences into meaningful educational programs? And what kind of indicators would provide evidence that the program is working? With the amount of money invested in developing leaders for the future, it is necessary to consider what strategic leaders found contributed to their ability to meet the challenges inherent in their position. It is important to note that, because of their seniority, many of these leaders would not have attended current leadership courses and may not be in a position to judge their effectiveness.

What is known is that active learning, rather than lecture, forces the student to demonstrate his or her understanding and provides time to practice skills. It is important that step-by-step feedback based on specific performance and behavior is much more valuable than a general overall grade. Having other students serve as observers provides practice in giving feedback. Exercises where students work in small groups or pairs are another method that can be used to provide feedback experiences. Although the literature has long demonstrated the value of active learning, and feedback, not enough traditional education programs incorporate more than a shallow attempt to get beyond the lecture format. However, the 360-degree assessments have become more popular, and are utilized more often for leadership classes. It is important to note that feedback is an ambiguous topic and has to be taken judiciously. A foundation for using it in educational programs can be made by discussing what feedback is and is not, what constitutes “good” feedback, and guidelines in providing feedback to others.

For the leaders participating in this study, what stood out was that they had been given the opportunity to take on challenges, whether they identified and went after them on their own or were encouraged to get beyond what they knew by others. A lecture may serve to inform and inspire the listener, but until they are actively involved in learning, experiencing doing something new or in a different way, the full benefit of new knowledge does not become internalized. Tools such as journal writing and other exercises designed to cause the student to stop and reflect on the meaning of the lesson, beyond simple understanding to the point of having meaning to the student personally, is necessary for true change to occur. Mentoring, being supported this way by others and serving in that capacity for others, was an integral part of where learning took place. Having a program that facilitates relationship development, networking, and the opportunity to meet and work with colleagues and exemplars is critical to providing the avenues for true progress and growth. Opportunity often comes by a chance meeting or by the individual’s work being recognized and shared with others.

Beyond a classroom experience, job rotations, serving on committees and task forces outside the normal workgroup, travel, professional development goals and plans, and personnel systems that emphasize feedback on a number of levels are needed.

## *Recommendations for Executive Development in the Federal Government*

In keeping with the recommendations of the April 2004 *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols* report, developing a Defense Professional Corps would not only help attract talent to the DoD, but it would provide a forum for an advocacy group to discuss developmental issues and address ways to provide the support necessary to develop future leaders. Job rotations, to include short-term, task-oriented assignments (even three-month or six-month rotations), would help provide the broader view and opportunity to test the ability to work in diverse groups that developing leaders need. Being willing to move is an important aspect in helping an individual become comfortable with, and competent with, dealing with change. Additional billets to allow for this type of movement in the system are necessary.

What is very important but not often addressed is how professional development, education, and rotational experiences are tied to the personnel evaluation system. We need to make sure that development is tied to evaluation and there is a realistic plan for each employee and the overall organization to improve and expand his or her abilities.

In individual programs, collaborative group learning should be encouraged, with educators skilled in facilitating such learning environments. Rather than give “participation points” for simply speaking up in the group, a concerted effort should be made to pay attention to how the student contributes, either by active listening or by carrying out the group normative task or maintenance functions. Feedback on participation must go beyond whether a student talked or not to how he or she facilitated the group process through their participation. Often it is the quieter student who contributes more in that way than a dominant participant. Beyond the classroom, groups should be encouraged to write together and come up with solutions to real-life problems, simulating their work challenges as closely as possible. Working in a group context, there is opportunity for learning, reflection, and cognitive reorganization. Although group learning experiences were not discussed by the subjects in those terms, the literature on group behavior and small group theory suggests that in a group we can see ourselves through the eyes of others, practice different roles, and be a part of developing norms and rules that help the group function effectively.

One final area that deserves consideration goes back to the command and control culture that exists in the Department of Defense. Much of the strategic leadership literature is more applicable to the civilian world where communication processes may be diagrammed in an organizational chart but, in fact, decisions are made in an entirely different manner and communication patterns are often confounded. In the military, a leader must be able to rely on the information he or she receives, which normally comes through a distinct and structured process. It might be helpful to study how the military does business in comparison to how non-military organizations work. How do they complement or conflict and what can be learned in helping the DoD leader make the changes necessary to grow into what research describes as an exemplary strategic leader? It was clear from the leaders in this study that they were able to make that transition and that they worked hard to overcome the constraints of the command and control culture to

become transformational leaders. What was remarkable was the degree of flexibility these leaders had in adapting the combat culture leadership mode to a new situation and context. This transition of leadership style deserves further attention.

### *Recommendations for Further Research*

Limitations on the time available to spend with each subject, and not being able to interview others who worked with or for the leaders, prohibited deeper understanding of these leaders. The question remains as to what the leaders described could be considered “the truth,” especially in light of the fact that, in many cases, they were describing their own leadership behavior. In order to verify their observations additional data would be required, such as 360-degree assessments, collaborating interviews, or shadowing subjects. The study was limited as those types of data were not within the scope of this research effort and the leadership literature is not necessarily focused on strategic leaders from the national security arena.

Although this study did not set out to examine the differences between those subjects with military background with those from a strictly civilian agency, such as the Department of State, the data did seem to indicate there was. It would be helpful to follow up on this and focus on the military command and control model of leadership in light of what we know about strategic leadership in general.

It was also clear that there were gender differences in leadership style. Although there was not enough data to make a compelling case or even include it in the findings, it did seem that the female subjects reflected more concern for others’ feelings and relationship development on a more personal level, which is consistent with the research on gender in communications and leadership.

A number of topics were discussed in the interviews that may have been interesting to explore further, but were not key to the issue or of interest to the researcher. Other studies might explore technology and leadership. As it was, this did not come up as a discussion item in some of the interviews, or the leaders’ viewpoints on technology varied too widely to warrant inclusion in the study. Other areas that may have been worth pursuing were evaluation of leadership, career advancement within the restraints of the given system (military or civilian), and making optimal use of diversity.

It is important to note that these leaders did not worry or talk about searching for jobs, had no difficulty getting jobs and, in fact, were often recruited. This could be a function of their background or position. However, a question that deserves more focus might be how one becomes the type of leader people want to recruit, and how to develop and market oneself so that people want him or her to be on their team.

Another question arises; that is, were those people in the leader’s chain of command or scope of influence that were problematic or disliked by the leader? Was there jealousy or subterfuge by those who were not mentored or taken under the wing of the leader? The leaders tended to talk in a positive, proactive manner about their

experiences. They addressed challenges that were taken head on and overcome. When they did discuss failure, it was in reference to their own personal snafus, but not the people they may have failed. Investigating the other side of success would give additional insight as to how these leaders operate in reference to non-allies or enemies.

Does mentoring always go so smoothly? What can we learn from it when it fails? When these leaders were being mentored by others, beyond career advancing opportunities and good advice, how did the experience of being mentored change them? What relationship, if any, still exists between the mentored and the mentee? How has that relationship changed over the years? This is a sample of questions that could be explored in future research.

There were two specific areas that were implied by some of the subjects, but due to the limited time afforded to spend with them and the lack of a personal relationship with the researcher, they were not feasible to explore. The first was spirituality and leadership, a subject which did not come up as a major topic. Spirituality was hinted at and actually discussed with some leaders, but was not pursued in enough depth to be meaningful. The leadership literature does contain research on the affective and even spiritual dimensions of leadership, even in respect to spirituality in the workforce. Yet, in the actual work environments, we avoid delving into this topic as we get to know people for a variety of reasons, including the desire to be politically correct. Yet spirituality and religious beliefs are an integral part of many people's cultural background and belief systems, and to ignore this defining characteristic of an individual seems odd. The second area involves transformational learning, which explores painful, life-changing experiences. Again, there were times in the discussion where it was clear something like this was a factor, but it did not seem right to probe. Everyone has difficult times, and often we can learn the most from delving into these situations. Being able to get close enough with any one of these leaders to be comfortable talking about those times in their lives, how they transitioned through them, and what they learned through the process would have been valuable.

As a researcher, completing this study was a challenging but rewarding experience. To have had the chance to meet and converse with these exemplars was extraordinary. What may yield the most fascinating results would be to pursue answers to what the leaders did not say: they did not discuss their dark side or "shadow" personality. Did they have one? They talked about their allies and friends, but not personality conflicts or enemies. Did they have any? If so, how were they negated or managed? It was obvious that these leaders had faced challenges and overcome them, but had they had any life-changing experiences that contributed significantly to molding them as a leader? To have the opportunity to spend more time with them and go more deeply into what made them the people they are today would have been priceless.

### *In Closing*

As Alfred North Whitehead (1943), one of the pioneers of adult learning, succinctly expressed: "The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to

preserve change amid order.” This statement provides a glimpse into the dynamic, challenging world of strategic leadership and the art of balancing its demands. From the leaders interviewed in this study it is clear that this search for balance, the need for each individual to maintain a strong sense of self while managing the lives and progress of others, is possible. The form of adult human learning that best imbues strategic capability is that which provides the best fodder for reflection and best encourages and enhances the reflective process. Bennis (2003) describes these types of leaders as having an “openness—a willingness to try new things and hear new ideas, however bizarre, a tolerance for ambiguity and change, and a rejection of any and all preconceived prejudices, biases, and stereotypes” (p.118). These are the people who will be capable of transformation, on a personal level, and for those they lead.

In order to develop the leaders we need for the future, we must foster their ability to become successful learners and teachers, not only in the classroom, but also in the real world in which they work. We need to provide the support and opportunity for them to develop the necessary self-awareness to grow personally. In addition, we need to help them identify and improve their talents through education and developmental experience. It is clear from the literature that leadership skills can be learned; yet, in practice, many of the findings are not implemented. As advances in technology and learning methods occur, it is imperative that practitioners find ways to document change and development in their students, and that their superiors pay attention to and recognize their positive impact on others in the organization. That is the true measure of achievement.