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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AS A TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESS

By

Denise Ann Bannan

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AS A TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESS

By

Denise Ann Bannan

Throughout the past two decades, many organizations have offered their employees the opportunity to participate in a variety of leadership development programs. These programs have attempted to develop and transform employees to be able to deal with the constant change within their work environment, align employee thinking with the mission of the organization, and motivate individual and team performance to reach the goals of the company. Yet little is known about the impact of these leadership development programs, as they relate to the fostering of transformative learning among participants. This study examined what participants reported about their individualized learning experiences before, during, and after attending a nine-month leadership development program that may have changed their perspective on leadership roles within their organization, their understanding of effective leadership practices, their process of critical self-reflection, and individual behavioral changes they might choose to modify in their working environment.

Participants in the leadership development-training program who held positions in the fields of retail, commercial, industrial, education, healthcare, and small business owners were chosen as the subjects of this study. Since the participants in this program had diverse backgrounds in their leadership and educational experiences, it was possible to study the interpretation of their roles, challenges, and perceptions to offer a valuable

perspective on how a leader's knowledge and learning are obtained and possibly transformed into new ways of learning and making meaning of new experiences. Thus, the possibility of transforming individuals to lead in different ways and form diverse working relationships with their colleagues existed because of their ability to reflect on their leadership approaches through the lens of their new learning.

To that end, the goal of this study had two main purposes: (1) to examine the transformation of individuals' meaning perspectives regarding leadership; and (2) to analyze the extent to which the participants attributed their change in perspective to participation in the leadership program.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Pat, and my two sons, Chad and Eric. Without their support and understanding, I would have never been able to complete the requirements of this degree. I am extremely fortunate and grateful to have such a wonderful family whom I love dearly.

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five of their children was the gift of persistence in pursuit of your dreams. They believed that there was nothing that their children could not achieve. Thank you, mom and dad for making all of my dreams come true!

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Chapter One
Leadership Development as a Transformational Process
Introduction to the Study

Introduction to the Problem

Within the last twenty years, organizations have come to the realization that in order to retain and attract employees who could successfully fill their leadership ranks and pilot their organizations into the future, they would need to develop and provide clearly articulated leadership training programs. This changed thinking about the importance of leadership training emerged for a variety of reasons. One reason was that senior leaders recognized that members of the new generation were not as loyal to organizations and were not as enthusiastic about, or driven by, a deep desire to move into leadership positions. Another factor was the introduction of advanced technology and instant global communications to our culture, driving organizations to almost frenzied levels of competition.

In tandem with these factors, highly respected writers and researchers such as Peter Block, Peter Senge, Stephen Covey and others began to teach the world community about the need to create dynamic future leaders who were team players, problem solvers, visionary thinkers, and mentors. These individuals would replace the traditional managers or supervisors. It was suddenly apparent to organizations that the traditional leader would no longer be effective in a global marketplace. The new leader would understand the importance of the human side of leadership. Valuing the diversity of the workforce, understanding the human condition, and knowing how to inspire and motivate for the purpose of increased productivity became the new definition of leadership. The leadership

community had an awakening and became aware that they had no strategic plan to replace themselves, and thus, to ensure the survival of their organizations.

From this perspective, a vast array of leadership training programs appeared in organizations across the United States as well as globally. Because the research on the effectiveness of leadership programs was limited and because there were few proven leadership program models, organizations began to create what they believed captured the essence of effective leadership training. As a result, we are currently left with training programs that can be fragmented and deal with leadership training from every possible vantage point. Some examples would include: job shadowing, mentoring, coaching, the art of leadership, and other theoretical approaches. While each of these approaches has value, there is often a shotgun approach to the actual training. In the spirit of stewardship, organizations have spent thousands of hours and millions of dollars hoping to leave a cadre of a new breed of leaders as their legacy to their organizations. Unfortunately, pre- and post-training data were not an element of most programs, leaving everyone to guess at the effectiveness or success of such training.

Prior to the rise of leadership programs, leaders in organizations either rose through the ranks or were selected by senior management. In fact, the literature indicates that many individuals in senior leadership roles within today's organizations have had no formal training in organizational leadership. These individuals evolved into leadership positions based on their political connections, abilities, loyalty, and work ethic, most often from non-managerial jobs. They arrived at their positions of leadership through the ranks, and their leadership skills were developed through work and life experiences. In addition, most have never been systematically taught about the elements of the art of leadership (Sogunro, 1997).

Some have learned how to lead from mistakes and through observation, coaching, on-the-job practice, and informal sharing of knowledge from colleague to colleague. Others may have had limited formal training, either through advanced degree coursework or seminar training dealing with leadership practices.

While infinite numbers of leadership development programs now exist, there is still minimal research data available about the direct or long-term impact that these programs have on how individuals think about leadership as a concept. Thus, the question begging to be asked was, "Has true transformative learning occurred within the individual during or after his/her leadership training experience?" This study examined participants' meaning perspectives about what constitutes good leadership before, during, and after involvement in a structured nine-month leadership development program. In order to complete this study, it was also critical to examine the literature on adult learning to have a more in-depth understanding about existing theoretical frameworks. After a critical review of adult learning theories, the researcher found that Mezirow's (1978) theory on transformational learning provided the best model to guide this study. The theory outlines the mental construction of experience and inner meaning and changes that may occur from these experiences.

For this purpose of this study, *meaning perspectives* will be defined as "a habitual set of expectations that constitutes an orienting frame of reference that we use in projecting our symbolic models and that serves as a (usually tacit) belief system for interpreting and evaluating the meaning of experience" (Mezirow, 1978). Hence, this study focused on participants' meaning perspectives regarding what constitutes good leadership because of the way the participants have organized and made sense of their life experiences. In other words,

how individuals have made meaning from their life experiences and how these experiences serve as their lens for the way they perceive and construe the world around them.

Mezirow's (1978) and Cranton's (1994) research on transformation in adult education parallels with employee transformation in a work setting outlined by Kegan (2000). Hence, transformational learning is not something that just happens in an educational setting, but can take place in a variety of situations and environments. According to Cranton, employees will transform their own attitudes and behaviors given the right environment that is mutually compatible with their personal values. Thus, individuals can have a transformational experience if they are at a point in their careers where they have formed some values and beliefs that could be altered or changed. It is also important to note that not every person will experience transformation of their meaning perspectives by experiencing the same phenomenon. This study explored the individual transformation of individuals and possible "triggers" that influenced how they made meaning from their participation in a leadership development program.

Mezirow's (1978) research has also shown that the act of reflection is an everyday occurrence in the transformation of one's *meaning schemes* (referred to as our points of view, which translate into our beliefs, attitudes, feelings and judgments related to a meaning perspective); however, this act of reflection does not necessarily involve self-reflection. Most often what happens is that one corrects one's interpretation of an incident and does not necessarily self-reflect on the occurrence that has taken place. However, what happens less frequently is the transformation of meaning perspective. This event is much more likely to involve our sense of "self" and always involves critical reflection upon the unclear territory on which we have built our assumptions and expectations.

Another aspect of transforming one's thinking is *perspective transformation.* This is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to limit the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective; and finally, making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings (Mezirow, 1991).

As stated in the research, the process of transformation can result not only from critical life events but also from emotional or intellectually based events. Examples of these might include: a substantive discussion, a book, a poem, a painting, or new understandings about a different culture that may contrast with, or contradict, our own previously accepted beliefs. Any major challenge to an established perspective can result in a transformational experience for an individual and is usually connected to some deep emotional level in the human mind. These challenges often call into question deeply held personal, moral attitudes and can threaten our established sense of "self."

This study had two main purposes: (1) to examine the transformation in individuals' meaning perspectives regarding leadership; and (2) to analyze the extent to which the participants attributed their change in perspective to participation in the program. Common themes, concepts, and experiences of participants from the leadership development program were explored and scrutinized to support evidence of individual transformational learning and changing perspectives experienced before, during, and after participation in the training program.

Transformational Learning Environment

An argument can be made that the transformational learning occurring within an individual can be facilitated given the right environmental conditions. The word "facilitated" is key in stressing the point that at the least one has to start with environmental conditions that could lead to transformation. No one person can transform an individual. However, research suggests that developing an organizational culture that develops an employee's values can lead to a transformed organization. What constitutes the right environmental conditions changes from one individual to another. As past research indicates, we all learn in different ways, have different experiences, and have different meaning perspectives. This does call into question, "Can a prescribed leadership development training program transform participants' thinking in their meaning perspectives?" One assumption that could be drawn is that this would be virtually impossible. Another could advocate that creating educational or work settings that support and promote independent thought would more likely encourage individual transformation and improve the work environment.

Regardless of where an individual leader falls in the continuum of management or leadership styles, it is evident that there is an authentic need for leadership development programs that can specifically foster individual transformative learning. If support by the organization's leadership is not present, then the participants of any leadership development program will be limited in their abilities to individually transform their behavior, adopt new ways of leading, or build more effective working relationships with their colleagues.

Rationale for the Study

Organizations today have generally embraced the importance of leadership training. They understand the critical need to provide appropriate and effective leadership training to a broad spectrum of employees within their organization. They also understand the need to provide differentiated modalities of leadership training. As stated in the introduction, this could include mentoring, coaching, job shadowing, skills set training, and theoretical study. This training can be a major benefit to an organization in retaining employees who may have potential to lead the company in the future. These offerings may also attract new employees, because they will view the organization as one where their potential may be recognized and developed. The bottom line is the survival of the organization, which depends on their most important asset, the human asset.

While organizational culture has certainly changed to include basic and practical leadership training, it appears that there is little, if any, collected and disaggregated data that clearly indicates whether or not any particular leadership development and/or training programs have had a substantive and lasting impact on an employee's ability to be an excellent leader. To add to this gap in our knowledge and understanding about the benefits of leadership training, there seems to be no specific data-based research that clearly tells us that any particular method of leadership training has short and/or long-term benefits for the individual or the organization. Finally, there is little anecdotal evidence that participants in leadership training programs have been asked to use self-reflection to assess the effectiveness of the program(s) on their personal development—again both in the short and long-term.

The goal of leadership training programs must be to provide an experience that enables participants to expand and enhance the way in which they view leadership. It must

also allow for some type of practical or hands-on application of what is being learned. The program selected as the focal point for this study met these criteria.

Established in the researcher's community, the leadership development program selected had an excellent reputation. In addition, the researcher's organization had sent twelve individuals to the program since its inception in 1996. All of these individuals were in various levels of leadership roles within the researcher's organization. Through informal conversations with them, it was discovered that they believed that this particular program improved and enhanced their leadership abilities. When discussing their experience in the program, most used words that described a transformation in their own thinking about what constitutes good leadership.

One obstacle that was identified by the supervisors of these participants over the years was the financial impact of allowing these individuals to attend the training during their normal working hours. The supervisors continually asked, "Is this training worth the cost?" and "Are we losing productivity in our department or division?" Simply put, participants were earning their daily salaries yet were not present at work. Obviously, this reflected traditional thinking on the part of the participants' supervisors. Thus, this question could have been another purpose of this study: to examine whether the leadership training was cost-effective to the organization. However, this is a much broader question that goes beyond the scope of this research study.

Another factor that was considered in selecting this particular program as the focal point of this study was that the participants were employed at a variety of organizations located within the researcher's community. They held various and diverse positions that ranged from presidents/CEOs of companies to public school teachers and from

manufacturing executives to healthcare providers. The participants also were from diverse organizations that were profit-driven businesses to non-profit community organizations. The diversity of the group intrigued the researcher, as did the expectation that the data collected could be a useful resource to the researcher's organization regarding the benefits gained from allowing employees to participate.

Finally, the researcher chose this program to study because of her desire to experience the program firsthand. The researcher felt she was at a point in her career where there was a need to experience new ways of leading and was open to exploring what this program could do to enrich or refresh her own thinking about what constitutes good leadership. In other words, the researcher wanted to immerse herself in the program in order to model her expectations that every member of her organization must continue to learn and grow. Thus, if the researcher's organization was going to continue to encourage and support employees' development of their own leadership skills, it was critical that the CEO provide the example and speak with a voice that understood every nuance of this program.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework chosen for this study is based on the transformational learning theory perspective presented by Mezirow (1997), which is defined as the process of effecting change in "a frame of reference." The transformational learning theory was utilized as the primary criteria for whether transformative learning did or did not occur by individual participants based on what they said about their experience before, during, and after the leadership development program ended.

One can make an interpretation of the process of change based on one's own assumptions or beliefs. When we subsequently use this interpretation to guide decision-making or action in our leadership roles, then making meaning out of an experience becomes learning. Research has shown that individuals learn in various ways. Nonetheless, to fully understand and make meaning out of a learning experience, a process of reflection needs to be part of one's learning continuum in order to be transformative. Reflection allows one to correct distortions in personal beliefs and errors in problem solving and decision-making. Further, critical reflection involves a complete analysis of the presuppositions on which personal beliefs have been built (Mezirow, 1998).

Critical self-reflection is motivated by perceived differences between learners' beliefs, values, or assumptions and new knowledge or experiences that provide differing viewpoints, insights, and perspectives. The person who wishes to stimulate critical self-reflection, and thus, work toward transformative learning, can further enhance the process by using strategies designed specifically to reveal and highlight such differences (Cranton, 1994).

Transformative learning theory is also embedded in the broader context of Habermas's (1984) theory of communicative competence, particularly the concepts of instrumental, practical, and emancipatory knowledge. Mezirow's (1990) interpretation of this broader context describes instrumental learning as understanding cause and effect relationships through problem solving, communicative learning as understanding what others mean, and emancipatory learning as becoming free from restraints through critical self-reflection. According to Mezirow (1990), both learning and reflection are multidimensional processes. One can engage in content reflection (describing the problem), in process

reflection (evaluating the strategies being used to address the problem), or in premise reflection (questioning the problem itself). Each type of reflection can take place within each domain of learning. Also, each type of reflection can be placed within the psychological, sociolinguistic, and epistemic meaning perspectives (Cranton, 1994).

Habermas's (1984) writings on communication action provide an interpretive framework for transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991, 1998). Habermas (1984) identifies two major domains of intentional adult learning: (1) instrumental action and (2) communicative action. Each domain is grounded in its own area of knowledge, human interest, and method of inquiry. Instrumental action focuses on technical interests through an experimental method of inquiry with fundamental explanation of events. Communicative action emphasizes practical interests, dialogue, collaboration, and explanatory inquiry with the interpretation of experience.

A third domain of learning which affects both instrumental and communicative action through the process of critical reflection is emancipatory action (the reflexive component of research). The process of critical self-reflection provides possibilities for transforming our meaning schemes and meaning perspectives and may be followed by emancipatory individual and/or social action.

Transformative learning theory is based on constructivist assumptions. Mezirow (1991) describes the constructivist assumptions that underlie his theory as including "a conviction that meaning exists within ourselves rather than in external forms and that personal meanings that we attribute to our experience are acquired and validated through human interaction and communication." Individuals interpret personal experiences they encounter in their own way and then make sense of their learning as a result of their

perceptions of their experiences. Transformative learning, then, is a process of examining, questioning, validating, and revising these perceptions (Cranton, 1994).

The whole concept of transformational learning has to make sense to the individual encountering this experience. Argyris and Schon (1978) describe this sense making as *mental models*, which can be further described as one's individual experiences and perceptions that frame his/her thinking on how to make meaning out of an experience. Schon's research included the *reflective practioner,* which involves continuous evaluation of one's professional experience and the construction of professional meaning. This reflective practioner approach provides a framework for understanding leadership development as one's ability to reflect upon one's quest for an ongoing dialogue of learning and self-development (Schon, 1987).

Individual, work, and social relationships influence the experience of leadership development. Kolb's (1984) research on experiential learning outlines a four-cycle process in which concrete experience translates to reflective observation, then abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. The experiential learning framework is grounded in knowledge that is "created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984).

There are specific criteria that one can use to decide if a change is transformative. To be called transformative, there must be structural change; either social structural transformation, or personal structural transformation, or both. The aim of change is to provide a catalyst to a fundamental shift in an individual's beliefs and values. It must include a social vision about the future based on a value system, which includes an individual's struggle with the validity of the claim being made. Another criterion in transformational

change is a shift in one's thinking of what counts as knowledge. Is this knowledge acquired new or old knowledge? Does it add to the knowledge base that more deeply forms a questioning of one's values and beliefs?

Finally, transformational change is based on conflict theory, not consensus or accommodation/adaptation theory. Conflict theory assumes there are different interests present when humans act to change either their own personal meaning or social structures. A sense of clarity emerges, which promotes enlightenment through a sense of struggle to understand differing points of view and meaning. Scott (1987) summarizes the four criteria for assessing if something or someone is transformed as: (1) there must be structural change; (2) the aim or intention must be grounded in a future vision that includes freedom, democracy, and authenticity; (3) there must be a shift in what counts as knowledge; and (4) the change must be based on conflict theory.

Using this as a framework, transformative learning challenges our perceptions of the concepts we have been taught throughout our lives and directs our attention to the roles that experience and culture have played in shaping what we know and how we have come to know it. At its core is a vision of learning that leads individuals, through reason, reflection, and rationality, to greater levels of self-awareness and consciousness of society. This study analyzed transformational learning through the lens of the participants of a nine-month leadership development program.

Research Questions

Utilizing the theoretical framework that focused on transformational learning as highlighted in the previous section, the following questions guided the inquiry of this study:

(1) In what ways are an individual's meaning perspectives about what constitutes good leadership transformed through participation in a leadership development-training program?

(2) To what extent did the participants attribute this change in their meaning perspectives to the leadership development program?

Significance of the Study

There is a need to further assess the effectiveness of leadership development programs based on the reflective inner work of participants. The significance of this study was to identify and analyze success factors, as well as specific gaps in learning that remain after the completion of a leadership development program, including:

- Participants were willing to enter into personal self-awareness and reflection as the program evolved.
- Participants were willing to change their behavior based on their self-reflection.
- Participants were impacted by the leadership development-training program as assessed before, during, and after completion and measured by the changes participants talked about during the evolution of the program.

The study focused on the impact that a nine-month leadership development-training program had on participants who held varied leadership positions in several organizations in the same community. The participants were employed by organizations in the retail, commercial, industrial, educational, healthcare, and small business sector. The research attempted to determine the inner work of reflection and transformation of meaning perspectives of participants in the leadership development program. The study sought to determine if the participants' meaning perspectives were altered in any way and if the participants attributed the change to the leadership development program. The inquiry included observations, on-line reflective discussions, and semi-structured interviews with a

select number of participants. Subsequent analysis followed the grounded theory approach of Strauss and Corbin (1998).

Chapter Two
Leadership Development as a Transformational Process
Literature Review

Introduction

Reviewing the literature that has been written about learning organizations, the nature of leadership, and leadership development programs was imperative to this study. Senge's (1990) research on learning organization was reviewed to provide a link between individual transformation and providing an environment that is conducive to such learning. The leadership development program literature explored both the traditional paradigms for leadership development programs and emerging perspectives regarding leadership experiences. This section of the literature also highlights evaluation processes to consider, as well as the shortcomings in previous research about the effectiveness of leadership development programs.

Because traditional leadership development programs were studied for reasons other than examining the changes that occur through self-reflection, the literature regarding individual experiences that sort them into informative and transformative learning categories (Kegan, 2000) was also reviewed. Finally, the research by well-known transformational learning theorists was explored to provide the foundation for the research questions and ultimate answers.

Learning Organizations and the Nature of Leadership

With the metamorphosis of today's society, organizations must be able to retain employees who can lead people effectively in order to be competitive in today's marketplace. Stable organizational leadership is essential for all organizations. In addition, developing

processes to promote and assist in meaningful leadership development for current employees within an organization is also a challenge. Employees must be willing to reflect on their own thinking in such a way, not only to do their jobs, but to do so in a way that is parallel with the organization's philosophy and vision. Employees need to believe they are part of the team. They need to be able to grow in their roles and feel that their presence is valued, and that their voices are heard. In return, the organization has the responsibility to provide a supportive environment where individuals' work lives are enriched. As Quinn (1996) advocates, organizations need to find individuals to lead employees who involve themselves in interaction and relationship with their broader environment.

Senge (1990) states that many individuals have spent much of their lives looking for a work environment that supports and provides safety for all employees to experience a learning organization. Learning organizations, as defined by Senge (1990), are organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together and from one another. Senge (1990) notes that learning organizations are possible because, intrinsically, we are all learners.

> "If we examine learning of an infant, we realize that no one has to teach an infant to learn anything. They are intrinsically curious, masterful learners who learn to walk, speak, and pretty much run their households all on their own. Learning organizations are possible because, not only is it our nature to learn, but also one could say people love to learn. Most of us at one time or another have been part of a great 'team,' a group of people who functioned together in extraordinary ways—who trusted one another, who complemented each other's strengths and compensated for each other's limitations, who had common goals that were larger than individual goals, and who produced extraordinary results" (Senge, 1990).

Senge (1990) states that a learning organization is a team that evolves over time. Most teams do not always start off where trust, respect, honesty, and safety are always present. This type of environment within an organization can take years to build. Building collegial relationships is an evolutionary process that needs to be nurtured and cultivated over an extended period of time.

The key to creating a learning organization is the presence of an improved ability on the part of the members to learn from and through experiences—both from their own and those of colleagues, customers, and competitors. All individuals in a learning organization need to be open to the fact that they still have a lot to learn no matter how long they have been with the organization. As Vicere and Fulmer (1997) have indicated in their research, there appears to be a movement on how organizations are managing and utilizing strategic leadership development initiatives to provide a learning environment for retaining corporate executives. However, to create a learning organization, the organization must come to the realization that the smartest people find it the hardest to learn (Argyis, 1991).

Another difficulty highlighted in the literature about learning organizations is that most people define learning too narrowly as merely learning how to problem solve. They focus on identifying and correcting errors in the external environment. Solving a problem is important; however, if learning is to persist, managers and employees must also look inward. They need to reflect critically on their own behavior, identify the ways they often inadvertently contribute to the organization's problems, and then decide to make a choice—either change how they act or continue to be part of the problem. They must learn that how they go about defining and solving problems can be the actual source of the problem.

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> "Put simply, because many professionals are almost always successful at what they do, they rarely experience failure. And because they have rarely failed, they have never learned how to learn from failure" (Argyis, 1991).

At an individual level, managers have a need to know their relationship to the larger picture and how the unknown forces beyond their own department are shaping their world (Cacioppe, 1998). As evidenced in the above statement, Cacioppe (1998) chooses the word *manager* versus *leader*. For the purpose of this study regarding leadership development, a clearer understanding regarding the two terms (manager and leader) both commonly utilized in the workplace provided further guidance in forming the foundation to support the research of this study.

Kotter (1990) contends that leadership is different from management. Management was invented to help the railroad, steel mills, and auto companies. It brought a degree of order and consistency to key dimensions like quality and profitability of products. Managers have developed and refined the processes, which make up the core of their existence: planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, controlling and problem-solving, in other words, various kinds of decision-making. Decision-making is the conscious consideration and selection of a course of action from among two or more available alternatives in order to produce a desired result (Mosley, Megginson, and Pietri, 2001).

The real meaning of management is making decisions. Managers are constantly required to assess alternatives and make decisions regarding a wide range of matters. However, there are many decision-making styles that exist depending on the individual's comfort and confidence level in making decisions. Decision-making involves ambiguity and taking risks. Depending on the style of the manager, the risk he/she is willing to take varies because of the individual's comfort level of dealing with the stress that may be associated

with the risk. Analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data can be utilized in the decision-making process. Decision-making also involves rational judgment; however, other factors can also play a role in the decision-making process. These factors include such things as the organizational situation at the time the decision has to be made, the peer pressure put on the decision maker by others within the organization, and the individual personality of the decision maker.

Leadership is different—it produces movement (Kotter, 1990). Leadership, defined in a broad sense, is a process by which one individual deliberately exercises influence that causes others to engage in voluntary, goal-oriented behavior and achievement (Mosley, Megginson, and Pietri, 2001). There are three key points to highlight in this definition. First, leadership is a shared influence process. Leadership does not exist without a leader and a follower present in the organization. Secondly, leadership involves voluntary action on the part of followers. Voluntary is key because followers want to follow, not be forced to follow because of the hierarchy of the organizational chart. Finally, leadership results in followers' behavior that is focused and goal-directed in some sort of organized setting.

Individuals who have created positive change within an organization have been viewed as leaders. We generally label leadership as good or effective when it moves people to a place in which both they and those who depend upon them are genuinely better off and when it does so without trampling on the rights of others (Kotter, 1990). Leadership within a complex organization achieves this function through three primary functions: establishing direction, aligning people, and motivating and inspiring people.

Those identified as *managers* relate to people according to the role that they play in a sequence of events or in a decision-making process. In contrast, *leaders* are viewed as those

who are concerned with all ideas and relate to people in more intuitive and empathic way. The distinction lies between a manager's attention to *how* things get done and a leader's attention to *what* the events and decisions mean to those affected (Zaleznik, 1998). Organizations today need more than just decision-makers in leadership positions. They need individuals who can create a shared vision with the people they lead.

Rosen (1996) described this shared vision as a four-step process. First, the leader must have the vision and then paint the picture mentally in order to see how each piece of the puzzle fits into the entire picture. Secondly, once the leader has the mental picture complete in his/her mind, the next step is to communicate this vision to everyone involved. This is a vital step in order to inspire people within the organization to build commitment to the goal. The evolution of this step changes from my vision to our vision. The third step is to allow for independent, diverse voices within the entire organization to be heard. After allowing for all voices to be heard, the leader must unite them together into the puzzle of the collective whole. The vision then becomes bigger than the sum of its parts. The final step is to allow for the vision to become a reality. This reality is a shared vision by the entire organization because of the steps that were taken to engage all employees in the process.

How does an organization provide an environment that not only promotes, but also encourages employees to reframe their core understanding and transform through the phases to reflect on what they bring to the work environment? Quinn (1996) suggests that at times people need to change their assumptions, biases, or paradigms and develop new theories regarding their meaning perspectives and surrounding environments. To develop oneself as an effective organizational leader, he argues, "One must develop a new self." This focus on the "self" and transformative learning as inner work is reflected in other forms of

professional development as well, such as leadership formation in organizations (Palmer, 1998).

If individuals are authentic in their desire to learn more about themselves for the purpose of building upon their leadership skills to move from a manager's role to a true leader's role, how can a leadership development program assist? Because this study explored the impact a leadership development program had on participants who attended the training and possibly transformed the meaning perspectives they brought to the program, the literature written about leadership development programs, as it relates to developing leaders, needs further exploration.

Leadership Development Programs

Substantive leadership skills are necessary in a diverse and complex world and many organizations are aware of the apparent leadership inadequacies in their employees. Many organizations are involved in providing a variety of leadership training programs to teach their employees the necessary skills to lead effectively. Because leadership skills may not be fully developed by practice alone, leadership development-training programs offer a means of improving and developing the leadership capabilities of individuals (Sogunro, 1997). While training programs appear in various formats, a recurrent question about these leadership development-training programs is, "What is the impact of these training programs on the participants?"

Leadership development is the combination of the experiences, skills, and new information that provide managers with an understanding of how to make meaning and be more effective in their supervisory roles. Leadership development involves continuous

development and learning through critical self-reflection of new knowledge obtained or old knowledge looked at in a different way by having new experiences and information introduced. Kur and Bunning (1996) reported in their research on leadership development that individual leaders respond best when they learn about themselves to enhance their self-development and self-worth, learn skills that help them better lead their team, and learn how to make a substantial contribution to the organization's overall success.

Further studies in leadership development literature indicate that one of the major benefits in attending a leadership development program is meeting and building relationships with other participants (Schneider, 1987; Argyis, 1991; Conger, 1992; Cacioppe, 1998; Vicere and Fulmer, 1997). The time spent with other individuals discussing similar issues, programs, and concerns builds a bond that can be called upon repeatedly in dealing with everyday problems. Participants have the opportunity to share real-life experiences, discuss strategies on how to manage within the organizational limits, and most importantly, get to know other colleagues within and outside the organization in a personal out-of-the-office environment. It is also an opportunity for individuals to talk about their passion for leadership. Leadership development cannot teach people to be passionate, but the experience can provide insight for the participants to explore what deeply interests them about their work and the roles they assume within their organization.

Other studies have indicated that effective leadership development programs must have participants who desire to continuously expand their capacity to learn and be empowered (Senge, 1990; Vicere and Fulmer, 1997). The emphasis on learner empowerment, continuous expansion of learner knowledge, and relationship building with colleagues would seem to be particularly important in a contemporary workplace

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environment in order to compete for the best leaders to manage people within an organization. An effective leadership development program should expand the perspectives of participants so that they can see and understand different realities or alternative courses of action. At its best, leadership development should inspire leaders to higher levels of achievement and the ability to engage in self-reflection to examine how their actions and behaviors influence others.

The traditional paradigm for leadership development focused on the leader as an individual. According to Vicere and Fulmer (1997), this traditional model was based on several key assumptions: (1) individual's stage of development, which was based on age; (2) a 40-year career was based on an individual's formal education prior to employment, and there was no need to update skills and abilities; (3) senior management candidates were the primary focus for leadership development programs, and once these individuals achieved these senior management positions, they no longer needed further education or training of any kind; (4) developing and communicating the organization's mission, goals, and vision were exclusively for the senior management team only; and (5) training and education programs were developed course by course based on specific current needs within the organization.

This traditional approach to leadership development, as an individual approach, may have been effective in an environment where business was stable and predictable. However, in a competitive global market, many of these assumptions in the traditional approach are ineffective and obsolete. A new paradigm of leadership development is emerging, and the literature highlighted four critical aspects of this new perspective:

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Chronological Age. With all the rightsizing that has taken place in today's organizations, there are no more layers of managers throughout the organizational chart. One cannot consider one's age as a valid indicator for the stage of personal development. Expertise and experience of the individual is far more critical than the individual's chronological age. Sogunro (1997) indicates that organizations will have to realize that every employee is a potential leader whose leadership ability should be developed. Leadership can be made more effective if organizations are concerned with the training of all its employees rather than training just the few designated leaders. Perhaps using this methodology, more leadership potential can be unveiled because there is sure to be a star amongst the ranks that is not known to the organization.

Longevity. A 40-year career with an organization with no continuation of formal or informal training is not acceptable in today's workplace in order to keep a position or be considered for a promotion. The continuous changes in the business environment and technological advances have aided in rapid job obsolescence at all organizational levels. No one is protected with the status quo. One must continually improve and build upon the skills they brought to the company. The term, lifelong learning, applies to all individuals of an organization.

Involvement. One of the primary problems in today's competitive business environment is that organizations are facing a lack of bench strength. Due to reassignments and rightsizing efforts, organizations simply do not have ready replacements available to fill vacated management positions. The concept of a promotion every two years is a thing of the past for current talent within an organization. These perplexing developments have challenged the traditional belief that leadership development efforts should focus primarily

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on candidates for senior management. Finding and developing tomorrow's CEO is clearly important, but that person will need a team of well-educated, competent, and dedicated leaders in middle-level positions to bring strategic visions to reality. Throughout the entire organization, there needs to be strong leaders that buy-in to the organization's mission and lead the charge with colleagues whom they influence.

Perspective. Gone are the days when top senior executives are the only individuals within the organization who interact with the public, deal with the political environment, facilitate joint ventures, explore the global market, or explain corporate policies and procedures, and give direction to subordinates. An organization has to change its view of what leadership actually is and who the leaders are within the organization. It takes more than just a handful of senior managers to make an organization successful. It takes a team of people to facilitate the needed changes to survive in today's competitive marketplace. Therefore, it is essential that all employees are involved, at least to some level, in the ability to participate in leadership development programs.

The literature written about effective leadership development programs also focuses on key factors that need to be considered in the delivery of the program. According to the literature (Cacioppe, 1998), a critical component of a leadership development program is centered on "hands on" learning. These types of hands on activities are described as a program where participants have to critically think to solve problems, perform tasks, and achieve results during a particular time frame. The key to these activities is the relationship between the task given during the program and real life situations that occur with the participants in their work setting.

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The leadership development program should also, over the timeframe of the delivery of the program, offer some improvement in the participant's skills and abilities as a leader. In other words, the program should allow for the personal growth of individual participants to learn better ways or new skills of handling situations both in their professional and personal lives. A few key concepts in an effective leadership program should focus on active listening or conflict resolution that directly relate to the participant's home and work life. Sogunro (1997) indicates that facilitators need to organize a more dynamic leadership training program that would equip leaders with new knowledge, skills, and attitude adequate enough to meet the leadership changes of today and tomorrow. Facilitators should strive to customize training programs for the identified needs of participants. Lastly, it makes sense to make evaluation an integral component of a leadership development-training program. The assessment of any program should be evaluated to be sure that program objectives were met or exceeded. If this crucial step is not taken, then the organization does not know if the leadership development program has been successful or needs refinement. This assessment can be measured in a variety of ways depending on the outcome desired.

Cacioppe (1998) also states that a great deal of learning occurs through one human being watching another. As we all know, actions speak louder than words. The person who facilitates the leadership development program, the senior management team who is participating in the training, and how the information regarding leadership is presented, are all key to the success of the training itself. Participants have the opportunity to examine others involved in this program outside of the office setting and in a more informal atmosphere. Participants observe individuals based on their body language and verbal comments. Judgment is quickly assessed by watching actions, and thus, provides a learning

experience and strengthens one's own experience on leadership. Sogunro (1997) points out organizations will have to realize that today's managers require retraining in various leadership skills to be more effective. The only way to change one's perspective is to introduce new ways of leading differently. However, no one can guarantee that change will occur even when new information is presented. How individuals utilize the new information can change behavior, and thus, be a source to expand one's frame of reference from previous learning.

Conger (1992), Tichy and Devanna (1986), and Vicere and Fulmer (1997), all well-known experts in the leadership development field, contend that all individuals need to know their relationship to the larger picture of the organization and how their own departments, along with other departments, are shaping the future direction of the organization. This type of information regarding the status and future direction of the organization gives employees some idea of their career and future in the organization.

Leadership development programs will not be effective if they are ordered from top management and enforced by a fear-based system. The program must be encouraged by the truth and based upon the assumption that people care about the organization and its customers, and that they are intelligent and rational and want to do a good job. The leadership development program needs to consider learner empowerment within the program both as a goal of and a condition for transformative learning. In Cranton's (1994) work, she refers to an empowered learner as one who is able to fully and freely participate in critical discourse and the resulting action. Empowerment requires freedom and equality as well as the ability to assess evidence and to engage in critical reflection.

Ultimately, the encouragement and development of leadership skills rest with the individual's own motivation and talent and the receptiveness of his/her organization to support and coach such skills (Conger, 1992). Obviously, this leaves a lot to chance. Practicing new behaviors requires willpower, patience, and persistence on the part of each participant. Subordinates and superiors expect certain stability in a manager's behavior, and even a positive change in participant's behavior may threaten that image of stability. Many organizations are simply not prepared for leadership development. Conformity is more important to top management than vision and risk taking by supervisors. This may indicate a need for greater leadership knowledge and learning or a better understanding of leadership roles from all organizational perspectives.

Further, the literature highlighted additional difficulties that may arise from the participants of a leadership development-training program. Challenging and recognizing one's own assumptions is not always possible by all adults who participate in a leadership development program. Some individuals are incapable of turning learning experiences into awareness because of their intellectual ability and defenses. This type of reflection takes a look into one's own behavior and challenges one's ability to perhaps reflect on what he/she brings to the organization. People can act inconsistently, unaware of the contradiction between their espoused theory and their theory-in-use and between the way they think they are acting and the way they really act (Argyis, 1991).

For other individuals there may be intellectual awareness without action. Only a segment of the participants may be able to gain awareness and then act upon that awareness. Moreover, some people may lack the will to change, to improve, and to become leaders. The philosophy may exist with some adults that "I'm too old to change." Participants may have

an unwillingness to embrace the leadership needed to transform the organization into a viable one for the future. Others may have deep psychological problems that prevent them from ever leading instead of simply managing.

Evaluations conducted regarding the effectiveness of leadership development-training programs have contained some flaws. An examination of the literature shows once participants have left the training setting, the program providers seldom attempt to determine the effectiveness of their programs, whether in the immediate, short, or long terms. Few programs have assessed impacts in terms of effectiveness and efficiency regarding costs and benefits to the organization that fund the training. Many lack assessment of the impact on participants in the program, especially through a combination of pre-training, during-training, post-training, and follow-up evaluation procedures. Most evaluations also lack in-depth data-gathering strategies involving mixed research methods such as interviews, document analyses, observations, and questionnaires. Often the literature written on leadership development-training programs indicates evaluations are done at the end of the program with written questionnaires, which provide little information about the real influence the program had on participants' behavior on the job or after a period of self-reflection by the participants (Sogunro, 1997).

According to a study done by Conger (1992) on effective leadership training programs, the results indicated there were drawbacks that needed to be considered in the approach to leadership development. The study revealed that today's leadership development programs have done an excellent job of building awareness; however, several important elements are missing in all of them. It concluded that although awareness is an important aspect of the training program, it is not enough. Psychotherapists tell us that

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insight into one's behavior is never enough to transform an individual. This same concept applies to leadership training. The self-awareness aspect is an important step in leadership training, but it must be followed by a phase of deep self-reflection and skill development that goes beyond the training. This study explored in more depth the concepts of self-reflection by participants of a leadership development program as the participants were observed and interviewed during this nine-month program. Common themes emerged from participant interviews that led the researcher to believe that self-reflection was evident in his/her thinking.

Another difficulty outlined in the literature was the amount of time the participants actually spent at a leadership development-training program. "A three- or five-day program cannot have a significant impact in terms of developing lasting skills. This type of program is only an introduction and the skills learned have no long-term impact on participants" (Conger, 1992). According to Conger (1992), most leadership development-training programs are weak in the actual development of lasting leadership abilities for their participants. Some organizations really do not want more leaders. They prefer managers—and for a simple reason: they are a known and controllable entity. Leaders are not. Leaders take initiative, they challenge the status quo, and they encourage followers. For many organizations, leaders can be a frightening vision. A huge mistake for organizations would be for senior management members to say they value leadership development and want employees to participate in the program, but in reality their actions are not to allow the participants the freedom to change their behaviors after the training has ended.

Kirkpatrick (1994) highlights four levels of evaluation for an effective leadership development program. The first level is *reaction*. How do participants in the leadership

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development-training program react to the training? What this first level of evaluation measures is customer satisfaction of the program. The second level in Kirkpatrick's (1994) research is *learning*. This level defines the extent to which participants change attitudes, improve knowledge, and/or increase skills as a result of attending the program. These first two conditions of reaction and learning can be created by a positive attitude by the participants toward a desire to change and by teaching the relevant knowledge and skills.

The third level of evaluation according to Kirkpatrick (1994) is *behavior*. This level of evaluation is defined as to what extent a change in behavior has occurred because the participant attended the training program. This condition centers on having the right climate and deals with something that the participant is not in control of—his/her immediate supervisor. There are five different types of climates, which exist for the participant to face when they are back in the workplace with the supervisor: (1) preventing; (2) discouraging; (3) neutral; (4) encouraging; and (5) requiring. All of these climates are clearly out of the control of the participants of a leadership development program and can have positive or negative affects on each participant's willingness to implement and transform new behaviors that may be beneficial to his/her leadership position.

The fourth level of evaluation is *results*. This level of evaluation is defined as the end result that occurs because the participants attended the program. The difficulty is to measure the end result for participants of a leadership development program on such topics as leadership, communication, motivation, time management, empowerment, decision making, or managing change. Each of these topics is difficult to measure as a whole but can be more easily measured using an individualized approach.

Who defines results as good or bad measurement? Personal reflection on one's own leadership differs from individual to individual. Small external behavioral changes can be huge internal changes to individuals; and hence, all individuals measure personal transformation of a leadership development program differently. As was indicated from the review of the literature on leadership development programs, most of these studies have not really examined training programs from the perspective of leadership as a deep, personal change, as Quinn (1996) argues. Thus, this study examined the individuals in a leadership development program through the theoretical perspective of transformational learning of ones' leadership development.

It was important that participants had the opportunity to self-reflect on their own leadership growth and what, if any, aspect of their behavior has been modified or changed because of the training. The participants themselves evaluated their personal journey through this nine-month leadership development-training program through their self-reflection. The findings of this study are based on the self-reported learning that participants reported in the interviews with the researcher. Because the study focused on transformational learning of participants in a leadership development program, the literature written on providing an environment that promotes and supports learning, along with how individual learning occurs, needs further explanation.

Transformational Learning Theory

Learning is a process where information is transmitted and then applied to the learner's changing needs. Kegan and Lahey (2001) define the difference between informational and transformational learning as being expansive and helpful—one within a

preexisting frame of mind (informational learning) and the other reconstructing the frame (transformational learning).

> "Learning aimed at increasing our fund of knowledge, at increasing our repertoire of skills, at extending already established cognitive capacities into new terrain serves the absolutely crucial purpose of deepening the resources available to an existing frame of reference. Such learning is literally informative because it seeks to bring valuable new contents into the existing form of our way of knowing. If one is bound by concrete thinking in the study, of say, history, then, yes, further learning of the informative sort might involve the mastery of more historical facts, events, characters, and outcomes. But further learning of a transformative sort might also involve the development of capacity for abstract thinking so that one can ask more general, thematic questions about the facts, or consider the perspectives and biases of those who wrote the historical account creating the facts" (Kegan and Lahey, 2001).

If there is a supportive culture that embraces the qualities of a learning organization, and employees are willing to critically self-reflect on their frames of reference, then there is an opportunity to transform individuals into new ways of thinking. However, just because the opportunity exists, does not necessarily mean that it will automatically happen. There has been a wealth of literature written on the long debate as to whether leadership skills are inherent within an individual or something that can be taught given the right environment. Individuals bring their own values, beliefs, and attitudes to their work. Employees choose whether or not to adopt the organizational goals.

As Kegan and Lahey (2001) outline in their work, there are literally thousands of individuals asked to lead short or long-term projects within an organization. Individuals end up in a leadership capacity for a variety of reasons, and what most soon experience is that the reality of managing and leading others is not always easy. Both well-prepared and unprepared leaders are eventually confronted with many issues that deal with the complexities of change, including but not limited to:

- Leading inevitably involves trying to effect significant changes.
- It is hard to bring about significant changes in any human group without changing individual behaviors.
- It is hard to sustain significant changes in behavior without significant changes in individuals' underlying meanings that may give rise to their behaviors.
- It is hard to lead on behalf of other peoples' changes in their underlying ways of making meaning without considering the possibility that we ourselves must also change (Kegan and Lahey, 2001).

Transformational experiences and learning do not just happen after one experience. A transformational experience can happen to an individual at different times in his/her life based on the value the person gives to the learning experience. "Learning aimed at change not only in what we know, but changes in how we know has an almost opposite rhythm about it and comes close to the etymological meaning of education. *Informative* learning involves a kind of leading in, or filling of the form. *Transformative* learning puts the form itself at risk of change (and not just change but increased capacity)" (Kegan and Lahey, 2001).

Earlier research by Mezirow (1981) outlines transformational learning as theory of perspective transformation and draws from the writings of the German philosopher Habermas. Essentially, Mezirow's (1981) theory states that learning in adulthood is not just adding to what we know; rather, new learning transforms existing knowledge into a new perspective and, in so doing, frees the learner. This theory of transformative learning was developed into a comprehensive and complex description of how learners interpret, validate, and reformulate the meaning of their experiences. The ultimate result of this type of learning is to become aware of the assumptions and expectations that dictate our lives and to act upon this knowledge. The reflection and action components of Mezirow's theory regarding a change in perspective are also the central concept in Freire's (1970) theory of

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conscientization. Conscientization is the increasing awareness of one's situation, which involves moving from the lowest level of consciousness, where there is no comprehension of how forces shape one's life, to the highest level of critical consciousness. Hence, Mezirow's work centers on developmental and cognitive psychology, psychotherapy, sociology, and philosophy and culminates in an understanding of how adults learn, transform, and develop. The roots of his theory lie in humanism and critical social theory (Cranton, 1994).

By the time individuals reach adulthood they have had many experiences in life that frame the way they see the external world, interpret new experiences, and use a core set of internal values that are incorporated in their lives. Although adults continue to acquire new knowledge and skills through a variety of encounters, they must often integrate these new experiences with prior learning. At times individuals discover that this new base of knowledge does not easily integrate into prior learning experiences. The individual then has choices to make. He/She can reject the contradictory new information or revise previous viewpoints to accept this new knowledge. People can alter their beliefs in order to have the prior and new knowledge mesh into one. This process is critical self-reflection and transformational learning.

How then can an organization foster a relationship with its employees to encourage individual reflection, learning, and ultimately, transformation? Much like Cranton's (1994) theory on the educator's role in the transformation process, the leader of an organization can also foster or support critical self-reflection and transformative learning. This transformative process can increase learner empowerment, stimulate questioning of assumptions, beliefs, and values, and support learners as they experience new ways of making meaning. Employees, as learners who do not feel a sense of support from their leader, may not fully

embrace the process of critical reflection, and thus, may be unwilling to transform. Respect, trust, honesty, and the ability to talk freely in any environment are crucial elements to support the learning process for any individual. If an individual is learning a new skill or concept in either an educational or work setting and these crucial elements are not present, transformation of the individual's meaning perspectives will be extremely difficult. No one would be willing to share experiences or feelings, because the environment is unsafe and perhaps the risk too great.

No one can predict when an individual may encounter a transformational experience. However, when transformation does take place in one's life, Mezirow's (1978) ten phases of personal transformation highlight the experience that an individual encounters:

- Experiencing a disorienting dilemma
- Undergoing self-examination
- Conducting a critical assessment of internalized role assumptions and feeling a sense of alienation from traditional social expectations
- Relating one's discontent to similar experiences of others or to public issues—recognizing that one's problem is shared and not exclusively a private matter
- Exploring options for new ways of acting in our roles, relationships, and actions
- Building competence and self-confidence in new roles
- Planning a course of action
- Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
- Making provisional efforts to try new roles and to assess feedback
- Reintegrating into society on the basis of conditions dictated by the new perspective (Cranton, 1994)

The ten-step model of transformative learning described above has great potential for personal integration and the inner work of leadership development. For example, step five, "exploring options for new ways of acting in our roles, relationships, and actions" may provide new insights and opportunities for leaders involved in the difficult process of organizational transformation. The challenge for any leader is to recognize that the

organizational culture will undoubtedly influence any attempts at major change, and it is necessary to create a safe environment where people feel comfortable to reflect and possibly transform their meaning perspectives into new ways of thinking about their leadership role within the organization. Mezirow (1994) identifies "freedom, tolerance, education, and democratic participation" as crucial elements for transformational learning.

Summary

Upon careful review of related literature on effective leadership development programs, a critical question remains, "How can one accurately gauge the results of a leadership-training program in a quantifiable, holistic manner?" The answer is that one cannot. This dilemma makes it extremely difficult for organizations to commit large sums of money to something from which they seem to gain nebulous results. Leadership training is a long-term investment, especially for organizational cultures that often look only to the profit margin for the next quarter or the next year. Organizations can establish and evaluate desired behaviors, but the outcome has to be measured beyond quantifiable data to include qualitative anecdotal results. The ultimate goal is that qualitative results will confirm such tangible things as higher morale or improved quality of work life (Kirkpatrick, 1994).

Chapter Three
Leadership Development as a Transformational Process
Methods and Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact that a nine-month leadership development program had on participants' original meaning perspectives about what constitutes good leadership. If their meaning perspectives were changed, did the participants attribute this change to some aspect of the nine-month program? During their reflective interviews in the post-assessment process, the study also examined common themes regarding participants' experiences that emerged.

Methodological Approach

The methodology selected for this study was the *grounded theory approach*. The methodology of grounded theory suggests an approach that examines the development of themes relating to a central concept. This includes the organization of data in order to identify categories and subcategories that are "conceptually similar in nature or related in meaning" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 102). Data analysis is integral to grounded theory research, following Strauss and Corbin's description of "microanalysis," the "careful, often minute examination and interpretation of data" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 38). Thus, the data was analyzed in this study according to "common themes" that emerged through personal observations, reflective discussion, and participant interviews.

In order to insure accurate detailed information, the interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed. This process assisted in the analysis by focusing specifically on what the participants self-reported about their experiences in the leadership development program.

Context and Setting

Leadership Cheyenne, a partnership of three community organizations—a regional Chamber of Commerce, a post-secondary institution, and a family community foundation, was the research context for this study. The program was in its seventh year of existence and designed for this particular community. The six previous Leadership Cheyenne programs met for ten consecutive weeks from September through December. For the seventh year, the organizers of Leadership Cheyenne decided to change the format to meet local employers' requests to change from weekly to monthly sessions. This change extended the program from September through May. The Leadership Cheyenne Class of 2002-2003 had 26 participants, all of whom worked at a variety of companies throughout the community, holding a variety of positions throughout the organizational chart. This program met monthly for an entire eight-hour day with group sessions being held at a higher educational institution setting, supplemented with off-site sessions at locations relevant to the subject matter for that month. Participants in the program were present or emerging leaders in their organizations. To quality for participation, participants must have demonstrated leadership qualities in their professions and/or communities and have shown a willingness to contribute to the community's future.

As an overview, the leadership development-training program consisted of the following:

- Content Areas: Healthcare; Education; Government; Industry; Community Development; Criminal Justice; Workforce Development.
- Leadership Principles: Visioning; Servant Leadership; Empowerment; Relationships; Self-Improvement; Change Management; Strategic Planning.
- Leadership Skill Sets: Small Group Leadership; Time Management; Presentation Skills; Team Building; Media Relations; Written

Communication; Personality Assessment; Effective Meeting Facilitation.

Because of the time span between sessions, the organizers added an online reflective component for discussion purposes between monthly sessions. This online component had not been part of the program in previous years. However, moving from a weekly format to a monthly format, the organizers felt they did not want to lose the connection that participants commented on as a key strength of the program when it was a weekly format. An outside facilitator, not affiliated with any of the participants' organizations, led the participants through discussions and course content. The leadership development program was facilitated through lecture, role-playing, panel discussions, hands-on activities, and reflection. The facilitator built into the program many opportunities for participants to review and discuss actual case studies dealing with supervisory tasks that all leaders handle on a daily basis.

Selection of Participants

Participants of the leadership development-training program who held positions in the community where the study was conducted were chosen from retail, commercial, industrial, educational, healthcare, and small business settings. Because the individuals attending this program came from diverse backgrounds in their leadership and educational experiences, it was possible that the interpretation of their roles, challenges, and perceptions offered a valuable perspective on how one's leadership knowledge and learning are obtained and possibly transformed into new ways of learning and making meaning of new experiences. Thus, existed the possibility of transforming individuals to lead in different ways, form working relationships with diverse colleagues, and alter their meaning perspectives due to their reflections about their leadership approaches.

Initially the researcher met with the three main organizers of Leadership Cheyenne—the Executive Director of the local Chamber of Commerce, the Executive Director of the family community foundation, and the Director of Business and Corporate Services of the post-secondary institution, to discuss the research project. It was important that all three of the directors understood the scope and breadth of the research. A second meeting was scheduled to review the researcher's role and the participant's role in the inquiry.

Because of the researcher's affiliation with the same post-secondary institution as one of the partners in the program, the course content was familiar. Also, the researcher had attended several sessions during the six years of the existence of the program. It should be noted that no one had conducted individual interviews with participants in previous years of the program regarding the effect the program had on participants. The organizers were interested in this research study, because the data would provide a more thorough review of the effectiveness of the program and could indicate modifications.

At the kick-off session the program facilitator introduced the researcher. An explanation of her role and a descriptive picture of the research being conducted were reviewed. All participants were given a copy of the pre- and post-assessment questions that would be used in the study. Participants were informed that this study was voluntary and was not a mandatory component of the program. They were also informed that the process would include two interviews. The timeline involved an initial pre-assessment interview to take place within the next couple of weeks at their convenience outside of class time. A follow-up post-assessment interview would take place at the conclusion of the program in May. It was explained that each interview would be approximately two hours in length. Participants

who were interested in participating in the research placed their names on a contact sheet for the researcher.

Nineteen of the twenty-six participants volunteered. After initial conversations with them, twelve individuals were selected by the researcher for initial interviews. The remaining seven had schedule conflicts or could not commit the time needed to do the interview.

Because it was important to the research that the participants in the study were at a point in their careers where they had developed some clearly articulated meaning perspectives, the researcher re-interviewed the twelve volunteers regarding their careers. The twelve were narrowed down to nine based on two criteria: (1) Did the participant have at least five years of supervisory experience with an organization? and (2) Was the participant attending this leadership program voluntarily because of a desire to learn more about himself/herself as a leader?

Formal two-hour interviews for initial data collection were scheduled via phone, and all participants were required to sign a consent form prior to this initial interview (See Appendix D). They were assured by the researcher that they would be given a pseudonym for confidentiality purposes. All participants were fully informed that the interviews would be tape recorded, which was also noted on the consent form.

The nine participants who were interviewed for this study ranged in age from approximately the late 20's to the late 40's. All individuals were working professionals in leadership positions from a variety of organizations. Eight held bachelor degrees, and one had a high school diploma. The nine participants were described in detail in Chapter Four of this study. All participants were Caucasian with two females and seven males. Their career

experiences included one in the finance area, two in the educational field, four in the manufacturing area, and two from the business sector. Choosing only nine participants allowed the researcher to spend more in-depth time and gain deeper insights from a select few committed participants and to compare and contrast their experiences after the post-assessment analysis of the program through a process of critical self-reflection.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

The data was collected over a nine-month period using the instruments in Appendices A, B, and C of this study. Pre-, during, and post-assessment measures were utilized with the nine voluntary participants in this program. Classroom observations, field notes, reflective online discussions, and interviews were the sources utilized to collect data from the participants and to explore how the experiences of the individuals in this leadership development program overlapped. It also focused on what aspects of this program created common themes and threads for the participants.

The participants in this study equally experienced the same exposure to the course content and activities over the nine-month period. The responses from participants were recorded and analyzed based on what they reported about this leadership development program. It enabled the researcher to gain insight on individual experience and potential transformation of their meaning perspectives as they related to what constitutes good leadership.

To make the data collection and analysis more meaningful, it was important to gain insight from the participants about their original expectations of this course. What meaning perspectives did they talk about in the initial interview regarding their views on attributes of

good leadership? Why did they believe they were chosen to participate in this particular program? Answers to these questions provided a foundation for the researcher to observe and reflect on their responses during the program. It also assisted in guiding the thought processes in comparing and contrasting their responses during the post-assessment interviews at the conclusion of the program.

The primary data collected were taken from the interviews with individuals who participated in the leadership development-training program. The initial interview was instrumental in understanding the meaning perspectives each participant had regarding leadership. The research approach of tape recording and transcribing the interviews was essential because of the need to obtain detailed descriptions of the participants' reactions based on their current perspectives. This was essential because the concept of transformational learning is a social construction of the experience, making meaning based on past perspectives, self-reflection, and making new meaning. Thus, a crucial element to the research was to gather these pre-assessment views of the participants in order to have a measurement to build a foundation for the researcher.

The specific interview protocol which was utilized allowed for the data reporting from the participants' responses to be open-ended (See Appendix A). These open-ended questions gave the respondents greater opportunity to share their thoughts because of the broader, more flexible approach as opposed to yes or no responses. This qualitative approach allowed the researcher to focus on a holistic approach with each participant by understanding the values each reported during this initial interview. The data collected during this phase was subjective based on the perceptions of the participants in their environment. The goal of

this type of research design was to gain rich and authentic data from the participants rather than to simply replicate data.

The research protocol was shaped through discussions, pilot interviews, and completed survey tools with several colleagues not associated with the study. It was developed to be considerate of the time constraints of busy people and sensitive to not put anyone on edge regarding their experiences in the leadership development program. Some preliminary questions were asked of participants to set them at ease followed by the formal initial questions. The researcher wanted to ensure that she heard their voices, their stories. During and after each initial interview, the researcher took copious notes about the thoughts and reflections reported by the participants. All tapes from the initial interviews were transcribed.

The two-hour post-assessment interview took place in May (See Appendix C). Participants again responded to open-ended, semi-structured questions that probed into key questions that were central to this research study. The thoughts and reactions of the researcher to the post-assessment interview were also noted after each meeting. All tapes were transcribed into full script to capture the complete dialogue of the participants. The researcher was the only person who had access to the taped conversations, and the tapes were kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office. Reflective field notes and tapes of interviews will be destroyed once the dissertation process is complete.

Both the initial and follow-up interviews were completed at the convenience and location chosen by each participant. Of the eighteen interviews conducted, nine occurred in the researcher's office and the nine others at the participant's work setting.

To address the research questions from a variety of angles, secondary data were also collected. The researcher participated, observed, and in some cases, facilitated the reflective discussion at each session of the leadership program. This allowed the researcher to observe the participants, yet have a shared experience with the participants. It also allowed for continuous informal conversations with participants, as a peer, throughout this nine-month journey. This experience allowed the researcher to share the lens with all nine participants and made the post-assessment interview easier to conduct. In addition, the researcher kept a research journal of personal reflections regarding personal thinking and observations about the program during the nine months. This journal was extremely beneficial and added a special dimension to the study.

Another data collection involved recording field notes immediately following the monthly program session, detailing observations, listing questions and concerns, and gathering further discussion items with participants. These notes provided two sets of observations and reflections on the content and process of each session. The field notes were also beneficial to the post-assessment interview process. The notes spurred further probing of questions due to the shared experience with the participants.

The final data collection involved online reflective discussions where participants responded to questions that focused on the leadership program, in general, and the views of participants. This provided another avenue to capture personal experiences and thoughts from participants. This was the first time that the organizers of this program utilized this online forum. While this format was valuable to the researcher, there were concerns from some of the participants regarding their comfort level with such vulnerability.

Analysis of the Data

Using the transcribed interviews of the participants, the information was disaggregated for the purpose of seeking common themes, important relationships, and key concepts. In the first step of this part of the process, the researcher reviewed and analyzed the pre- and post-assessment interviews of each participant. The goal was to study the conversations of the participants to determine the influence that this nine-month leadership development experience had on a change in their meaning perspectives about what constitutes good leadership. This segment of analysis involved a careful look at what was reported by each participant that would lead one to believe it was the program that influenced this change.

After this initial stage the data was thoroughly examined using the systematic procedures outlined in the grounded theory approach. Strauss and Corbin (1998) state that theory building needs to keep evolving as data collection continues. In this approach, researchers frame their thinking process as to what continuous themes emerge from the interviews.

> "Our way to building theory is not just to work with a single case, then proceed to the next one and treat it as a separate case, and so on. Rather, we want to know what this case teaches us about other cases. We want to move from the specific to the more general. Therefore, we use a case to open up our minds to the range of possible meanings, properties, dimensions, and relationships inherent in any bit of data" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 88).

Strauss and Corbin outlined explicit techniques for collecting data, analyzing data, and delineating the steps in theory building. The emphasis in the grounded theory approach is placed on the critical importance of asking questions that will aid in the development of the theory along with the constant open-minded analysis throughout the data collection

process. In other words, Strauss and Corbin advocate that the researcher does not have preset themes to categorize information from the interviewees. Instead, the common themes emerge from what the interviewees say about their experience from the leadership development program.

> "We are interested not in how many individuals exhibit this concept but rather how often this concept emerges and what it looks like (i.e., its properties) under varying conditions" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 95).

As described by Strauss and Corbin (1998), the data collected were coded using "open" and "axial" techniques to offer a straightforward approach for examining the interview transcripts and organizing the data into major thematic categories. The anticipation was that central themes would evolve from the participant's interviews as major thematic categories. Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined a central category or theme as having "analytic power," suggesting "what gives it that power is its ability to pull the other categories together to form an explanatory whole" (p. 146).

Continuing with the grounded theory approach, the next step was to identify the common threads of the program that were present in the interviews. What common themes emerged from the post-assessment interviews with the nine participants? What did the participants say about the leadership development experience that emerged as shared themes? This type of information could be useful to the organizers of Leadership Cheyenne to refine and enrich the program for future participants. What was also useful in this stage was to utilize the three secondary sources of data collection. The research journal and field notes allowed the researcher to be immersed into the conversations. It also provided personal reflection notes regarding themes and provided better insight into what was being said by the participants. This shared lens experience also allowed diverse thinking about interpretations

of the information. The conversations among participants in the monthly sessions furthered the knowledge base and provided the researcher with more qualitative data.

Finally, the online discussion format enabled the participants to share their thoughts in writing about certain topic areas that were presented. Participation in the online discussion was not mandatory. However, it allowed for free flowing conversation which added to the research by providing more background and information that otherwise would not have been captured because, perhaps, of the hesitancy of participants to verbalize their thoughts in person. This provided a forum for the participants that had not been available in previous classes and was piloted for this leadership class to find out the usefulness of the dialogue among the participants.

The final analysis was to merge the personal comparison and common themes together to explore how participants made meaning of this experience. The goal was to critically explore the data to apply it to the transformational learning model described earlier in this study. Did participants experience transformation as a result of this program?

Chapter Four
Leadership Development as a Transformational Process
The Study Context and the Subjects

Introduction

This chapter provides a more in-depth look at the Leadership Cheyenne experience and the experience of the nine participants selected to be interviewed for the purpose of gathering the core data for this study. Details of the participants' backgrounds and experiences were carefully described. This provides a context for the framework that is integral to the research. The leadership development program name and names of the participants have been given a pseudonym to protect confidentiality.

Leadership Cheyenne Overview

Leadership Cheyenne is a partnership between three community organizations—a regional Chamber of Commerce, a community family foundation, and a post-secondary institution. The nine-month leadership program was developed in 1996 and has graduated 125 leaders. Until the year of this study, the program was ten weeks in duration with weekly meetings. The major reason for changing the format was due to the fact that organizations that sent participants struggled with making a weekly commitment to send selected employees to the program. Also, the participants who had attended in the past indicated the desire for the organizers to examine a nine-month program where employees were only away from the office once a month, instead of once a week.

The goals of Leadership Cheyenne were to:

- Make participants better leaders at work, in the community, and at home.

- Establish strong relationships with other people in leadership positions.
- Get more commitment and performance from those whom participants supervise.
- Prepare participants to run for public office or engage in community service.

Other stated goals of the program include:

- Graduates of Leadership Cheyenne are prepared to assume responsibility in leadership positions.
- Graduates of Leadership Cheyenne bring new and improved leadership skills to their work challenges.
- Leadership Cheyenne connects people to the community, a network of professionals, and other business leaders.
- Graduates of Leadership Cheyenne have represented their employers well on community boards and professional associations.
- Leadership Cheyenne provides good corporate exposure for companies throughout Cheyenne County.

Opening Session

All participants of the Leadership Cheyenne Program initially attended a dinner meeting the evening prior to the first session of the program. The meeting began with a formal welcome from the main facilitator and the organizers of the course. The format had participants introduce themselves, informing everyone where they were employed and their role within their organization. Dinner was served and then the keynote address was given by a local city manager whose remarks focused on the meaning and significance of being a leader within this community. In addition, two alumni of previous Leadership Cheyenne classes spoke to the group about what Leadership Cheyenne meant to them now that they had graduated from the program. Finally, the facilitator ended this opening session with an overview and requirements of the course.

A notebook was given to each participant, which included details regarding each class session. The primary reading source for this course was Max DePree's book *Leadership is an Art.* Additionally, other leadership articles were included for each session from authors such as, Stephen Covey, James Autry, Kouzes and Posner, Perry Smith, Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, Annie McKee, Garry Wills, Peter Senge, and Parker Palmer. Along with this supplementary reading, articles from *Michigan in Brief—Sponsored by the Michigan Nonprofit Association and the Council of Michigan Foundations*, provided background information for each session. These articles included topics on "Taxes on Business," "Health Care Costs and Managed Care," "K-12 Funding," "Land Use and Sustainability," "Career Development," "Local Government Organization and Issues," "Crime and Corrections," and "Youth at Risk."

Also included in the notebook were several pamphlets and brochures that outlined area businesses for upcoming sessions. The participants were able to review the materials before coming to each class session in order to have background information regarding a company or topic that was going to be discussed at each monthly session.

Monthly Sessions

Session #1: This session was held at the student center of the post-secondary institution within the community. The Leadership Cheyenne Class of 2002-03 participated in an exercise that moved them around the room asking questions of one another regarding personal information. The purpose was for them to begin to get to know one another. The facilitator then began a discussion about the five characteristics of leadership and reviewed

the leadership principles and skill sets that participants would learn during the next nine months.

The *True Colors Personality Self-Assessment* was then administered (Lowry, 2001). This exercise allowed participants to reflect about their own values, beliefs, and behaviors. It also provided a venue for more interaction among participants. Finally, it provided insight into their leadership styles and relationships with others.

Using this instrument, participants were sorted into style categorizes—blue, gold, green, or orange. Each color represented a personality type. Blues were categorized as wanting individuals to feel "warm and fuzzy" and make everyone part of the team. Golds were categorized as goal driven and mostly interested in obtaining results and moving on to the next goal. Greens were classified as analytical in their thinking and wanting to get all the facts before reacting. Oranges were identified as spontaneous and wanting to "fly by the seat of their pants" in order to accomplish the goal. The facilitator noted that everyone has some of all four colors in his/her personal and leadership style. However, one color "style" is usually dominant over the other three in interaction with others. This activity elicited substantive dialogue regarding working in teams and how individuals approach their own thinking regarding projects and assignments.

The group then headed to the local YMCA outdoor ropes course. Participants were placed into three groups of nine and engaged in physical activities and challenges in this outdoor setting. Examples of the activities included: walking across a tight rope, walking on a three-inch beam and having to move large beams in order to get the entire team across, lifting individuals through a tire hanging from a rope, and turning a small piece of canvas over to its other side while having all participants on the canvas.

After completing the ropes course, the group debriefed the day, discussing the various leadership principles, skills, and perspectives that were learned throughout this first session. There was also a discussion among the participants regarding the true colors assessment and how their dominant color influenced the way in which they interacted with different personalities. Each participant shared expectations of the Leadership Cheyenne program with the entire group.

Session #2: This session was held at a local manufacturing company with the facilitator providing an overview of the session and responding to any questions that the participants might have regarding the course. A panel discussion followed regarding industry and economic development within this county. A local manufacturing company was used as a case study. It represented one of the community's oldest industries and was "saved" through collaboration of state and local officials. The panel discussed the roles that all the players had and how the process led to promote the health of the local economy and develop the necessary steps in order to keep the manufacturing firm from moving from the community. After a question and answer period, the participants toured the plant and witnessed firsthand how this now successful manufacturing company operated.

After the tour a presentation was given on the leadership principles of vision and mission. The presenter provided several examples of mission statements from well-known firms followed by a discussion about how companies need to clearly and carefully prioritize their hopes and goals in alignment with their mission statement. Questions were then posed to the group including: (1) How do we develop a sense of mission for our organization and ourselves? and (2) How do we translate our vision to others and help those we lead to understand and live the mission of an organization?

After lunch the group reconvened at the student center of the local post-secondary institution and debriefed the morning session. There was dialogue regarding developing a group mission statement to guide them through the journey of this leadership program, along with developing a personal mission statement. Examples were discussed and participants were divided into small groups to discuss the development of a class mission statement. After this activity the group went to a computer lab. The *Franklin Covey* website was accessed for the purpose of developing personal mission statements.

Because one of the requirements of this course was to present a four-minute speech on either a leader who had influenced the participant or an explanation of a professional development activity in which their organization was engaged, a presentation regarding public speaking and presentational skills was given. The presenter reviewed the basic skills necessary to deliver a speech and gave helpful tips on what makes a speech effective.

Session #3: This session was held at a local healthcare facility with a presentation regarding the leadership principle of servant leadership. The comment and question posed to the group were, "One cannot be a leader without followers, but leadership must be in service to a cause, an organization, and/or those who share our mission. Whom do we serve as leaders?" Discussion took place regarding the concept of followers and how leaders get people to follow them within an organization.

The largest employer in this county, the healthcare organization, had its top administrators speak to the participants regarding being an independent community institution created and led by local physicians and citizens. The healthcare administrators talked about the challenges of living their mission in an ever-changing and financially difficult environment. They also discussed the necessity of being technologically advanced

in a human-centered industry, and the function that information technology must play in this leadership equation.

The participants then reconvened at the student center of the local post-secondary institution and learned about exercising leadership in a small group setting. The participants were placed into small groups and were given a problem. They were directed to brainstorm solutions, as a part of a strategic planning exercise working towards achieving consensus, common direction, and an agreed-upon plan of action.

Session #4: The session was held at a local middle school. A panel of individuals affiliated with public education spoke regarding political, social, and economic pressures. The panelists voiced their varying perspectives on how public schools respond to these various pressures and how they take advantage of local opportunities.

A presenter spoke to the participants regarding the leadership principle of empowerment. The presentation focused on effective leaders who inspire and motivate others, rather than relying on their authority and direct commands.

The group moved to a local railroad station within the community. A tour followed with a guide speaking to the history of the station and how it has aided in the revitalization of the economy within this community. The group participated in an interactive communication activity. The participants practiced verbal and non-verbal communication, sharpened their listening skills, and received some tips on how to utilize written communication effectively. A skit was also utilized as a teaching tool to talk about how effective communication can be misinterpreted.

Session #5: This session began at the student center at the local post-secondary institution. A local CEO of a financial institution spoke to the participants regarding his

leadership of a "premier" financial institution that was recently named by Fortune Magazine as one of the "100 Best Places to Work." The presenter shared his insights as a business leader and talked about rewarding employee initiative, maintaining corporate focus, and excelling in difficult times.

Session #6: The session began at the student center of the local post-secondary institution. A presentation was given regarding community development by a local planning expert who highlighted an overview of local zoning and planning issues that can affect a community. A panel of local officials then spoke on physical growth, development, and preservation of a community. The group highlighted the need for local leadership being the critical element, because so many of the tools of land use and community development are within local government control. The discussion focused on the private sector making the fundamental decisions about new construction and investments, and thus, taking responsibility to guide the development of a community.

Time management was the next focus for this session. The participants spoke on leadership roles in the workplace, in the community, and within their families. How do you manage your time with increased responsibilities and challenges of balancing your work life, home life, and other obligations? How do you manage your time to ensure you get the most out of all of these aspects? These were some of the questions posed to the participants. The participants were asked to bring their calendars, planners, and personal digital assistants to class to discuss these issues.

A panel then spoke on personal leadership and shared insights about their own personal leadership activities. The panelists talked about motivating themselves, sharpening their leadership skills, and managing their busy professional and personal lives. Tips were

given on how these individuals seem to be able to "do it all." The group debriefed the time management discussion and shared their personal mission statements with one another in small groups that they had developed over the past few months.

Session #7: The session began at the student center of the local post-secondary institution. A facilitator presented the leadership principle of change. Utilizing the best-selling book, *Who Moved My Cheese?*, the presentation focused on change and leadership and how they are interrelated in today's society. Discussion took place on varying degrees of change and the type of responses that go along with the introduction of change in the workplace. How can we not only accept change but also embrace and use change for positive improvement? This question was discussed, along with being a positive team member and the need to help others within our own organizations cope with change.

A panel discussion took place after this presentation, which focused on how the success of an organization depends on the skills and talents of those who work in these organizations. This panel of experts highlighted the local and regional initiatives to train and educate the workforce both on the job and before the job. Information was presented about the leader's role in ensuring the development and growth for those with whom they work in order to keep up with the technological advances utilized in today's businesses.

The group then reconvened at the local vocational technology center and toured the program offerings available for individuals within the community. After the tour, the leadership principle of relationships and developing a personal network of support was presented. Discussion focused on the fact that the success of leaders depends not only on the relationships they have with colleagues but also on the quality and extent of relationships they have with customers and community members. The participants talked about how to

foster friendships that help one grow personally, how to build a network of peers for personal support, and how to enhance professional relationships to make one a better leader. The group was then divided into teams of six, where they were involved in a team building exercise.

Session #8: The session began at a local township hall. The local State Representative for this community spoke to the participants regarding state government and his role as a state legislator. After this conversation a panel of local government officials spoke on being elected as local public officials and their responsibilities to the variety of constituents in this community. Discussion followed on the ability (or lack of ability) to be able to persuade others to support their mission and the wide latitude to pursue policy initiatives. The panelists also shared their personal experiences dealing with township, city, and county governments and how governments need to work together in order to support the entire community.

A public relations expert then facilitated a conversation regarding dealing with the media. Suggestions were given on how to deal with the media, especially during controversial issues within organizations or a community. This professional talked about delivering the message the public wants to hear and dealing with the "notepad nuts." He gave firsthand experiences of dealing with diverse organizations throughout the state that went from public disasters to effective planning techniques to deal with the media.

After discussing the topics presented, the participants were grouped into six teams of four. The teams were given five clues of various items that had to be retrieved throughout the community using a "road rally" model. As the teams returned to the township hall, there was excited dialogue among the participants as they shared their experiences with one

another. This exercise gave the participants a chance to network with other participants informally and view different places within the community.

A panel of local professionals then role-played an effective meeting facilitation and participation session. This panel became attendees at a meeting to demonstrate the appropriate and inappropriate behaviors of meeting management and provided guidelines on how to make a meeting more efficient and effective.

Session #9: The day began at the student center of the local post-secondary institution. A presentation was given regarding the basics of how to initiate and manage strategic planning for an organization. Organizations need to provide purpose for the employees, bring together all the players, and define the objectives for the entire team. The ABC's of strategic planning were outlined. The participants were placed in groups of three and participated in a group activity where their ankles were tied together utilizing rubber bands. They had to move as a team through hoops on the floor to reach the end goal—the plan. The group debriefed the exercise and spoke of the difficulties of moving with having ankles tied to one another. This provided a metaphor to use as a framework for a discussion on how barriers can inhibit an organization to move forward with its goals and objectives.

The participants were placed in six groups of four and given a leadership activity of working together in teams. The small groups engaged in a simulation of being *Lost in the Sub-Arctic* to challenge their leadership skills of communication, decision making, and team building. Discussion took place after the groups debriefed their survival techniques and highlighted how they had reached consensus among team members.

The group then reconvened at the local county courthouse. The local circuit judge talked about his role within the court system and how the legal system operates. A tour was

given of the historical court building. A panel of legal experts then spoke about their daily encounters and how the legal system must settle private disputes, resolve certain family conflicts, and protect the youngest and most vulnerable members of our society. Discussion took place on specific procedures that protect the rights of all, along with managing complex budgets and inspiring a large staff of individuals who must literally make life and death decisions. After the panel discussion the local county sheriff gave the participants a tour of the local jail.

Session #10: The day began at the student center of the local post-secondary institution. A panel discussion followed regarding the volunteer opportunities available throughout the community. A group of individuals highlighted unique opportunities that allow leaders to give back to the community. Discussion took place regarding the personal rewards of volunteering.

A presenter speaking on leadership in action then reflected on what it means to be a leader, not only at work and in the community, but also to our friends, families, and close associates. Discussion followed regarding varying leadership styles. The presenter closed with the thought that, "leadership is more than a set of skills; it is a way of life!"

A luncheon followed in honor of the employers, sponsors, and mentors of the leadership candidates for the year 2002-03. Each participant introduced their guests and highlighted what the leadership experience had meant to them over the past nine months. The luncheon ended with a slide show of the nine-month experience, showing an array of photographs taken through the program.

The afternoon session closed with a reflection from the participants about the journey in this program. Discussion included what participants had learned about the community,

about their careers, about their organizations, about others, and about themselves. Experiences were shared regarding those memorable moments of Leadership Cheyenne and common themes that emerged from their journey. An evaluation was completed by all Leadership Cheyenne participants so they could offer anonymous feedback to the organizers of the program.

The ending ceremony closed with a formal graduation of the class of 2002-03. The facilitator began the ceremony with a reflection about the nine-month program. A speaker from the former class gave a five-minute presentation regarding his career development since graduating. All of the sponsors thanked the employers that sent participants. One of the candidates from the class was nominated to give the "Leadership Cheyenne Class Speech." His presentation highlighted what the experience meant to him. Finally the graduates each received a pin and a framed diploma.

Background on the Subjects

Participant 001 – Zach. Zach is a Caucasian male and an investment manager of a large banking institution. He has worked in the finance area since graduating from college with his bachelor's degree. In his role as the manager of investments, ten individuals report directly to him. He has had no formal training in leadership and has learned by watching others how to build his framework about what constitutes good leadership.

He is a twin and was born in Brussels, Belgium, where his father worked for a computer company. He lived there for two years before his family came to live in the Midwestern region of the United States. There he spent most of his younger childhood followed by several moves throughout this region during his teenage years. He described his

family as middle class with his father working and a mother remaining at home. In addition to his twin brother, Zach has another brother who is two years older.

Zach attended a large public school and describes his experience in the following manner:

> "I did not like the kids that were in my high school. I was in a high up high school. The people were cliquish and snobby. But the challenge I had in high school was that I did not fit in. These guys all drove to school in Porsches and expensive cars, and I would beg my brother to drive me to school. We had this piece of crap Chevette. It was just like I did not want to belong to that group, because they were into drugs and stuff also. And this just wasn't me. I wasn't a good fit."

After high school Zach attended a large research-based state university and graduated with a double major in economics and communications. His father and two brothers are in the engineering field, but Zach felt that his skills were not in this area.

He does not live in this community, because he and his wife want to raise their three children close to his brother so the children will know their cousins. Thus, he has about an hour commute one way each day. When asked about his reason for attending Leadership Cheyenne during the first session, Zach stated the following:

> "I want to draw from others and incorporate learning from others in my leadership. I need to build more community friendships, because I am new to the community."

Participant 004 – Ned. Ned is a Caucasian male and an administrative manager for a beer manufacturing firm. He has worked for this company for many years in different capacities, being that it is a family-owned business. After graduating from college with his bachelor's degree, he came back to the company to work in administration. In his role as the administrative manager, he and two other supervisors are in charge of twenty individuals who work for the company. He has had both formal training in leadership through his

college experience, as well as through many company-sponsored professional development seminars on leadership. However, he attributed much of his leadership knowledge to observing his grandfather build this company. He stated that he has learned through his grandfather's leadership about what it takes to be a good leader and what constitutes good leadership.

He and his sister were born in a rural community with a total of just over 300 residents. He described his family as middle class with a father and mother employed in the educational field as teachers.

Ned attended a small rural public school and spoke about his experience in the following manner:

> "I grew up in a rural community. I graduated from a class of 42 people. The town where actually I am from is listed as 306 people total. So I am definitely from a small rural town. I was a good student in high school. I was on the honor roll and national honor society."

After high school Ned first attended a small private university on a basketball scholarship. After a knee injury, which ended his basketball career, he then transferred to a larger state university and received his undergraduate degree in management.

He has lived in and worked in this community for ten years. Ned is married and has a son who is five and half months old. He liked the small-town community, because it is similar to the one where he grew up as a child. When asked about his reason for attending Leadership Cheyenne during the first session, Ned stated the following:

> "This will be a great networking opportunity, and I want to communicate with others in leadership roles in order to bounce ideas off them. I think I will find this a real valuable networking opportunity to do so."

Participant 006 – Charles. Charles is a Caucasian male and is the director of a visitor and convention bureau for a nonprofit agency. Before taking on this position, he worked for a large video retail organization for many years as the manager of several stores. He has supervised numerous individuals and viewed his current role as managing people who are experts in their field and rely on him to promote tourism for their businesses. He has had both formal training in leadership in his college experience and has attended many company-sponsored professional development seminars in leadership. He attributed his leadership knowledge to firsthand experience of leading many diverse personalities, while managing the video stores throughout an entire state, and learning what motivates individuals and what constitutes good leadership.

He was born in a rural community. He described his family as middle class with his father in law enforcement and his mother in the educational field as a secretary.

> "I am close with the family—not totally the affection loving kind, but we are definitely close. I appreciate my parents much more now than I did when I was growing up. I definitely enjoy spending time with my brother. I have one sibling an older brother four years older than me. He lives actually only ten miles from here. We are a close family and spend a lot of time together during the holidays."

Charles attended a rural public school and described his experience in the following manner:

> "It was the traditional high school experience. I really wasn't president of the class or anything like that, but I was a member of the honor society. We did things in the community like blood drives and that sort of thing, which was not really in a leadership capacity, but I always have been a chosen leader. It seems when I get into small group dynamics I seem to take charge when there is hesitation."

After high school Charles attended a large research-based state university. He worked full-time while commuting to his courses at the university. He described his continued educational experience:

> "I graduated from this large university with a BA in advertising in May of this year. I was hesitant in what I really wanted to do. I knew I liked advertising and marketing and that sort of thing, which kind of ties into my current position. I had a high school instructor that interested me in graphics, and he had a lot of comments on leadership itself. One of his big philosophies was never ask someone to do something that you yourself wouldn't do. So that was always kind of in the back of my head. After I graduated I took some time off. I don't know if I was mature enough or what, but I took a vacation and wanted some time to see what I was looking for. I always kind of anticipated after graduating to move off to the big city and make the big dollars. We had a guest speaker in one of my advertising classes at college, and he spoke about the benefits and advantages of doing non-profit work. So that kind of sparked my interest in getting here (current position)."

He is single and has lived and worked in this community his entire life. He liked the small town community, because it is where he grew up and is close to his family. When asked about his reason for attending Leadership Cheyenne during the first session, Charles stated the following:

> "I am currently in a new position only two weeks ago. In my last position, I was the key manager with my own management style for six years. I need to look at my own leadership style and see where I fit in order to help them and me grow now that I am working with more people at the same level in the organizational chart."

Participant 009 – Lori. Lori is a Caucasian female and a curriculum director for the local intermediate school district. She was afforded the opportunity of growing up with many diverse experiences because of her parents' encouragement. In her words, she described how she ended up in a career in education:

> "My home life background is more traditional—two parent home and I have a brother, so a family of four. I have always had an interest in education. My

> father is a social worker, and my mother always wanted to be a schoolteacher, although at that time period she wasn't really encouraged to go on to college. So it started out immediately I knew that I wanted to teach. I worked as a high school assistant, and as a sophomore, I actually got off from a school bus and went into an elementary classroom to be an assistant. I had a high grade point average and was top in my class out of four hundred. However, I was fairly discouraged by others to go into education. I can be a little bit of a strong-willed person, and I thought that is where I wanted to go. I then started college and was on the education track, but I also had a strong business interest in accounting. My mom is a bookkeeper, and I actually have a natural talent towards numbers. So while I was always going to go into education, I also used my secretarial skills and that type of a background to get a co-op job at a large local hospital."

She attended a large research-based university was part of the honors program. This allowed for Lori to have "a free ride" and study in Europe for three and half months. When she studied overseas, she wrote an undergraduate thesis on the European secondary school system.

> "So part of my interest in going over to England was that they do not have the public private issues there. The religion is brought into the schools in a lot of ways. So that was part of what I was studying—their school system and how they allowed some of that Christian belief."

After this experience, the job market for teachers was not promising so she worked in a pharmacy. She then landed a job in an adult education program in a disadvantaged school district. She went back to school and received K-12 certification. After working for several years in this disadvantaged school district, she applied for a position in another local public school as a curriculum coordinator. She attributed much of her leadership knowledge to mentors that she had in the public school setting. She has worked for a lot of diverse leaders and has learned from personal experiences about what constitutes good leadership.

Lori has been in her current position for about three years. She does live in this community, because she and her husband wanted their two girls to be able to raise their

horses on a farm. Her husband is originally from this area, while she was raised in a community that borders this county. When asked about her reason for attending Leadership Cheyenne during the first session, Lori stated the following:

> "I want to see things from different angles. In education, we tend to get 'stuck' in our ways, and I am interested in other areas of leadership. It will be interesting to hear others' ideas outside of the educational world."

Participant 020 – Karen. Karen is a Caucasian female and works as a youth agent for a local extension office. She grew up in a large urban area and was encouraged by her parents to explore different career options. She has had a lot of leadership training through her activities and educational background, and especially in the occupation she has chosen. She was born into a traditional middle-class family and described her family as:

> "Well I am a pretty simple person. I grew up in a traditional family. I have a mom, dad, and one older brother. I have had a lot of parental support. My family is active in their community. Community service has always been a part of our family life. Those were family activities for us growing up. We thought, as children, growing up that is what everybody did. It wasn't until meeting and dating my husband that I realized that all people are not community minded. That might sound funny to some people that it took me that long to realize it, but the people that I associated with and the friends that my parents had were also involved in the community. My parents always told us that life was a smorgasbord. It is how they told us to think about life, and they said that you need to try a lot of things because you will never know what you will like or not like unless you try it. You can never tell us that you don't like something until you have tried it."

Karen attended a private K-12 school and then continued her education at a community college. She was accepted at a large research-based university, but after analyzing the financial situation, she opted to stay at home and commute to the community college. After receiving her associate's degree, she transferred to a large state university where she again commuted from home, and she received her bachelor degree in physiology. She had a lot of public speaking training because of her interest in this area. She was also

crowned Miss (county) in the early nineties, which also gave her an opportunity to work on her public speaking skills.

Because of her husband's occupation, she lived on the border of the county line where this study took place. She and her husband have a son who is two years old. When asked about her reason for attending Leadership Cheyenne during the first session, Karen stated the following:

> "I read the brochure and wanted to come, because I was new to the community. I didn't expect to be asked to come to Leadership Cheyenne by my supervisor. I fill many different roles in my work, and I can gain more community connections that will be beneficial in my job. I am really excited about being part of the group."

Participant 025 – Fred. Fred is a Caucasian male and one of three sales managers at a family-owned graphic arts company. He has worked at this company since age 16 when he started through the high school co-op program. This is a small company, and all three sales managers supervise all employees throughout the company. He reported directly to the president, along with the two other sales managers. He has had much training through Dale Carnegie and Fred Pryor seminars but attributed his leadership knowledge to one individual he worked with at this company.

> "As I explained earlier, a lot of my work ethic and values that I have now are pretty much the responsibility of one man and that is Rudy. I was watching the things that he did, and I told my boss before in the past that I would like to be a manager like Rudy. I watched him manage people and wanted to be like him someday."

He was born in the community in which he now resides and where this study was conducted. He talked about his values and beliefs regarding family.

> "I guess a lot of the values and beliefs that I have now stem back from when I was really little. When I was age one, my father passed away so I really pretty much lived with my mom. She passed away when I was seventeen. I

> look back now and some of my biggest values are family oriented. I think about my son and the stuff that he does in school. My mom could never be at these things, and it was not my choice or hers. So a lot of my values are pretty much directed at my family."

Fred attended a small parochial K-8 school in his childhood. He then attended a large public high school. His college experience was limited.

> "As far as the education, I was taking some off the wall classes and wanted to take others but really never did. I really did not need a college degree for my position."

He lived in this community, because he and his wife grew up here. It was also important to him that his son attended the parochial grade school that he attended. When asked about his reason for attending Leadership Cheyenne during the first session, Fred stated the following:

> "I want to feel more confident around people. I speak a lot on the phone with individuals, but speaking to them face to face is a lot different. I want to feel more comfortable talking to them in person."

Participant 026 – George. George is a Caucasian male and a traffic control manager for a large furniture manufacturing company. His background has always been in the trucking field. In his role as the traffic control manager, several individuals report directly to him. He has had a lot of formal training in leadership in his career evolution. He has been with this company for two years. Previous to this position, he had worked for another large trucking firm that conducted leadership training with their supervisors. He has built his framework about what constitutes good leadership through this training experience and by observing and learning from others.

He was born in Canada and spent his entire childhood and young adulthood there. His father was an industrial engineer and worked in the steel industry. George described his high school years and college experience as:

> "I did spend some time working at manufacturing plants for summer jobs. I really found it amazing as far as the manufacturing process. Originally going through high school, I thought I really wanted to work for a large American auto industry. I wanted to work on cars. I did not want to be a laborer; I wanted to be in supervision. As I progressed through high school, my parents divorced, and I was really kind of free wheeling through high school. I did whatever I could just to make it by, and I made it by and earned a scholarship to a large university in Canada. Originally I applied to the school of engineering, but because I kind of did not give my 100% effort in high school, I did not get into engineering. I got into science. I earned my bachelor degree at this university, and I actually hold a degree in physics."

He has lived in this community for eleven years, because he and his wife wanted to raise their two children where people watch out for you and where the community is safe. His wife loved horses so they purchased an old farmhouse in the country. In his words, "This is just a great area to raise a family." When asked about his reason for attending Leadership Cheyenne during the first session, George stated the following:

> "I tend to have tunnel vision of what I think a leader is. I want to grow myself as a manager and leader."

Participant 027 – Sam. Sam is a Caucasian male and a general manager of a large manufacturing firm. He has worked for this company for sixteen years. He holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from a large research-based state university. Even though he has an accounting degree, he has never held a traditional accounting position. He started as an internal auditor for his current company in 1985. He worked in this capacity for about nine years and moved into manufacturing. He described his work and leadership experience as:

> "I started supervising five people, and then I came here in 1985 and eight people were direct reports. Then I went back into what I say is a financial business analyst role. What I did there was capital assets and multiple projects and then was promoted to general manager here. We have twenty-five salaried employees and eight-nine hourly employees. We obviously have layers of management. I have six direct reports."

Sam described his work environment and personality profile as being impacted by a training seminar that used Lou Holtz has a spokesperson for one of the video presentations. He spoke about the two most important things that Lou Holtz stated in the video, "Can they trust me and do they care about me? If you can do those, and if you can instill that, then you can keep good people. That is the bottom line you have to show them that they can trust you." Sam stated that from a personal standpoint that was the most challenging for him because he was direct, business-like, and matter of fact.

> "If I looked at the personality profiles, I score low in the *blue* area. My wife tells me that I am emotionally stubborn, and I think that is because how I grew up. You know that is just the way it was."

His company has done extensive training in leadership development with employees. This training experience has been with outside consultants who are former military career officers. Time is spent on basic personality profiling, theories, role playing, and different coaching scenarios. Obviously, he has had a lot of formal training in leadership and has learned by observing others to build his framework about what constitutes good leadership.

He grew up in another Midwest state but has not lived there since the early 80's. He lived in another larger metropolitan city for five years and transferred to a large metropolitan city in the South. He came to work in this community in 1999.

Sam commuted to his position from a larger urban city about 45 minutes away from his place of employment. His primary reason for not living in this community is that he felt it would have been hard for him to move his family from a metropolitan area.

> "I left the large metropolitan in the Midwest area and went to another larger metropolitan area in the South and that was hard, because after my wife and daughter relocated to the South they loved it. Moving them back to a small rural area would be extremely difficult."

When asked about his reason for attending Leadership Cheyenne during the first session, Sam stated the following:

> "It will be difficult to find time out of my day away from work to attend this program. However, this program will help me with community networking and will be beneficial in that aspect."

Participant 028 – Troy. Troy is a Caucasian male and an engineer for a large furniture manufacturing company. He has worked for this company for the past 15 years since graduating from college. Several individuals in the research and design area of this company are his direct reports. He has had no formal training in leadership but attributed his knowledge about what constitutes good leadership skills to his father and to mentors that he has had at his place of employment.

He grew up in a small town about one hour from where he currently resides. He attended a community college after high school to receive his associate degree in math and then went on to receive his bachelor's degree in engineering from a large research-based state university. He claimed he was destined to be an engineer, because his grandfather was an engineer, his father was an engineer, and his brother is an engineer. Regarding how he ended up in this community, he commented:

> "I was in the top five percent of my class at my university, and I was on all of the honor societies and so forth and so on and I knew what the average going

> rate was for engineers, but my company came in about at the low end of the scale. But it was manufacturing and definitely engineering and this is where I wanted to be. So I said, 'Yes,' when they offered me the position and came aboard. That was fifteen years ago."

He lived in this community, because he and his wife wanted to raise their two children where his wife grew up. Troy admitted that he is a workaholic and needed to live close to where his job is because of the amount of time spent at work. When asked about his reason for attending Leadership Cheyenne during the first session, Troy stated the following:

> "I continuously want to learn and expand my horizons. I would like to 'hone' in on skills and get better at leadership."

Chapter Five
Leadership Development as a Transformational Process
Findings of the Study—Part One

As Palmer (1998) stated, transformational learning is a continuous evolution of one's "self" through the inner work of various forms of professional development. This study analyzed this evolutionary process of participants through their participation in a leadership development program. Was there evidence of transformation of one's thinking that was attributed to this specific leadership development program? As presented in an earlier chapter, the research regarding leadership development programs leaves a main question unanswered, "How can you actually gauge the 'returns' from a leadership-training program in a quantifiable, holistic manner?" This study utilized the premise that the 'returns' from attending a nine-month leadership development program would be self-identified by the participants. The participants measured their own benefits gained from the program. This measurement was gauged through the interviews with participants reflecting on the nine-month program. The research outlined by Mezirow (1978), regarding the ten phases of personal transformation, was the basis of the "gauge" utilized to guide this measurement for each participant.

The researcher engaged in a critical analysis of what may have influenced participants' thoughts about leadership. How was this accomplished? In reviewing the conversations with the participants of this study, the researcher focused on particular words or expressions that would indicate transformational learning took place. As is evident from this type of research, there is no exact science to the measurement or even the absolute occurrence of transformation. Although transformational learning contains no distinct words

or phrases that one could identify as definite measurements of change, the researcher utilized the work of Mezirow (1991) as a lens to assess the individual reflection by each participant.

> "Learning through transformation of meaning schemes. This is learning that involves reflection on assumptions. We find that our specific points of view or beliefs have become dysfunctional, and we experience a growing sense of the inadequacy of our old ways of seeing and understanding meaning. For instance, a woman attending an early evening class at a local college who feels obligated to rush home to prepare dinner for her husband may come to question the meaning scheme that produces that compulsion as she encounters other women who do not feel a need to fulfill this stereotypical sex role. Often other meaning schemes derived from the same stereotypical role become similarly transformed at about the same time. This accretion of transformed meaning schemes can lead to a transformation in meaning perspective" (pp. 93-94).

The researcher reviewed the information presented in Chapter Four regarding the nine participants' backgrounds and life experiences that framed their thinking on their meaning perspectives regarding what constitutes good leadership. After this analysis was completed, the researcher examined the data presented in the next chapter regarding the specific aspects of Leadership Cheyenne that participants spoke about in their post-assessment interviews, which influenced their personally held meaning perspectives about leadership.

The final step was to examine this information and draw conclusions regarding the evidence (or lack of evidence) of transformation of individual meaning perspectives based on the researcher's own assumptions and interpretations of the dialogue before, during, and after the program ended. Mezirow's definition of transformation outlined above was utilized as the "lens" to assess the occurrence of transformation of participants' meaning perspectives. The next section of this chapter provides the reader with a critical self-reflection of meaning perspectives held by participants of Leadership Cheyenne as outlined by the researcher and answers one of the research questions, "*In what ways are an individual's meaning*

perspectives about what constitutes good leadership transformed through participation in a leadership development-training program?"

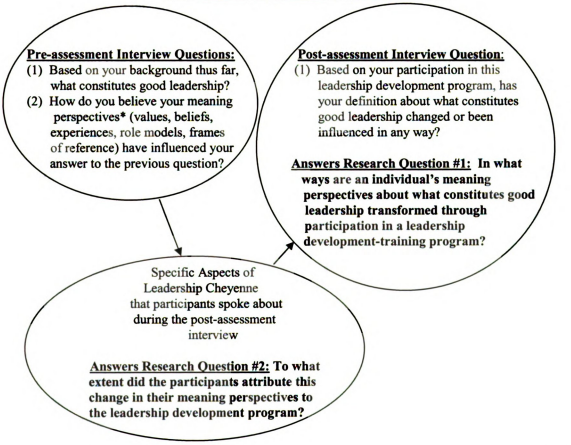
Critical Examination of Meaning Perspectives

Utilizing the work of Mezirow (1978) and Cranton (1994), the research focused on the ten phases of transformational learning as a foundation for framing personal integration and the inner work of this particular leadership development program. As the post-assessment interviews were conducted, the participants shared their experiences regarding their learning in this nine-month program in different ways. Their original meaning perspectives of what they brought to the program and what they walked away with were examined in the language that they used during the research conversations. The participants described, in their own words, in the pre-assessment interview what they thought constitutes good leadership.

In the post-assessment interview, after the experience of the leadership development program, the participants reflected on this nine-month experience and discussed the impact the leadership development program had on their original meaning perspectives about what constitutes good leadership. Some of the participants shared this experience, regarding their meaning perspective, in such a way that led the researcher to believe they had reaffirmed some of their values, beliefs, and frames of reference regarding leadership. Other participants shared their thoughts about different aspects of the program throughout the nine-month period that conveyed to the researcher their original meaning perspectives had, indeed, been influenced.

The participants highlighted many avenues of learning and changes in their thinking regarding leadership as a direct result of Leadership Cheyenne. What follows is a critical assessment of each participant's reflection on their meaning perspectives. The diagram which follows outlines the specific analysis model that was utilized to assess the impact of the leadership development program on each study participant. Based on this examination, it was determined by the researcher that seven out of the nine interviewed participants experienced some form of transformation as a direct result from attending Leadership Cheyenne.

Critical Analysis of Meaning Perspectives



***Definition of meaning perspectives:** **A habitual set of expectations that constitutes an orienting frame of reference that we use in projecting our symbolic models and that serves as a (usually tacit) belief system for interpreting and evaluating the meaning of experience" (Mezirow, 1978).**

Zach's Leadership Development Experience

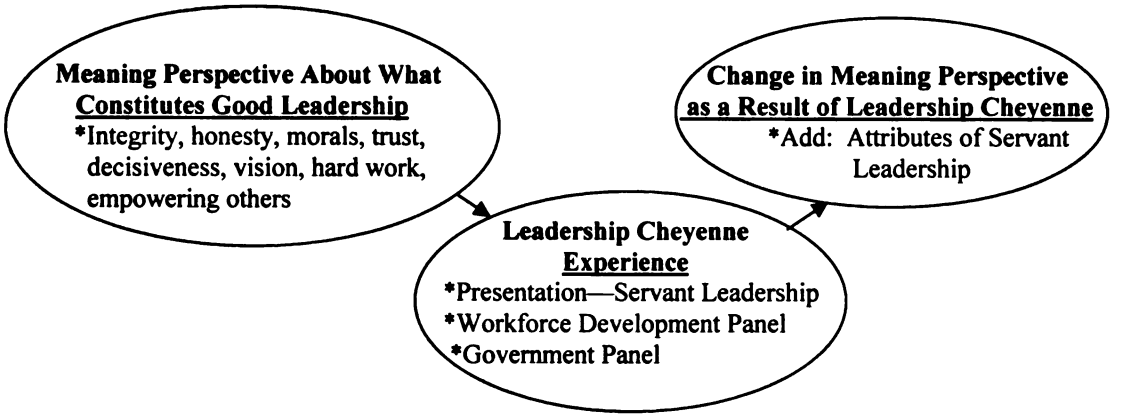
During the post-assessment interview with Zach, he referred to the presentation about servant leadership as influencing his original meaning perspectives about what constitutes good leadership. He added this terminology to other meaning perspectives he has held before the program began.

> "DB: Moving on to question #2 on what constitutes good leadership based on your experiences with the leadership development, have those attributes changed?
>
> The one thing though I picked up on was the whole angle of servant leadership. That was a concept that I hadn't really had not thought about. But you know now that I am aware of it, I've become a lot more focused on serving my team as opposed to just trying to bark at them. Yes, the only thing that has changed about it is the whole aspect of servant leadership was something that I didn't anticipate. I always thought integrity and hard work were two of the big ones and empowering others and helping people believe in themselves. I always knew those were the big three, but the whole servant thing was a refreshing addition to them." (001 – page 6)

Zach continued by pointing out that the program influenced him to get involved in the community, which he stated would not have happened if not for his exposure to this program.

> "DB: When thinking about your perspectives and your meaning perspectives, have they been influenced in any way? Have they changed? Have you reflected if it was something to do with the leadership program or maybe something external now that you have a little seniority under your belt?
>
> I feel a little more confident in the community. Not only can I make a difference, but I know people now. It is like when you go to a party if you don't know anyone, you just sit there like a little wallflower until you meet a couple of people then you can start telling your jokes and being yourself. (001- page 6)
>
> If not for this program, I probably would not have joined Rotary. I probably would not have joined the Chamber Foundation. I probably would not have done any of that stuff. I really wouldn't have. It was the conduit to get me to meet people that are influential who I would have never met." (001 – page 7)

Critical Analysis of Zach's Meaning Perspectives



Utilizing Mezirow's (1991) definition of transformation, the conclusion that can be drawn from the information presented in the findings and the dialogue above is that clearly the experiences Zach had in Leadership Cheyenne had a direct impact on his beliefs on leadership. Zach identified three specific aspects of the program that clearly affected his thinking. As a result of the program, he indicated that the presentation on servant leadership was influential on his original meaning perspectives. Because Zach was new to the community, his original expectations from attending this leadership development program were to build relationships and community connections. These expectations were met, along with his self-reported improvement in his leadership skills as a direct result of his participation in this program.

He also reaffirmed for himself that he is a better leader, which he indicated in the findings and was a definite outcome of Leadership Cheyenne. Therefore, the researcher affirms that Zach's originally held meaning perspectives were influenced, and the three specific aspects of the leadership development program that he highlighted did cause this transformation.

Ned's Leadership Development Experience

Ned added "people skills" to his meaning perspectives about what constitutes good leadership after attending the nine-month leadership development program. He referred to the respect one has to earn and how one can gain such respect from those with whom one works.

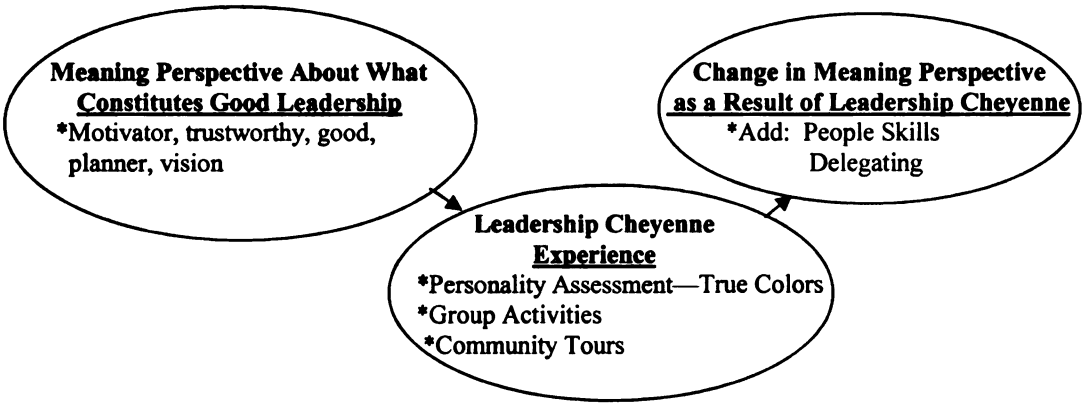
> "DB: What about your definition on what constitutes good leadership? As you went through this leadership program, are there any other things that have changed in your mind when we talk about good leadership skills, or maybe how some of your meaning perspectives have changed?
>
> I think for the most part everything that I talked about in the first interview regarding my meaning perspectives about what constitutes good leadership I still believe. I don't think anything has changed, but maybe something I would add is people skills. You have to know how to deal with different types of people. What motivates different types of people? You have to earn the respect from the people that you are trying to lead. And I think the respect comes from knowledge of what you are doing. I don't know I think the best leaders are actually people that have been there and have done that." (004 – page 5)

Ned described his experience from attending the program as thinking on a "larger scale." He also changed his thinking about how he delegates tasks to others. He stated that the program has shown him not to get "bogged down in the small stuff." Giving people responsibility and delegating tasks so that they feel like they are an important part of the team is an integral part of good leadership.

> "This program has gotten me to think more about leadership and about my role both here at work and at home. Don't sweat the small stuff; I mean my role is bigger than a lot of things I let myself get bogged down in. It has helped me to understand that giving people—I'm going to say delegating—I don't know if that is the right word, but delegating tasks. A lot of the times, I go back to my way is the right way and I just grab onto too much stuff and take on too much and can't always quite get it done. So this program has helped me to understand that you need to give people responsibility. Another thing, I think we do a pretty good job here, but I don't know if planning is the right word. Just kind of every day questioning are we on the right course?

Are we doing what we need to do? I don't know there are so many things to worry about. But for me the program got me thinking a little bit larger." (004 – page 6)

Critical Analysis of Ned's Meaning Perspectives



As compared to Mezirow's (1991) definition on transformation, along with the information presented in this chapter and reviewed above, the researcher concluded that Ned's meaning perspectives have been broadened. He specifically highlighted the addition of "people skills" and "delegating" to his original thinking about good leadership traits. Based on his own assessment, three key aspects were highlighted as influencing his thinking. The words used by Ned such as, "thinking a little bit larger," have led the researcher to believe that this leadership development program did transform Ned's original meaning perspectives. His own words indicated that his thinking is on a "larger scale" because of his participation in Leadership Cheyenne.

Fred's Leadership Development Experience

Fred's thinking was reaffirmed regarding his original meaning perspectives. He now felt more comfortable working with his employees and stated that perhaps he was too restrictive in the past. He wanted to hire the best people to work with him.

"DB: Moving on to the next question, we talked about leadership in our last interview about what constitutes good leadership. Caring for employees, leading by example, doing things that everybody else does—knowing each other's job – did anything in the program make you reaffirm that or think about those attributes differently?

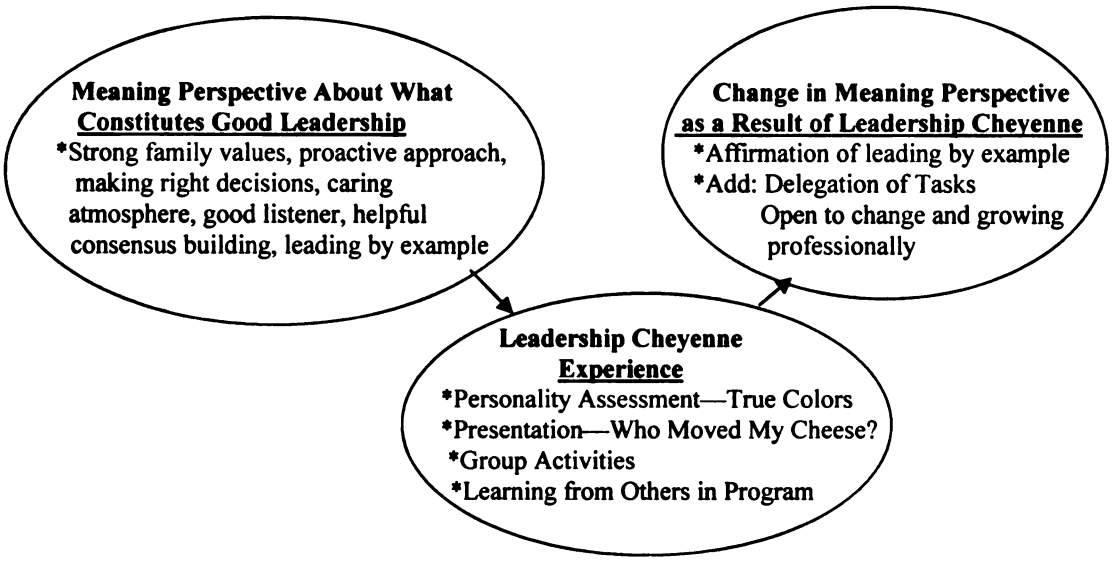
I still believe the same way, especially when they reaffirmed, that you lead by example. And again hearing a lot of the other people and their issues that they came up with helps me try to lead by the same example. It did make me feel more comfortable being able to have better people working with me and to be more comfortable to let them do what they want to do. I don't know maybe in the past I probably had a hard time maybe restricting people from doing specific things. I think now I am more open to people doing more of what I do. I am not fearful of losing my job or anything like that, and I just think I was kind of holding back and for some reason not letting the people do it. But I think hiring the best people to work with you is a good idea." (025 – page 7)

Fred also related his experience from Leadership Cheyenne to his desire of wanting to persevere more in his life. He referred to the individuals in the class who were strongly driven to succeed because of their attitude and behavior.

"DB: Have any of your beliefs changed about leadership or as it relates maybe to some meaning perspectives that maybe you brought to the class regarding what constitutes good leadership?

I think of anything the program may have made me persevere a little more. There were so many really neat people in the class, and you could see there were a lot of driven people in the class. And at times I find myself being driven and then just backing off. So if you really want it, you got to pursue it. I noticed a lot of people in the class that were like that–driven people. I think that was neat, and I see them and I would like to be them and have that attitude—that drive. If I could have that, I would like someday for someone to look at me and say, 'I like to be like him and have that drive'." (025 – page 8)

Critical Analysis of Fred's Meaning Perspectives



Analyzing the post-assessment interview with Fred and utilizing the Mezirow's (1991) definition of transformation, the researcher concluded he not only affirmed one of his original meaning perspectives, "leading by example," but also added knowing how to delegate more to his staff and to be more open to change. Fred was influenced by the presentation on *Who Moved My Cheese?* It made him think more about resistance people have to change and how he needs to be more open to change in order to grow professionally. This aspect was one of the four specific components of Leadership Cheyenne that influenced his thinking regarding his original meaning perspectives about what constitutes good leadership.

He also stated that his perseverance is something that has been strengthened through observing others in the program. His statement regarding his desire that someone looking at him in the future would aspire to be like him told the researcher that his thinking was transformed by this leadership development program. He wanted to be better at "leading" so people could say that he had the same drive he observed from others in the program. Fred

wanted to be more comfortable in his decision making and less restrictive to his employees. The transformation of his meaning perspectives was a direct result of this program as indicated in his conversations with the researcher.

George's Leadership Development Experience

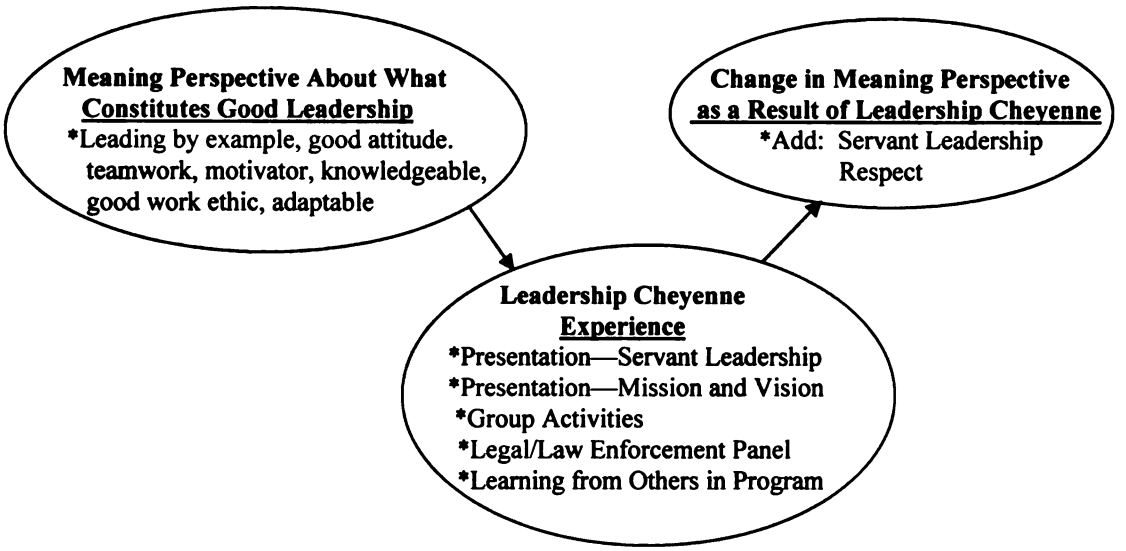
George affirmed that this program has "fine-tuned" some skills he already had from previous training. The servant leadership attributes were added to his meaning perspectives regarding what constitutes good leadership. He felt the respect one can earn from these attributes is integral in effective leadership.

> "DB: Moving on to question # 2, which really was based on your definition of what constitutes good leadership. Has it changed or been influenced in any way as a result of this experience?
>
> I think this particular leadership development program has fine-tuned some of the stuff that I already had. I really think it just made me more cognizant of what is going on. You know the servant leader comes out. I never heard it described that way as a leadership skill or the respect you earn for that. I see some the servant leader qualities in myself. I am trying to bring more of those out. I think the respect level whether it be your co-worker or your fire fighter beside you – you build a stronger relationship by moving to that level of leader – whether you consider yourself a leader or not. You're not if you have to throw your authority around to get things done. That's short term it will resolve the issue, but long term I think you will lose respect. You will lose confidence of your co-workers. Servant leader is rolling up your sleeves and jumping up and doing stuff or at least offering. So I think it has made me more comfortable about clarifying things. I think that I had a lot of the skills, but it's nice to see them right in front of you." (026 – page 6)

George also referred to a segment in one of the reference books utilized in the class as he reframed his reflection regarding the leadership development program experience. All employees are an integral part of the organization no matter what the title is behind their name. This was something that he realized, but the program helped him to remember this important point when dealing with people.

"I think that was one of the big things that I learned from one of the reference books where the person asked, 'Do you know the name of the janitor at your organization?' I did realize that everyone is important in your organization to an extent, but it didn't sink in as an impact. So you start reading some of this stuff and you start talking to other people in corporations and things like that and you know that everyone is important. And it does not matter if you empty the trash or you program the CAD system or whatever, you still are a notch in the wheel and a part of that team. If you are not there, you are missed. So that was kind of a big eye opener. I mean there were things that I realized, but it is nice to see the broader view from the other people and from a variety of people from some great companies. That alone says that these people have done the right thing. It's all part of being a good leader." (026 – page 2)

Critical Analysis of George's Meaning Perspectives



Analyzing the conversations with George and comparing this information with Mezirow's (1991) definition, the researcher did confirm that his leadership skills have been enhanced. He also indicated that the servant leadership presentation influenced his thinking on his original meaning perspectives. George added "respect" to his list of attributes as to what constitutes good leadership as a result of his participation in this program. George's ability to critically self-reflect was evident in the conversations with the researcher. He highlighted

six separate aspects of Leadership Cheyenne that influenced his thinking and reflection. The researcher interpreted his experience from attending Leadership Cheyenne as transformational due to the language, such as, "seeing the broader view from other people," that was present and reported in the research findings and from the above dialogue.

Sam's Leadership Development Experience

Sam reflected on where he had the greatest opportunity to grow in his leadership skills. In his post-assessment interview he discussed his "soft skills" as something he continues to work on and is aware that they are an important aspect of effective leadership. This specific aspect of enhancing his leadership skills was not present in the pre-assessment interview. Sam's original expectations were to build relationships and community connections.

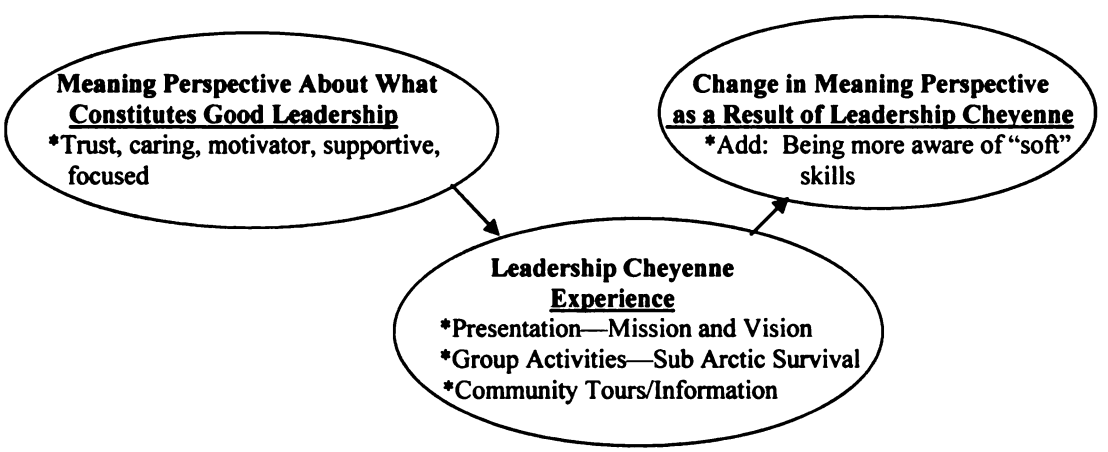
> "DB: The next reflection is on what really constitutes good leadership. Does anything come to mind throughout the leadership development program that perhaps reinforced your thinking of trusting and certainly caring about people or made you sit back and think about your meaning perspectives in a different light perhaps?
>
> I think when I sat down and really looked at the areas where I thought were areas where I had the greatest opportunity to grow it is really what I call "soft skills." It gets down to I am good at tasks, and I'm good at talking about goals and objectives but I have to weigh that with going out and talking to people in general how things are. Because I'm focused, and therefore, that is what I talk about and I think unfortunately that is the only way people see me. So I have to change that a little bit, which I mean it is going to take effort because that's just the way I am. We always talk about rule #1 is that people don't change. So what you get today is what you are going to get tomorrow, but it comes down to communication I think. It is doing things differently when we have meetings in the plant. What we have is a culture barrier, and it is difficult to get people to talk. But you know you try to give them opportunities to do that. So that is just something I have to work on.
>
> DB: What in the leadership program brought that to light for you?

> I think just talking about it and in some of the readings and some of the books – it talked about a lot of time spent on empathizing and things like that. That's when I go back and I think about people I work with. Some people have that ability and some people do not. And that's just the way it was." (027 – pages 5 and 6)

Sam also highlighted the ability to inspire others as an integral part of leadership. He felt that a leader needs to be aware that "motivation" is key to assist others to do their best for the organization.

> "I go back to my definition of leadership is inspiring others to do their best. And that's pretty much means that somehow every day you have to be doing something to spend some time on that and really talk about motivation." (027 – page 8)

Critical Analysis of Sam's Meaning Perspectives



Reviewing Sam's background, he definitely had more leadership development training experience before attending Leadership Cheyenne than any of the other nine participants in this program. He stated in his pre-assessment interview that his main reason for attending Leadership Cheyenne was to build better community relationships since he did not live in this county. His post-assessment interview indicated that he reflected more on his "soft skills" of leadership enhancement than on his original intent for attending this program.

Sam did not specifically report to the researcher that he had built community connections. However, it was evident that this program had a stronger impact on his leadership skills. The community connection piece never emerged during the post-assessment interview. He indicated that there were three specific aspects of the leadership development program that influenced his thinking regarding leadership. Comparing Sam's experience with Mezirow's (1991) definition on transformational learning, the researcher affirmed that there was a transformation in his thinking regarding his original meaning perspectives. This was expressed in the post-assessment interview as he referred to being more aware of his "soft skills" when dealing with his employees.

Troy's Leadership Development Experience

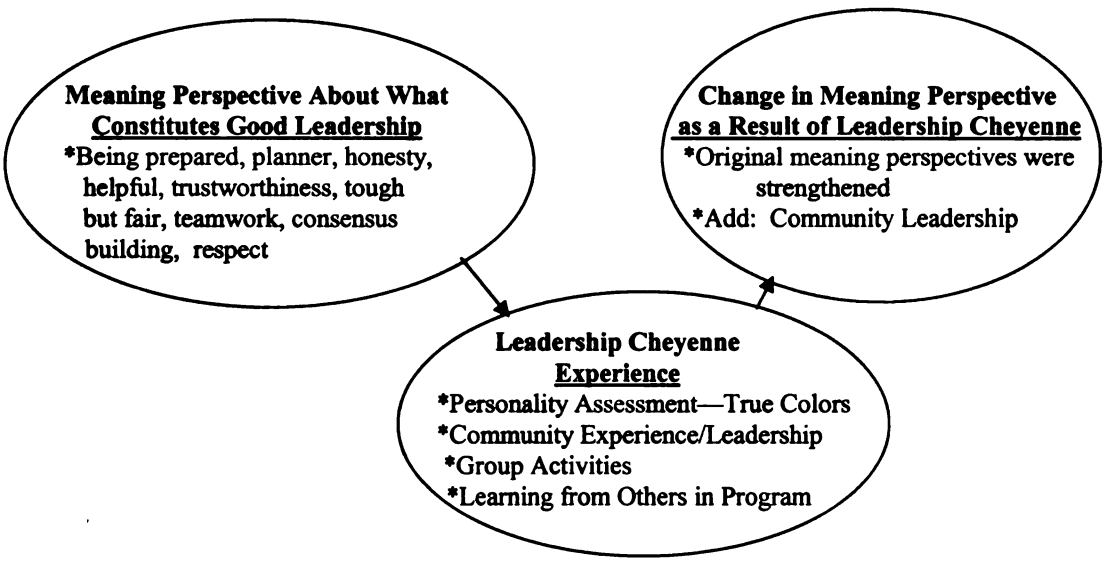
Troy stated his original meaning perspectives have been strengthened. He highlighted the importance of gaining people's respect.

> "DB: So have any of your original perspectives about what constitutes good leadership been changed or been influenced in any way?
>
> I think basically that my meaning perspectives about what constitutes good leadership have been strengthened. That doesn't mean that I feel like I knew everything going into this course. I just think I had a good basis for morals being honest, being trustworthy. You have to gain people's respect. That is where you have to roll up your sleeves, and you have to work side-by-side people sometimes. Because if they see that you are not willing to do that and just delegate, you do not have their respect. And I think the class strengthened that for me, because I saw a lot of those common traits in most of the class members. I think they helped strengthened my views, my morals, and my values because they had similar ones." (028 page 11)

Troy spoke about his discomfort at the beginning of the leadership development program. His perspectives on leadership and his views about the community have him thinking differently because of Leadership Cheyenne.

"I think in the beginning I thought that maybe I wouldn't fit in as well with this sort of people and I learned that – how do I say this carefully – they're not snobs or anything like that. They're just people like me and definitely the hard work that goes into these positions be it nonprofit, voluntary, or whatever, just amazed me that people are willing to put in that time. I think that a lot of us, me included, were taking these people for granted. Yes, they do lead our community, and yes, that is what they want to do. Maybe in the future I would be looking at something like that. I think personally I would like to get more involved with my church. I am fairly religious and even though maybe the community isn't quite where I want to be. I think the church is where I need to help out. I plan on moving up here (at work). I think this program has helped me take a different perspective. Even though I thought I was a good leader going into the class, I've gotten different viewpoints on how to view others be it they are a green, gold, blue, or orange." (028 – page 2)

Critical Analysis of Troy's Meaning Perspectives



As Troy stated, he had a lot of "solid" meaning perspectives going into the program. Even though he stated there was "nothing" to add to the list of attributes, he firmly believed that his original thoughts on his values, beliefs, and frames of reference regarding good leadership were strengthened as a result of this experience. Although nothing seemed to be added to his meaning perspectives, the researcher did sense a shift in his original thoughts in the area of

community leadership. Thus, the researcher believed that there was the presence of transformation using the definition of Mezirow's (1991) transformational learning.

Troy was also influenced by the personality assessment that was conducted during this program. There were four specific aspects of the leadership development program that influenced his original meaning perspectives. He talked about how this program had changed his views of the community and allowed him to look at "things" differently. As the researcher examined the transformational learning expressed by Troy, there was evidence of transformation of his meaning perspectives as it related to community leadership. His views regarding this topic were interpreted by the researcher as a transformative experience based on his participation in Leadership Cheyenne.

Karen's Leadership Development Experience

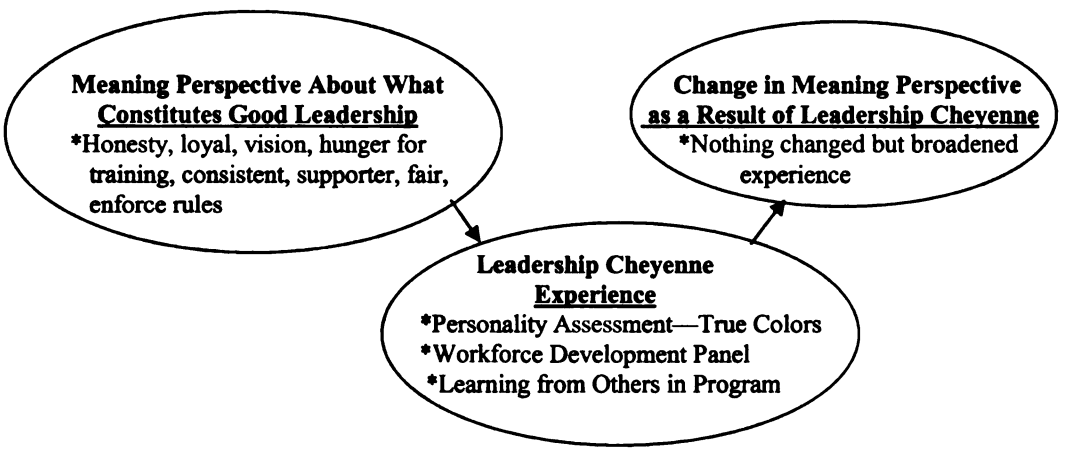
Karen suggested that this leadership development program experience was practical and meaningful. It became clear to her that one needed to continually develop skills in order to stay competitive. She stated that the program has broadened her experience.

> "DB: What about your thoughts based on this nine-month program about what constitutes good leadership? We talked about some of your meaning perspectives that have been brought back to the forefront for you. Is there anything that stands out in your mind that perhaps has changed your frame of reference?
>
> Well I think that it broadened my experience. There was a lot of theory presented but it was practical. And everything seemed to be in a different – a real life mode in the way in which everything was presented. It made everything real and applicable. The topics that were addressed were practical and meaningful. I just think that the biggest thing is that it got me to think in a much broader scale. And that is what I needed – I needed that. (020 – page 7) I always knew that education was important, but this program really made it clear that you need to make sure you continue to develop your skills not just to be competitive in the workplace but because it will enhance you personally as well." (020 – page 8)

She also focused on how the program inspired her both personally and professionally. Personally it inspired her to continue her education, and professionally she was inspired by the program to develop and conduct a leadership program for volunteers of her organization.

> "I was thinking WOW I was learning all of these cool things and wouldn't other people like to learn these things. So we have different options and classes and it's just been really beneficial for me. It inspired to get my rear in gear and start checking out graduate programs. (020 – page 9) The program for me was inspiring. I mean it has inspired me to look at doing some other things. After I came back when we had class one Thursday, I was going to work the next day and coming back and I was thinking about we could do a keys to leadership program that could take care of volunteers throughout our county. It would be specifically designed for my volunteers, but if other organizations within the community wanted somewhere to send volunteers for leadership development, they could send them here for specific skills. I drafted out a whole program called the 'Keys of Leadership' where you would be a bronze leader, and then a silver leader, and then a gold leader." (020 – page 9)

Critical Analysis of Karen's Meaning Perspectives



Based on what Karen reported, she indicated to the researcher that this program was inspirational to her. She stated that her meaning perspectives were broadened and defined explicit aspects in the post-assessment interview about the impact that Leadership Cheyenne had on her thinking. Three specific Leadership Cheyenne elements were highlighted by

Karen as meaningful experiences. The reported inspiration that she encountered by the conclusion of the program indicated that without the nine-moth program she would not have been as "aggressive" in pursuing her graduate work or in initiating a volunteer leadership program for the county.

Utilizing the definition of Mezirow's (1991) transformation learning, the researcher identified transformation in her thinking about educational options for youth during the post-assessment interview. Karen described her amazement at a discovery she experienced in this county after taking a tour of a local vocational/technology center.

> "I mean the biggest 'ah-hah' for me was literally over the partnership between the local college and the intermediate school district with the program offerings in the vocational/technology center because that was something different that I hadn't had the opportunity to experience. I knew kids could do things, but I didn't understand that kind of a setup and that kind of an organizational partnership existed. And I said, 'if this is going on, there are a lot of other things going on that I do not know about.' Since being involved in Leadership Cheyenne, I have been out at the local intermediate school district to meet with 'an employee' to talk about one of their programs and they are interested in partnering with us to work on some community service activities with the kids." (020 – page 7)

Karen worked with other intermediate school districts (ISD) in her career for the past eight years. She felt that through this leadership development program she was exposed to another segment of the local ISD's that she had not connected with before. What the experience did do was transform her thinking about the existence of different avenues that are available to young adults in the community beyond the traditional college-bound track. "For eight years I didn't know how to promote those kinds of activities to young people because (a) I didn't know they existed and (b) I didn't know where to send them. Now I do."

Reflecting on the research question, *"In what ways are an individual's meaning perspectives about what constitutes good leadership transformed through participation in a*

leadership development-training program?," the conclusion drawn regarding Karen's meaning perspective is somewhat different than other participants. Karen's frame of reference, through her life experiences, has changed on a meaning perspective in educational options for youth. Even though the researcher's conclusion is that transformation took place, it was not transformational learning that answered the above research question. Rather, it was transformation of a personally held meaning perspective on traditional secondary education to which most are accustomed in the public school sector.

Charles's Leadership Development Experience

Charles affirmed the original meaning perspectives that he reported during the initial interview. From this experience, he had found different ways to include all individuals in part of an initiative.

> "DB: What about some of your feelings about what constitutes good leadership and one thing that you pointed out in the initial interview was not taking control of every situation or taking it over. What are some of your thoughts now on your original meaning perspectives after going through this program and having time to reflect on leadership?
>
> I am still a firm believer that it is important to work with others to move things forward, and I think that going it alone isn't necessarily the best way to go about it. So I think this course has shown me the different things you can do to try to include others and make sure that they feel as much or more part of the initiative as the leader." (006 – page 4)

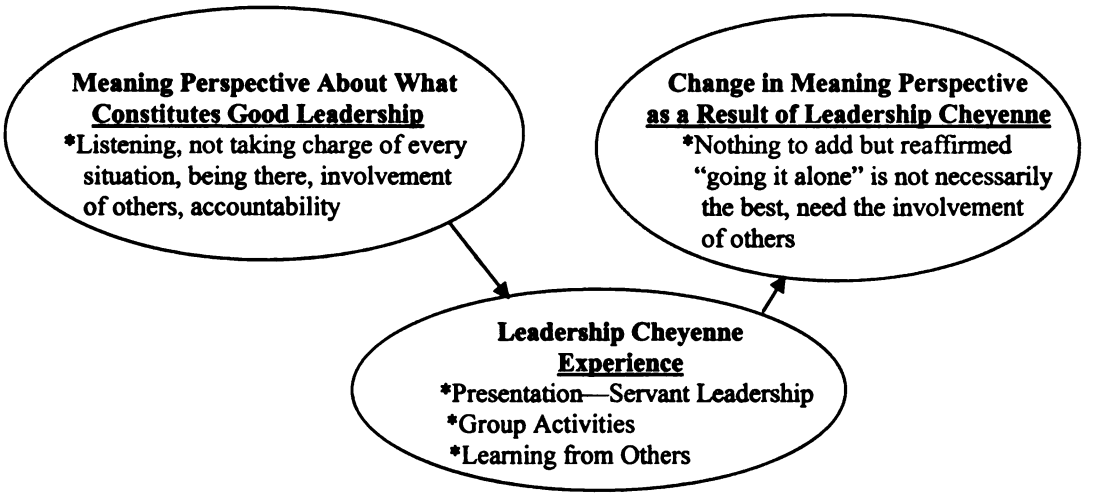
Charles also believed that from his participation in Leadership Cheyenne he more thoroughly understood the concept of leadership. He stated, "It is not just if you either have good leadership skills or you do not."

> "I think leadership is one of those things that you either have or don't. You can hone in on those areas, but I think you have it or don't. And I think to a certain extent I have always had it. But maybe I understand it a little more now then I did before.

DB: And why is that?

I think in this course you are directed to step back and just evaluate what it takes to be a leader and what aspects are involved. Going into it, I thought it was more you have it or you don't. But I understand it a little bit more than I did before." (006 – page 3)

Critical Analysis of Charles's Meaning Perspectives



Reflecting on the conversation with Charles, it was apparent that the dialogue during the post-assessment interview was focused on affirming his original meaning perspectives. The language utilized by Charles, along with comparing his dialogue to Mezirow's (1991) definition of transformation learning, did not indicate a significant shift in his thinking regarding good leadership attributes. Analyzing the background information that was collected by the researcher during the pre-assessment interview, the conclusion that was drawn regarding the presence of transformation did not seem apparent during the post-assessment interview with Charles.

The researcher's assumption was that even though Charles had met the researcher's criteria of having at least five years of supervisory experience and being a willing participant

in Leadership Cheyenne, he was not at the point in his career to be able to reflect at the same level of other "more experienced and mature (chronological age)" participants. The dialogue during the post-assessment interview showed no significant shifts in his thinking regarding his original meaning perspectives about what constitutes good leadership. Although he mentioned three specific aspects of the program, there were also no indications of "ah-hah" moments or words that emerged during the post-assessment interview that led the researcher to believe that Leadership Cheyenne was a transformational learning experience for Charles.

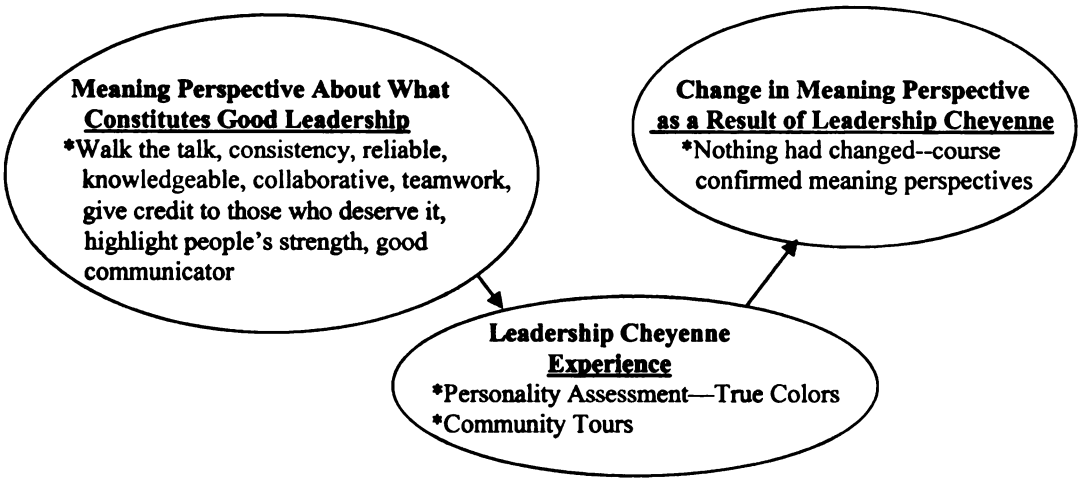
Lori's Leadership Development Experience

Lori explained that her original meaning perspectives were already so well grounded that she did not experience any "wow" moments in her thinking as a result of this leadership development program. Because of her previous work experience, she had already formulated her values about leadership.

> "DB: What about your original thoughts on good leadership? Have you changed any of those principles or any of things that you see in people regarding leadership or any other words you would use to describe good leadership? What constitutes good leadership? Have any of your meaning perspectives changed?
>
> I don't know if really my meaning perspectives changed much. As I said, I think a lot of it was because of my background and working with multiple leaders. It was more of what I already knew. It confirmed what I already knew going into the course. But I really didn't have a revelation to be honest in the area of leadership per say. What they told me is what I had already seen and knew from my trials and tribulations in my past. (009 – page 9)
>
> DB: Absolutely. And that's based on all the experience that you brought to the class.
>
> Yes, if I had come in with less experience and maybe not have worked with as many leaders who were both strong and weak leaders, my experience

would have been different. I had a background that gave me the opportunity to see this person is really strong and this person is not and what I should do. I was lucky in the sense of coming in with that. Some people maybe didn't have that same advantage that I had." (009 – page 9)

Critical Analysis of Lori's Meaning Perspectives



Based on the findings and further analysis of the information presented above, it was evident to the researcher that Lori did not have a transformational experience. She stated in the post-assessment interview that she did not have a "revelation" regarding any new meaning that was elicited during her experience as a participant in Leadership Cheyenne. In fact, she was disappointed with her experience in this leadership development program. She felt the program was too structured for her to meet her original expectations of building relationships and developing community connections.

Lori stated that she had strong values, beliefs, and frames of references about what constitutes good leadership coming into the program due to her career experiences. She stated the program was "too elementary" based on where she was in her career, "Well I found most of the leadership pieces to be pretty basic, to be honest. I think some of that is because I've been in a leadership role for a while. Setting up agendas and getting agendas out before

meetings, communication, some of that was maybe my educational background. We have a lot of communications courses and it seemed extremely basic for me." The obvious conclusion of the researcher was that a transformational experience did not occur for Lori as a result of her participation in Leadership Cheyenne.

Summary

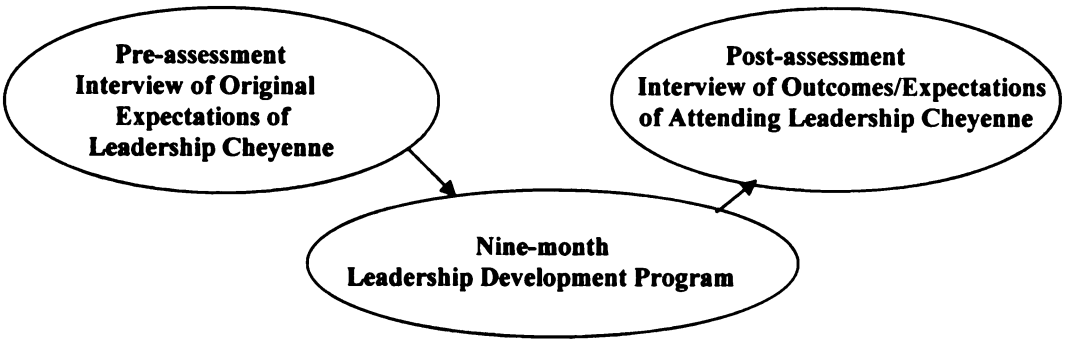
As this chapter reveals in the conversations with the nine interviewed participants of Leadership Cheyenne, not all individuals experience the same phenomenon even with the same exposure to an experience. The findings suggest that participants reflected on this leadership development program and integrated this experience with their previously held leadership meaning perspectives in a variety of ways. The disorienting dilemma encountered by the participants of this program focused on the exposure to thought-provoking dialogue, readings, presentations, and material. As interviews were conducted, themes developed and the researcher used these emerging themes to search for evidence of individual transformation from participation in the leadership development program. The next chapter will discuss the specific expectations, outcomes, and aspects of Leadership Cheyenne that influenced participants to think about their leadership perhaps in a new way, or at least, in a different way.

Chapter Six
Leadership Development as a Transformational Process
Findings of the Study—Part Two

Part two of the findings describes in detail the themes that emerged from the data. As the foundation for the research, one of the initial questions asked to all nine participants of the study was their expectation of the Leadership Cheyenne program at the onset. The researcher gained insight on the driving force behind each participant's thought process on what they hoped to encounter from this experience. In order to select appropriate participants for the study, the question of expectations was used as a screener, according to the criteria outlined in Chapter Three. Each of these nine participants highlighted his/her personal reflection before the program began about expectations. A similar statement from each of the nine participants during the first full-day session was presented in Chapter Four.

The responses regarding personal expectations of the twenty-six participants were categorized in three main themes: (1) Building Relationships and Community Connections; (2) Enhancement of Leadership Skills; and (3) Public Speaking and Confidence Building. In the post-assessment interview, the researcher framed the question in the following manner, "Now that the program has ended, were your expectations of Leadership Cheyenne met?" Collected responses in each category were examined to determine if there was a correlation to the original expectations and/or the direct outcomes as stated by the participants of the study. The researcher also searched for common themes in relationship to specific aspects of the leadership development program that may have suggested a change in participants' thinking regarding information that was obtained through the program. The specific aspects mentioned by participants of Leadership Cheyenne will be outlined later in this chapter.

Summary of Participant's Expectations



As the above diagram outlines, the researcher examined if participants' original expectations for attending Leadership Cheyenne were met. Following are the responses of the nine participants during the initial interview in September, along with the post-assessment outcomes regarding meeting the participants' original expectations stated in May.

Building Relationships and Community Connections

During the first full-day session, ten of the twenty-six participants indicated that building relationships with individuals within the program and having a better understanding of the community were integral reasons why they chose to attend Leadership Cheyenne. Some were new to the community and felt that the program could aid in the development of this connection. Of the nine participants of this study, five affirmed this as the primary reason for attending the program. They indicated a desire to learn more about the community, associate with people who could help them expand their ideas, and be better able to access community resources. As indicated in the literature review in Chapter Two and confirmed by the following participants, one of the major benefits of attending a leadership development program is meeting and building relationships with other participants (Schneider, 1987; Argyis, 1991; Conger, 1992; Cacioppe, 1998; Vicere and Fulmer, 1997).

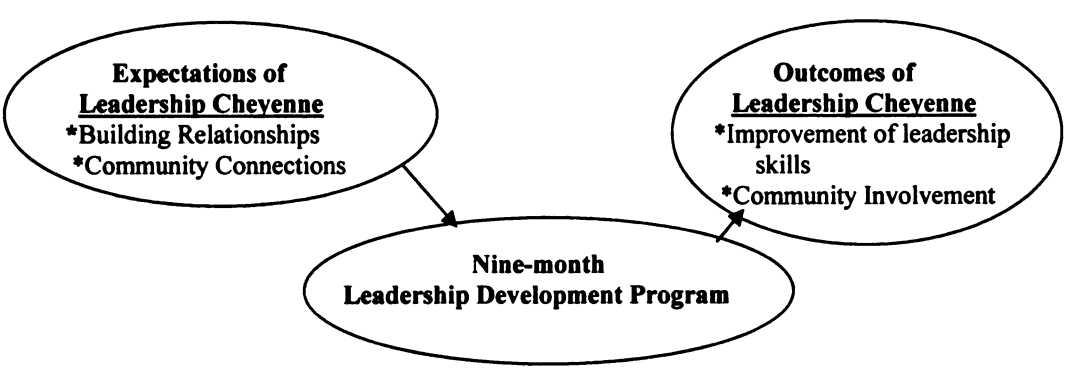
Zach's Expectations. Being new to the community, it was important for Zach to build relationships with community leaders. Because of his occupation in a local financial institution, he needed to build a network of professional people in order to be successful.

> Zach's Pre-Assessment Response: "From a professional standpoint, much of my job as a broker is who you know in this community. So I am looking to meet the key players in the local community. As far as what happens from there, who knows maybe I will sit on a board, but I really have not decided."

Zach affirmed that his expectations were met. However, what he also revealed from this post-assessment interview is that his leadership skills were also enhanced. This was not one of his original expectations that he had identified in September in the pre-assessment interview.

> Zach's Post-Assessment Response: "As far as meeting people, that expectation was met and what I was looking for. I am now in Rotary and they just hooked me into a community foundation. But as far as growing as a leader, that kind of came as an unexpected surprise, which was good because I really did not know everything that there was to know of being an effective leader. I was thinking along the lines this program could help me with business connections. I really wasn't focused on the leadership angle. I should have been since that was the name of the course, but I wasn't looking to improve my leadership skills." (001 – pages 1 and 2)

Summary of Zach's Expectations



This leadership development program reinforced for Zach that he is an effective leader to his team of eleven people. Through the presentations and information that was presented in this

program, he found that his leadership skills were enhanced and this was something he had not originally thought of before he enrolled in this program. This enhancement was an unexpected outcome for Zach but something that he considers as a "by-product for attending the Leadership Cheyenne program."

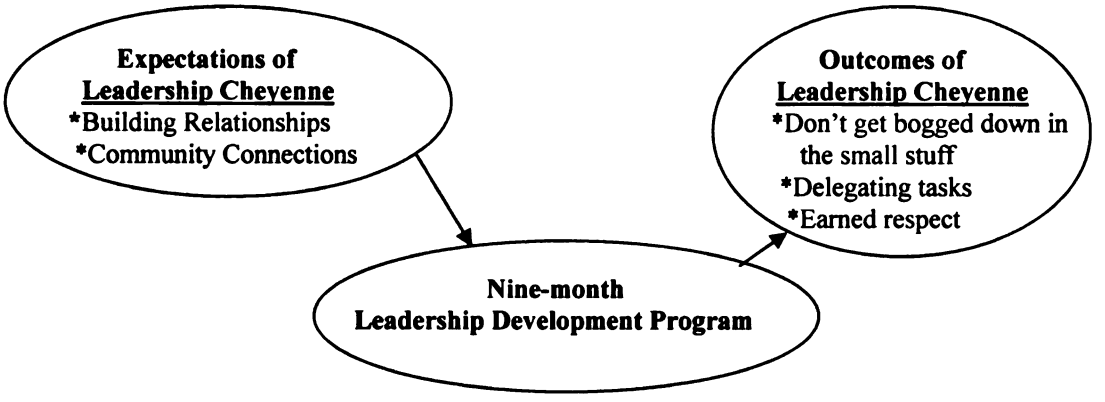
Ned's Expectations. Working for a family-owned business, Ned stated that his company is reliant on this community remaining vital and prosperous. Several individuals who work with Ned have been with the company for many years and as he described, "not so keen on change." He wanted to expand his connections within the community and learn from others in order to lead his organization more effectively in the future.

> Ned's Pre-Assessment Response: "It will be good to be with people that have bigger ideas and think a lot bigger because a lot of times you get bogged down. I don't like big change. But you have to change. So it refreshes you and gets you with people that think like you or they really would not want to be in this leadership program. I want to run into some better connections in the community, because it is in our company's best interest to have a vital community because this is our business. So those are the big reasons I signed up for it. And then hopefully, maybe the personal developments will help me out too. I think that just getting out from behind the desk and actually taking a look at what you are doing instead of coming in and getting my work done everyday makes me take a few minutes to look back about what I have learned and what you are applying and what you could be applying. I guess it is just like a way to recharge yourself."

Ned focused on what he felt were important attributes of being a leader. He described the impact the program had on him as "not getting bogged down in the paperwork" and implied that focusing on the people is important. He did not actually state if his expectations were met, but one of his major goals was to be around people with bigger ideas. Thus, it was difficult to measure whether his expectations were met, but his response would indicate that he was satisfied with the overall outcome of attending this program.

Ned's Post-Assessment Response: "But overall, I really enjoyed it. If nothing else, it helped with thinking about leadership and about what your role is as a leader. You know a lot of times I get bogged down in the every day piles of paper on my desk, and I think what this program has tried to teach us is that's not what is really important. So that is kind of what I have gotten out of it. I have enjoyed it." (004 – page 1)

Summary of Ned's Expectations



The leadership development program helped Ned to understand that an effective leader needs to earn the respect of those who work with him. Part of being an effective leader, he identified, "is not to get bogged down in the small stuff and be able to delegate tasks to others." As Ned stated, he is not "keen on change." However, in order to grow both personally and professionally, one has to be open to others' ideas and new ways of achieving the end result.

Lori's Expectations. Being an educator for many years, Lori wanted to learn from individuals outside of the educational walls. She felt that if she could learn from others in the community, she could take this information and share it with her colleagues. This was an integral reason for her participation in the leadership development program.

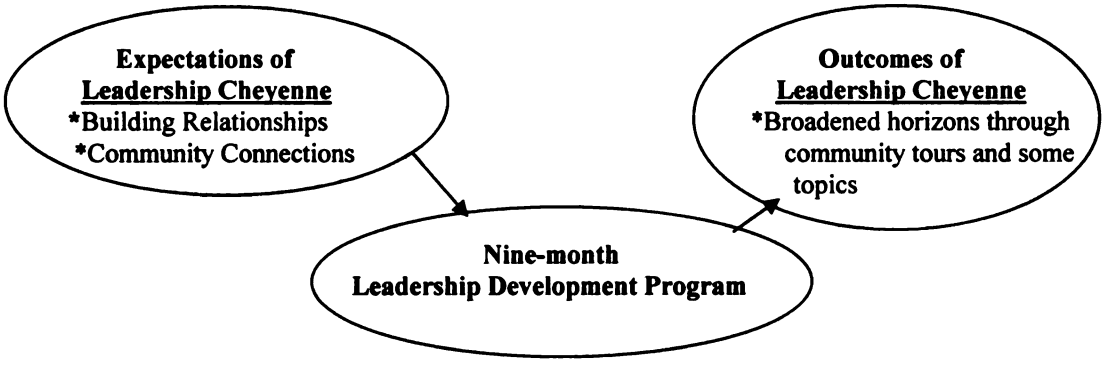
Lori's Pre-Assessment Response: "My interest for wanting to attend Leadership Cheyenne was I wanted to hear what is going on in the community so that when I am working with the local school districts I can be a voice and have a little different view on things and share others' perspectives. I do not necessarily want to change direction but maybe bring

> up questions and bring up issues that would have not surfaced if I was not part of this program. From just my own personal view, you can always learn, and the more you learn the better you will be in the end. So that is kind of why I want to be a part of it."

Lori's conversation regarding the program was different from the other participants. She felt that she did not build relationships due to the program structure. She expressed her disappointment, because she felt the program was too restrictive for informal conversations with others and, therefore, did not build relationships.

> Lori's Post-Assessment Response: "...if we had done more of the survival type exercises for an extended period of time, I think that I would have gotten much more out of the program. I would have been able to connect to others better. And I would have known what truly the issues are for people in their work because it would have come up. So in that sense, I was a little disappointed. But I did feel by doing some of the topics and travel, I definitely broadened my horizons." (009 – page 2)

Summary of Lori's Expectations



Through the leadership development program, Lori hoped to leave with the feeling that she knew other participants well enough to make phone calls in order to help them with their issues. The relationships that she expected to build with others in the program did not materialize for her. Her original expectations were not met, and therefore, she does not feel she can make those contacts throughout the community.

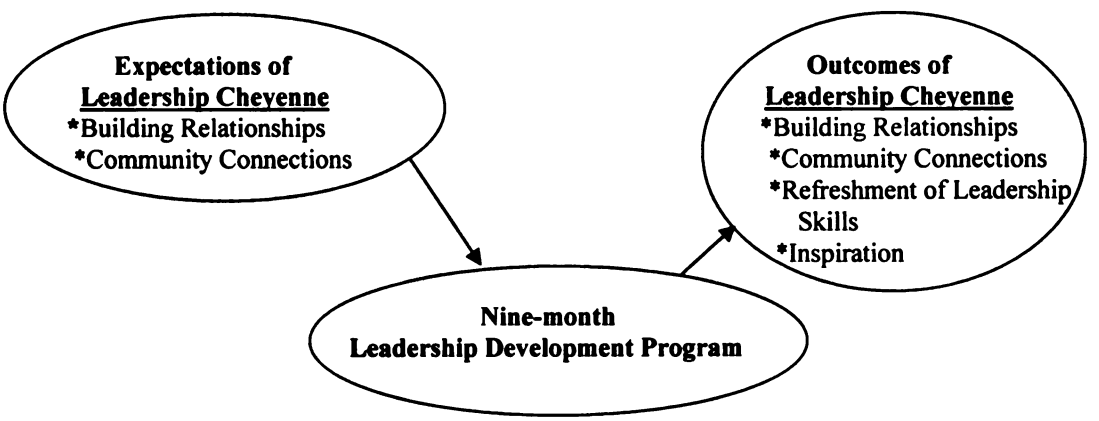
Karen's Expectations. Karen was new to this community and felt that this program would allow her the opportunity to be able to network with other professionals. She indicated that this program would aid in her development of working relationships that could help her be successful in her career.

> Karen's Pre-Assessment Response: "I received the brochure for Leadership Cheyenne in the mail, and I was hoping that my boss would recommend this course for me. Being new to the community, I thought this would be a perfect opportunity for me to learn more about the county and be able to network with individuals in order to do my job more efficiently."

Karen also stated that her expectations were met regarding the program. She was inspired by the program to develop a book club in her work community. This project was something that she has wanted to do for quite an extended period of time.

> Karen's Post-Assessment Response: "I can tell you that I have gotten everything out of the program that I had hoped to. My biggest one was to understand and know the community here in this county being that I am new. The best thing about the program has been that aspect. I have gotten to know different individuals from different agencies and different fields. I now know not just the participants in the Leadership Cheyenne course, but the panels that have come in. So I have been able to help people make connections because of that and that was one of my big reasons for wanting to take the class." (020 – page 1)

Summary of Karen's Expectations



Not only did Karen meet her original expectations of building relationships and forming community connections from attending the leadership development program, she also stated that the program inspired her to start a new program offering in her work community. A book club was something that she had forgotten about through the years but was brought back to the forefront of her mind and now she has taken the initial steps of forming this club. She felt that the program built many networking connections through the activities with the participants, along with exposure to individuals within the community through the panel discussions.

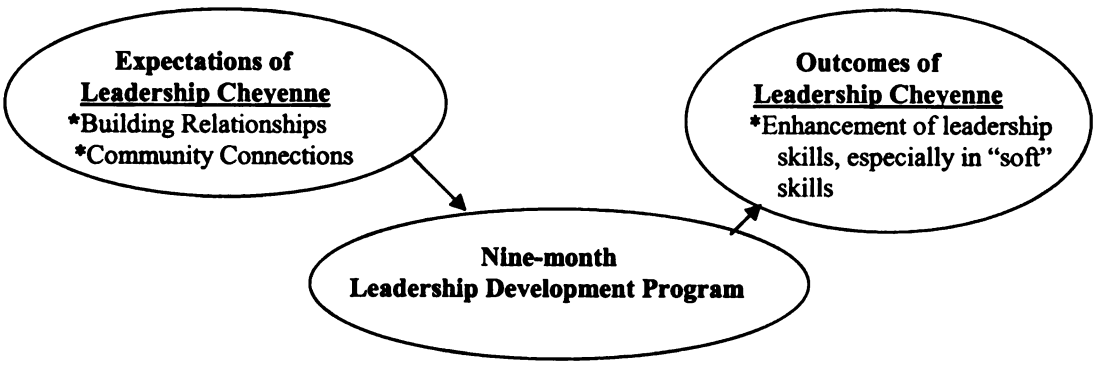
Sam's Expectations. Sam's manufacturing company had previous general managers who lived within the community. Since he was named general manager in the late nineties, that community connection was lost because of his desire for family reasons to not live in this community. He was interested in meeting the local leaders and building community recognition for his company.

> Sam's Pre-Assessment Response: "The reason I wanted to attend this program is to meet other people. Not being from this area, I need to build for selfish reasons, actually, recognition for my company. The best way to do that I think was for me to get out and meet people and understand what it is all about. Not being from this area and not being a native, that puts us (my company) at a disadvantage. So I am looking to meet the key players in the local community. As far as what happens from there, who knows maybe I will sit on a board, but I really have not decided."

Sam's original expectation, as he identified before the program began, was to build relationships because he was not from this community. During his reflection of the program, he did not seem to mention this particular expectation being met. He focused more on enhancing his leadership skills through reinforcement of his soft skills, which he already knew was his greatest opportunity for personal growth.

Sam's Post-Assessment Response: "What the program did was reinforced a lot of the other training I had. I look at it as a refresher. I think the themes are consistent with everything we have done. I mean you focus on core values, focusing on what are you doing to reinforce this, understanding and helping people understand what is important. How do you communicate that consistently and everyday in what you do? So that's my take on the leadership is what I focused on or what I got out it for the most part." (027 – page 1)

Summary of Sam's Expectations



Each time a session ended, Sam asked himself, "What did I get out of the program today?" He felt keeping this question at the forefront of his mind allowed him to reflect on behavioral changes he could control in his own leadership style. Sam believed an effective leader needs to constantly focus on the fact that leaders need to keep trying different things to motivate their employees. He stated that you have to consistently change what you are doing, because if it worked for a while, it then just gets to be routine and people become bored. This program helped him focus on his leadership soft skills by keeping his focus on the "people."

Of the five participants who suggested during the pre-interview conversation that building relationships and community connections were their primary reasons for attending the Leadership Cheyenne program, the post-assessment interview found that only two participants (Zach and Karen) actually stated that their expectations were met. Two of the five participants (Ned and Sam) did not state this exact theme, but both seemed satisfied with

the results of attending the leadership development program for different reasons. Lori expressed her disappointment with the program and indicated that it did not meet her original expectations.

Enhancement of Leadership Skills

Twelve of the twenty-six participants indicated during the first full-day session of the program that enhancing their leadership skills was the main reason they chose to attend Leadership Cheyenne. The participants wanted to learn more about themselves and how their leadership roles in their organization related to a broader vision. They wanted to hone their existing skills and continually learn. Of the nine participants interviewed for this study, three stated that the enhancement of their leadership skills was the primary reason for attending this program.

Charles's Expectations. Even though Charles had a lot of leadership experience in his background, this was the first position that he held where he had to report to a board of directors. He expressed his anxiety of facilitating board meetings and being able to lead a board. He felt that this leadership development program would assist him in his leadership skills to facilitate these meetings in a more effective and efficient manner.

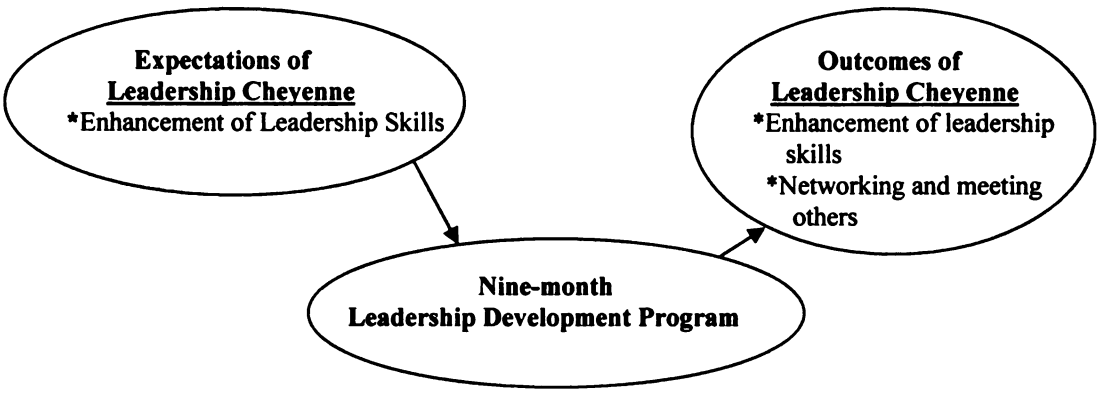
> Charles's Pre-Assessment Response: "I have to conduct board meetings for the convention and visitor bureau. When I started the position, it was something that I expressed to my boss that I was a little concerned about because I don't have, I mean, I facilitated meetings through my previous employer, but never really I guess in the capacity of the convention and visitor bureau. I've gone to some smaller seminars and that sort of thing that my boss signed me up for on board leadership and that sort of thing. So I kind of worked a little bit with that, but it was definitely a concern, so I think that my boss saw this was an opportunity that I could learn from. A big thing was contact with the community. I feel that I have met so many people, and it is hard to match up faces to names. Also, I really wanted to gauge what

other people's leadership styles are and want to see how people handle different things and learn from their ideas about leadership."

Charles stated that the program lived up to what he expected. He also indicated that he networked with other people in the program.

> Charles's Post-Assessment Response: "I think in a lot of aspects the program lived up to what I had expected it to be. There was a lot of sitting back and reflecting on other people within the group and their leadership, which I kind of wanted to meet other people." (006 – page 1)

Summary of Charles's Expectations



The pre-assessment interview with Charles indicated that he was uncomfortable with facilitating board meetings because this was a new experience for him. He hoped to enhance his leadership skills in order to lead a group of professionals effectively. He stated that this expectation of enhancing his leadership skills was met, along with networking and meeting others. These outcomes were a direct result of his participation in this leadership development program.

George's Expectations. George was interested in further development of his leadership skills in order to be a more effective member of his team. He knew that he could learn new ways of leading from this program. George was anxious to learn from others so

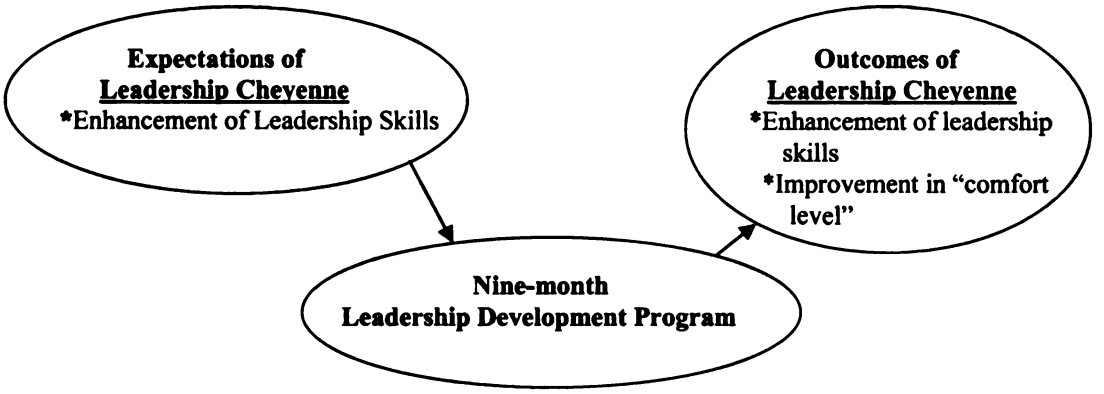
that he would be more successful in working with his colleagues within his organization. One dilemma George stated was that he "rolled up his sleeves" perhaps too much and was too accessible to his employees.

> George's Pre-Assessment Response: "Getting up in front of crowds is probably something I don't really like to do, but I know that I can do it. I think that my boss wants to build a better management team, and he chose myself and another employee that he thinks are in the position that we are and wants us to 'tune up' our leadership skills. I think that he thinks we have the potential to make better decisions. I really want to learn what other people have done. I want to know what decisions are made at the hospital and see those broad views of management throughout the community. I am looking forward to seeing what other people see. I need to know how to manipulate and make those decisions to make a difference and meet the goals. I hope that I learn some more skills here and stop the guilt feelings when I don't get done the things that I should have or could have in a day's work. I am going to learn this from the leadership course and be more proactive about this and change my ideas of how I think."

George affirmed that he did feel more comfortable after attending this program. He spoke about the realistic approach of the class as something that stuck out in his mind. The reaffirmation that individuals need to be involved in the community was also something that he gained from this experience.

> George's Post-Assessment Response: "One of my main goals was to make myself feel a little more comfortable. I'm not going to lie to you and say that I am going to be perfectly comfortable all the time, but I don't think anyone can say that. There are situations where people are yelling and screaming and difficult situations where you are never going to feel comfortable. So that is one of the most important things that I have covered in this whole course – and that was part of it I just wanted the community involvement. I wanted the acceptance to maybe not conquer the fear but learn why the fear exists. You can make yourself that much better." (026 – page 2)

Summary of George's Expectations



George described the leadership development experience as being more fun than what he originally had thought. The passion of the people and the reality of the program made it more realistic. He felt that the impact of the program gave him a broader understanding of his own leadership and comfort with his style and abilities as a leader within his organization.

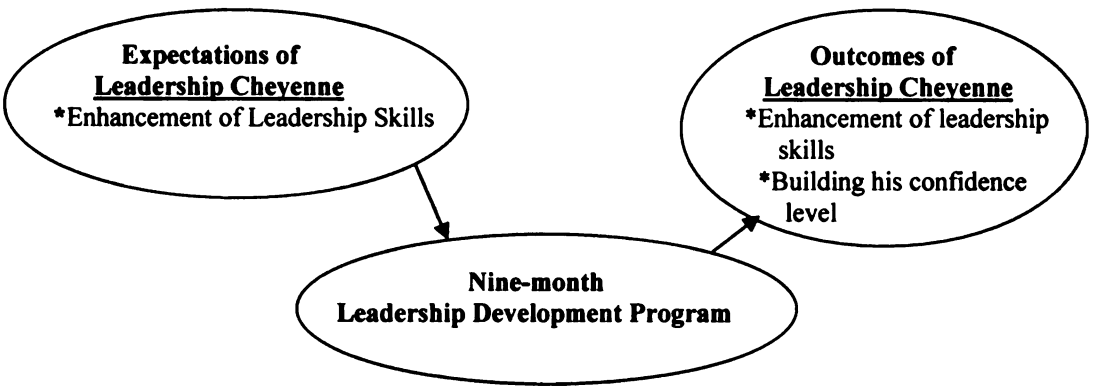
Troy's Expectations. Troy felt that he needed to enhance his leadership skills in order to be prepared for a promotion within his company. He expressed that his boss wanted upward mobility in his career and needed to prepare someone for his position.

> Troy's Pre-Assessment Response: "My boss is a mover and a shaker, and I am sure that he wants to be vice president someday. And in order for him to move up, he needs to be able to move somebody else up. Now he has a couple of good candidates here, and I realize that I am probably one of them. So I think that is one reason he chose me to attend this program. The other is that even though you might be the best leader and manager in the world, there is always more to learn. So that is why he chose me."

Troy's expectation of enhancing his leadership skills was met as he indicated, in his words, "The program was more than he expected." He also explained how the program built his confidence in standing up in front of people.

Troy's Post-Assessment Response: "I got way more out of this program than what I expected. I'm a green. I want to know about everything before I get there, and I didn't and that was not helpful. (028 – page 6) I did feel more comfortable. I got that out of the course. I think I do feel a little more confident standing up in front of people although to be honest I still don't like it." (028 – page 2)

Summary of Troy's Expectations



Troy admitted that this program has built his confidence level. He stated that, "In the past in classroom settings, I have been one of those who, unless called upon, really didn't speak out too much. This class I might have spoken out too much." Troy's desire to improve his comfort level of speaking in front of others was a priority for him. This indicated to the researcher that the program allowed Troy to be more comfortable in this classroom setting and did not allow his introverted personality to control his voice.

Of the three participants who outlined during the pre-assessment interviews that enhancing leadership skills was their main reason for attending the Leadership Cheyenne program, the post-assessment interview indicated that all three participants (Charles, George, and Troy) met this original expectation. They were much more expressive with the one-on-one interview regarding this expectation compared to the brief response each verbalized in front of the total group of program participants. Admitting that one has much to learn can be

less threatening when telling one individual your story. All three of these participants had many years of leadership experience and were willing to admit during the interview that they wanted to learn more about themselves in order to lead more effectively in their current positions. This type of response correlated with the research conducted by Senge (1990) and Vicere and Fulmer (1997) as outlined in Chapter Two regarding the desire of participants in a leadership development program to enhance their leadership skills as a primary reason for attending.

Public Speaking and Confidence Building

Four of the twenty-six participants indicated during the first full-day session of the program that feeling more comfortable speaking in public and building their confidence level were the key reasons they chose to attend Leadership Cheyenne. The participants discussed the fear and challenge of talking with individuals face-to-face and in front of groups. This anxiety pushed them out of their comfort zone. Of the nine participants interviewed for this study, one indicated that this was the primary reason for him to attend this program.

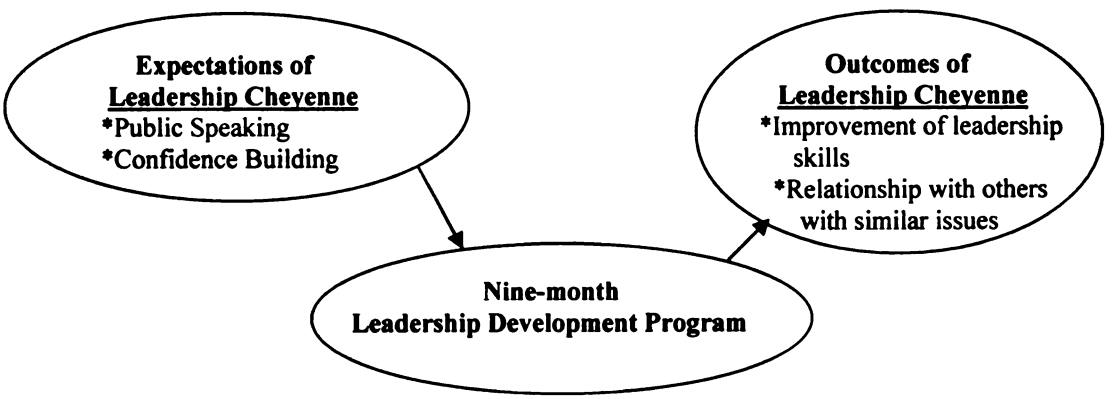
Fred's Expectations. Fred had a desire to increase his confidence level in speaking and meeting individuals face-to-face, along with speaking in public. He no longer wanted this fear to take away his control of his personality.

> Fred's Pre-Assessment Response: "One of my colleagues attended last year, and my boss wanted me to go this year. I also want to learn more about making the right decisions or perhaps feeling more comfortable that I am making the right decisions. A large part of my day is spent on the phone, and I want to be more comfortable dealing with people face-to-face. I would like to be active on community boards, but I'm not ready to be on city council or anything like that."

Fred's main expectation was to build more confidence in his dealings with people face-to-face. During the post-assessment interview, he focused more on improvement of his leadership skills and did not specifically detail his original expectation being met. Since this was the only participant interviewed who highlighted public speaking and confidence building as the expectation, Fred did not necessarily state that he overcame this challenge through the program. However, based on the researcher's observations and informal dialogue with the participant, this fear was not something that was going to totally disappear in nine months. However, the leadership development program helped start the process of feeling more comfortable and building his confidence. Continuation of improving public speaking skills and talking face-to-face with others will be something that Fred will continue to learn and practice to fully overcome this fear.

> Fred's Post-Assessment Response: "I kind of had an idea what to expect, but it was all through the voice of one guy (Fred Pryor Seminars). And with this program, you got the voice of several people. No leadership experience is the same; every one is different and it is kind of nice to hear people have the same leadership issues that you may have. They have the concerns and same fears, and share how they have dealt with it. And when you get into the panels, there are some people on there who basically come out and say there are a lot of people who don't like me. I never want to think that any one doesn't like me, but I understand when maybe an employee doesn't agree with me and how to handle that a little better." (025 – page 1)

Summary of Fred's Expectations



Even though he had attended numerous one-day management seminars throughout his career, building confidence to be able to speak in front of individuals was a major expectation for Fred. This difficulty was becoming greater instead of getting better. He explained, "The speech—other than scare the 'hell' out of me.....it...I know...you see I never used to have a problem talking in front of people. I used to do it all the time and again for whatever reason the older I got the more I started to change. And I am just terrified...and I am sure I am not the only one."

Summarized Findings of the Three Original Expectations

The three themes of *building relationships and community connections*, *enhancement of leadership skills*, and *public speaking and confidence building* were integral reasons that participants identified as their expectations for attending Leadership Cheyenne. As Conger (1992) stated in his research, one of the factors to consider when engaging employees in a leadership development program is that the encouragement and development of leadership skills rest with the individual's own motivation and talent and the receptiveness of his/her organization to support and coach such skills. It is evident through the findings that these nine participants were clear about what they expected to gain from attending this program, and in some cases, also spoke about why they were chosen by their supervisors to attend Leadership Cheyenne. The findings regarding participants' expectations affirmed that participants were motivated to attend this leadership development program and in all cases had the support of their organizations.

The next phase of the research was to report the aspects of the program, which influenced participants' thinking and outlined by the participants in the post-assessment interviews. The reporting of what particular aspects of the leadership development program influenced the meaning perspectives of the participants needed to be examined because it provided the channel to answer the research questions.

Specific Program Aspects of Leadership Cheyenne

As the post-assessment interviews were conducted, it was evident to the researcher that several key components of the Leadership Cheyenne program had impacted the thinking of participants in a variety of ways. The second phase of this research study was to answer one of the research questions, *"To what extent did the participants attribute this change in their meaning perspectives to the leadership development program?"* The participants verbalized experiences that led the researcher to believe that certain aspects of the program played an integral role in changing their meaning perspectives regarding what constitutes good leadership.

What follows in this next section are the experiences shared through the voices of the participants that surfaced regarding the leadership development program experience. Participants identified the following aspects of the program as being influential in their thinking on leadership: *True Colors* personality assessment, Presentations, Panel Discussions, and Group Activities. These specific aspects of the program emerged as common themes that led the researcher to believe that these program components triggered a reflective process by the participants that may have led to individual transformation of their meaning perspectives.

True Colors Personality Assessment

During the first meeting of the program, the participants were introduced to an assessment of their own personality by using *True Colors*. This personality assessment organized the participants in four major color areas: blue, green, gold, and orange. Each of the colors represented a different personality type. Even though all people have all of these traits as part of our personalities, individuals seem to have dominant personality traits that surface through personal and professional relationships. The personality assessment provided insight to the participants on perhaps why they respond to others within their organizations the way they do. It was also a useful tool to explain to all participants how to be able to understand different personality types within their team. Several participants talked about the *True Colors* personality assessment in the post-assessment interviews. They formed different frames of reference by understanding how people process information. The exercise was intended to identify individuals in the program who thought about information in the same way and those who differed in their thought process.

Ned described the impact the *True Colors* assessment had on his leadership by how it influenced his thinking regarding how he deals with change. As Ned reflected on the personality assessment, it seemed to confirm in his mind why certain people behave the way they do.

> "DB: So when you think about people skills and how to deal with people, what activities helped you see that in the leadership program?
>
> Definitely the colors. I had never done the colors. But after that, I came back here and did that with a couple people here. They turned out to be what I thought they would be. So that kind of made them look at themselves as a color, and it let me know either I was on the right track with this person or I wasn't.

DB: And doesn't that help just understanding what color a person is? What was your color?

I am gold. Yes, because a lot of times I think I am open to change and that I am a person who puts change in the forefront and in all reality maybe I am not. It got me thinking about my own self. I have a quote on my computer here that says—Aim for excellence not perfection. A lot of times, the only right way is my way and so that exercise definitely got me thinking about there is more than one way to skin a cat. That is one thing that I've tried to work on every day is just making sure that the product or the end result is what we all want, not necessarily how we got there." (004 – page 5)

Lori talked about validating her color of blue in her personality. She reflected on a previous supervisor she had in her career and witnessed the personal struggle some people have with the emotional piece of their personality. This activity helped her understand her empathy towards individuals and the blue that surfaces.

"I referred to that even when I talked about my former boss about that social piece that he sometimes struggled with. I think I've seen it with some other community members lately. They have all the other pieces, but they don't have that emotional piece to pick up on the crowd and how to change. So I have found that piece something I have taken and used as an observation just to sit back, and especially, people that I think are struggling I try to think okay now if they are to put that into play how would they respond differently in this situation then how they did respond. I tried to think of it myself. It also helped me personally justify some blue that I tend to have that is hard in a leadership role to exhibit. You know that caring and nurturing. You always have to keep a little distance, and it kind of validates that need for the blue to be there." (009 – page 8)

Karen also confirmed that the personality assessment aids in assigning the right roles to individuals. She felt that knowing a person's color allows for a different dialogue among team members.

"It helps people understand that you can be leader. I know that we all know some really good leaders, but they are all different colors. It is interesting to know how to work with those individuals. When you know what someone is, it is easier to make sure that you're assigning them the right roles. It helps you to know how to work with them and not be so frustrated." (020 – page 5)

Fred talked about his personality color in affirming why perhaps he has changed over the years. He reflected on this assessment of himself and used this exercise as a tool to validate this movement of color change.

> "I can see the blue moving up. I can see the older I get I can see the blue moving up. Because in the last year, I have developed this caring thing that really doesn't drive me nuts, but it's unusual for me. I can see something on TV or somebody crying, and I start crying. I'm like where did this come from and what is this. I have no idea what that is." (025 – page 4)

For Troy the *True Colors* assessment reassured him that there were people in the group who had his same personality type. This exercise indicated for him that others in the group would think like he does. Because this exercise was completed at the beginning of the program, he felt comfort in this assessment.

> "We had a lot of greens and just knowing who your comrades are and the ones that you have to talk to a little differently, possibly not down too necessarily, but differently to understand them. Obviously, blues and golds look at things differently than the greens do. So I found that more beneficial then maybe some got out of it, because I pick things apart." (028 – page 5)

What seemed to be evident throughout the conversations with the participants was the fact that this exercise helped individuals understand themselves. The participants also used this analysis to help them better appreciate others who were in the group or in their working environments. The personality assessment allowed them to have background information on how others process information and was a helpful tool to assist them in their everyday life.

> "It was neat to be in the class with people who look at the world basically the same as I do even though the color groups are different—intermixing with fellow people – young, old, women, male, female. Because I don't care if you are purple, red, black, green, female, male, if you can do the job and you have my respect and vice versa, that is the team. I don't care handicap doesn't matter to me. And it seemed to be that was the way other folks were in the class—good people, down to earth, and willing to jump in when

needed. I do want to try to keep in touch with these people and see where we go from there." (028 – pages 11 and 12)

Summary of Personality Assessment. This personality assessment was a topic of dialogue that surfaced at each session by the participants during the nine-month program. The participants utilized this knowledge as they worked in small groups and prefaced some of their statements by saying such thing as, "Because I am a green, I want to study the information more carefully before I give my opinion. The gold in me indicates that we need to be organized and more structured before we proceed. Because I'm orange, let's just jump in and get the work done and figure it all out later. The blue in me wants everyone to have a voice in the decision, because I want to make sure we are all comfortable with the results." This *True Color* personality assessment seemed to set the stage for each meeting as groups would form. The facilitator asked that each small group have a personality color mixture of all four represented. Of the twenty-six participants in this particular Leadership Cheyenne program, four were blue, six were orange, six were green, and ten were gold.

Presentations

Who Moved My Cheese? During the nine-month experience the participants heard a variety of presentations regarding different aspects of leadership. One of the speakers focused on organizational change and how one leads an organization through a constantly changing environment in order to stay competitive. Fred highlighted his thoughts about this presentation. His reflection on this topic led him to think differently about his role within his organization and delegating work to individuals who had perhaps better skills to handle the task.

"I still believe the same way, especially when they reaffirmed, that you lead by example. And again hearing a lot of the other people and their issues that they came up with helps me try to lead by the same example. It did make me feel more comfortable being able to have better people working with me and to be more comfortable to let them do what they want to do. I don't know maybe in the past I probably had a hard time maybe restricting people from doing specific things. I think now I am more open to people doing more of what I do. I am not fearful of losing my job or anything like that, and I just think I was kind of holding back and for some reason not letting the people do it. But I think hiring the best people to work with you is a good idea.

DB: What made you change? Can you think of something that made you change the way you felt before about holding it in and not delegating it off?

For some reason, I still go back the book and movie, *Who Moved My Cheese?* I bought the book and it came in the day after the class for some odd reason it took two weeks to get it so I didn't get a chance to read it until after I had seen the movie. It was true. I mean you just got to rely on a lot of other people and if you stay in your old ways and your grooves, they are going to go past you. You need to grow together instead of growing individually or trying to grow individually and being stagnate." (025 – page 7)

The dialogue that is used by Fred led the researcher to believe that this presentation on change influenced his thinking as he reflected on his leadership style and how, perhaps, he has restricted others who work with him. He understood that you need to allow the people to grow. However, he did not underestimate the need to grow together as a team not just individually in order to move a team forward.

The next example also highlights another presentation on servant leadership that influenced several participants' thinking on their own meaning perspectives. Participants reflected on the information that was presented in this presentation as an aspect of the program that affirmed some of their original thinking of their own meaning perspectives about what constitutes good leadership.

Servant Leadership. At one of the sessions, a speaker discussed the attributes of servant leadership. Group discussion took place regarding this leadership style. Several of

the participants spoke about that particular session as one that stood out during the post-assessment interviews as they thought about what constitutes good leadership and their frames of reference. The servant leadership presentation influenced these strongly-held meaning perspectives of participants.

Zach described the information presented regarding servant leadership as refreshing. He reaffirmed his original thoughts regarding leadership but indicated that the attributes of servant leadership are added to his meaning perspective after this presentation.

> "The one thing though I picked up on was the whole angle of servant leadership. That was a concept that I hadn't really thought about. But you know now that I am aware of it, I've become a lot more focused on serving my team as opposed to just trying to bark at them. Yes, the only thing that has changed about it is the whole aspect of servant leadership was something that I didn't anticipate. I always thought integrity and hard work were two of the big ones and empowering others and helping people believe in themselves. I always knew those were the big three, but the whole servant thing was a refreshing addition to them." (001 – page 6)

Charles utilized the presentation information on servant leadership as a foundation for building a broader base to his original framework about what constitutes good leadership. He reflected how this information confirmed his thoughts towards working with others.

> "I think it was throughout the course the understanding of servant leaders as opposed to people who take charge whether people like it or not. I think that puts it into perspective a little bit to see the importance of having people around you that want to help support you and not being the dominant force of getting things done. So I think this course has shown me the different things you can do to try to include others and make sure that they feel as much or more part of the initiative as the leader." (006 – page 4)

Another participant reflected on the servant leadership presentation on the respect that can be earned by exhibiting this type of leadership style. He described servant leadership as "rolling up your sleeves and jumping up and doing stuff or at least offering." The

presentation influenced George in clarifying some original thoughts he had regarding his leadership.

> "You know the servant leader comes out. I never heard it described that way as a leadership skill or the respect you earn for that. I see some the servant leader qualities in myself. I am trying to bring more of those out. I think the respect level whether it be your co-worker or your fire fighter beside you – you build a stronger relationship by moving to that level of leader – whether you consider yourself a leader or not. You're not if you have to throw your authority around to get things done. That's short term it will resolve the issue, but long term I think you will lose respect. You will lose confidence of your co-workers. Servant leader is rolling up your sleeves and jumping up and doing stuff or at least offering. So I think it has made me more comfortable about clarifying things. I think that I had a lot of the skills, but it's nice to see them right in front of you." (026 – page 6)

This presentation impacted the thinking of personal meaning perspectives of these three participants. It helped them understand and reaffirm their own leadership styles when dealing with others. The presentation brought to the forefront for these participants that the qualities of servant leadership were attributes necessary to lead effectively. The conversation that emerged from this presentation was one of confidence building regarding possessing these attributes in their leadership styles.

Another presentation that impacted participants' thinking was on mission and vision of an organization. The dialogue regarding this presentation focused on keeping the message simple. It allowed for at least two participants to critically view their organization's mission.

Mission and Vision. A couple of the participants in the post-assessment interviews focused on the presentation about mission and vision statements. George and Sam discussed the impact that this presentation had on their own thinking on this topic. The message of this presentation was elementary—do not over-complicate what you're trying to convey—keep it simple. Whether you are creating a new mission statement or revisiting an old one, both

indicated that organizations need to keep in mind that individuals will remember statements that are simplistic but meaningful.

> "The guy who talked about mission statements, and he got to the simplistic mission statement of Toyota—BEAT GM. Talk about putting it right down to the bear minimum and not going through these paragraphs and paragraphs of language. What that made me think of is what do we want to accomplish (period). All of the other things are going to fall into place if you set your goal and you keep it simple. I mean I believe in today's businesses we have a tendency to over-complicate things too much." (026 – page 3)

> "Well, I think it was something in the plan, and the leadership program helped me understand what I wanted to accomplish from it. A lot of times it (the mission statement) is a lot of words on paper. But now the way I look at it is I'm looking at it from a third party or every day as we are going to understand what is important to us." (027 – page 2)

Both of these participants focused their thoughts on understanding what is really important to an organization and utilizing that as the basis for setting goals that are important to their team and the entire organization. The information presented in this session influenced these two participants to reflect on their own mission statements. They wondered, "Is it important to us? Does every employee understand the goal? Is it simple?" These questions were raised by this presentation. Understanding your organization's mission is an important aspect in keeping leadership focused.

Summary of Presentations. This aspect of the leadership development program allowed for reflective thinking by the participants as was noted by the interviewed participants. These presentations were memorable to the participants in various ways as was outlined in the transcripts. However, the common theme among these presentations was the integration of previously held meaning perspectives of participants and the influence this presented information had on participants' thinking. In the conversations with the researcher, the participants had no hesitation remembering the presentations that they felt were

meaningful. This indicated to the researcher that individuals are influenced by different information. As one presentation may have been memorable to one participant, another participant would not even mention it to the researcher. This confirmed for the researcher that meaning perspectives are impacted by various "triggers" because of the participants' frames of reference from which they draw.

Panel Discussions

As outlined in the Chapter Three, there were several panel discussions throughout the nine-month program that focused on different topics and themes. During the post-assessment interviews several of the participants indicated that certain discussions or individuals on these panels influenced their thinking regarding leadership concepts and provided thought-provoking dialogue. Because the panelists, for the most part, were local individuals, the participants were introduced to these local experts in a more informal setting. This informal environment made a more relaxed atmosphere, which invited a more spontaneous dialogue between the panelists and the leadership participants.

Zach and Karen were intrigued by the panel of workforce development professionals. During this particular presentation, the panelists highlighted aspects of their work that made these two participants think about their roles differently. The common theme that both participants spoke about was how "kids" need to be more aware of the complex and changing world. Are we preparing our young children to compete?

> "The workforce development panel was eye-opening when the business leaders were there and the one fellow that ran a local business talked about how global the workforce has gotten. He had mentioned that he was actually on-line hiring the services of a Russian engineer. I was impressed, shocked, and amazed by it all. Then I thought that my kids need to start learning tools to deal with international things like learning a foreign language and that kind

of thing. So it was a side of business that I had not been exposed to my world. But it was really enlightening." (001 – page 2)

"The workforce development was my favorite panel discussion. They were upfront. They didn't try to be politically correct. They just said what exactly was going on in the world. I went back and wrote a really nice presentation after that, and it was because of what the gentleman had said that day. I went back and had a leader training the next day and asked, 'Are we trying to prepare kids?' We are saying that we are preparing kids for a complex and changing world. Are we really doing a good job? I was sitting at a presentation just the other day and he pointed out x, y, and z. Are we meeting that need? We say that we are teaching responsibility and time management, but we need to make sure we are doing that to give our kids the advantage." (020 – page 4)

Another panel that influenced George was made up of local legal and law enforcement professionals. His conversation with the researcher focused on being passionate in one's work. The theme of passion made him reflect on his own work and how passionate one has to be towards one's work no matter what career one chooses.

"From the panels, the defense lawyer to the prosecuting attorney, like I said that is real world. The prosecutor being so passionate about going to convict these people and as I saw her finger point—you scum bag. The passion of these people—the dedication and the passion is phenomenal. It's nice to see that whether it be business or government, the hospital doing fundraising, it was so nice to see that in people. It made me a little bit more passionate about our furniture, and our goals and things along those lines." (026 – page 3)

The government panel was an eye-opening experience for Zach about the reality of politics. He spoke about the impact that the government officials panel had on his thinking as a "dose of reality."

"I guess it was a dose of reality of how the real world works. That township thing really had, I mean, I don't want to say negative because it wasn't all negative, but it had an impact on me to realize that there are people that just haven't gotten with the new millennium and gotten into the whole helping out your fellow mankind. How there are people still kind of drawing a line in the sand saying, 'this is my ground don't cross it.' I just am amazed at that. But I probably understand it on the same hand. They have done their own

thing forever, now why is it time for them to play nice in the sandbox. You know, I have an older brother like that." (001 – page 8)

Summary of Panel Discussions. As participants reflected on their own learning, it was evident during the interviews that several of the panelists left the participants with some thought-provoking questions and reflections in their own thinking. All of the information that was presented by the panels focused on the reality of one's work. The participants, through their own words, seemed to internalize this information and think about their work and personal lives differently. All used the presented information and compared it to their own personal situations. They utilized language that referenced a change in their thinking. The meaning that the participants made from this particular aspect of the program led the researcher to believe that transformation of originally held meaning perspectives took place.

Group Activities

Interactive group activities were introduced throughout the program as a way for participants to network with one another through fun, real-world exercises. The participants worked in small groups during these activities and had the opportunity to converse within their groups more on a social level. The activities focused on learning different ways of incorporating leadership within the group's work. The participants highlighted varying aspects of these activities during the post-assessment interviews that influenced their thinking on leadership.

Even though the group activities were based on some basic concepts, some of the participants seemed to focus on these exercises in terms of how they impacted them. Several participants talked about their experiences in the group activities and how they learned from the group work.

> "I liked the group activities. I don't know it seems like a lot of things we were going over was a lot of basic common sense, but we are putting it in a more formal format." (004 – page 4)

The common sense approach helped Ned understand the basic concepts of leadership. Through group activities, he learned how one individual team members' participation (or lack of participation) can influence the outcome of the entire team.

> "Obviously the first day I think was really one of the key activities by going to the ropes course. Because it was interesting to see in each different task that we were assigned as a group to watch people kind of emerge as leaders. Another was when we did the egg toss. I initially thought, 'what does this have to do leadership and why are we doing this?' But it was interesting to see the different people and the ideas that people had. Everything from wrapping the egg to cushion around it—it was different ideas but interesting." (006 – page 1)

As is apparent from Charles's statement above, he felt that, "it wasn't always the same person stepping forward to solve the problem." Depending on the activity, different people emerged as the leader of the group. This insight confirmed for him that teams need to have a variety of people to solve varying problems and who approach situations in a different way.

> "Well, I think for me, and some learn differently, the exercises—the fun exercises that people obviously commit too. They are learning from those exercises. The ropes course – even though I've done it three times, I learned something different every time. That was a lot of fun. The arctic rescue was a lot of fun. So I think the exercises were good to do." (028 – page 3)

Troy admitted that when you make learning fun, as was evident in the group activities, individuals learn and they do not even realize it. The enjoyment of the activities was something that he stated many times to the researcher during the post-assessment interview as having an impact on his thinking about what constitutes good leadership.

> "I did like *Who Moved My Cheese?* That was pretty good and the last one we did, the lost in the sub arctic, was pretty good. I guess some of things that I enjoyed most about the course are the real world examples. It is building a

> spaceship with four real people out of straws and duct tape. Everyone is involved, and they are passionate about it." (026 – page 4)

The real world examples were specific aspects of the program that George enjoyed the most of the leadership development program. He felt that if all individuals get involved with the group activities and enjoy the camaraderie, the end result is that more is learned from the experience.

Two participants focused on the ropes course that was introduced during the first session. Fred felt that this was a great ice breaker to kickoff the program. Promotion of teamwork and the ability to get to know people were two of his main thoughts regarding the ropes course.

> "I guess the one that sticks out most to me is the ropes course. Because when we had the group of us together, a lot of us ran into situations that we had not seen before and instead of just jumping in and doing we took a poll of everyone in the group to find out what they thought was the best way. A lot of times it took a mixture of everybody's opinion on how to get through the course and how to actually complete it the proper way.
>
> DB: How comfortable were you during that ropes course?
>
> I was fine. It was actually an ice breaker. It was really neat that it was in the beginning of the year. I had my arms wrapped around people I didn't even know." (025 – page 3)

George mentioned the ropes course as something he had participated in before. Because of this, he felt handicapped during this session. He related his experience with the ropes course to how people need to work together.

> "The YMCA camp when we tried to get 20 people on the tarp and turn it over. You just see how people work together and how they react. It's nice seeing how other managers, supervisors, and leaders react to certain situations. It was hard to bite my tongue when I was deaf and mute, because I couldn't do anything because I had already been through it." (026 – page 4)

The road rally experience was also highlighted as a high point for Fred. Working together as a team also was important during this activity.

> "I thought the road rally was really neat. I was wondering what we were doing. Where should we go first? But when we got into the car, we all said this is where we are going. Then we all agreed on the second choice, and we were all wrong. So we were the last ones done. But if you are going to survive together, you are going to fail together. We all made a group decision together. That is what we are going to do, and we did it. We failed at it and then turned right around and got the right thing." (025 – page 9)

Another group activity highlighted by Sam was the survival exercise that was completed in small groups. Decision-making and how individuals need to work together to accomplish the goal were the focal points of his conversation with the researcher.

> "The last one, the arctic one, I thought was good. It's interesting, because what it does require you to interact with the group and somehow you have to influence their decisions. If you made a decision at the beginning that was wrong, then you are going to fail miserable overall on the exam. So that tells you something about when you are working on a project, that you better make sure that you have some checks and balances in place." (027 – page 3)

Summary of Group Activities. The common theme that emerged from the post-assessment interviews regarding group activities was that they were centered on real-life concepts. The small group exercises allowed individuals to get to know a variety of participants. However, the theme in all of these group activities highlighted by the participants was working together toward a common goal. Participants discussed the activities by using the term "teamwork" in their dialogue. They related the group activities to "real work life" examples where people need to work together in order to accomplish the goal through "hands on" learning. Cacioppe (1998) also noted in his research that an integral aspect of a leadership development program should be centered on "hands on" learning through "real life" situations, which was affirmed in this research study.

The last section of the chapter will focus on two additional themes that influenced participants' thinking regarding their original meaning perspectives about what constitutes good leadership. From the post-assessment interview, two supplementary themes emerged as a direct result from attending Leadership Cheyenne. *Community connectiveness* and *learning from others* in the program were also found to be influential in the reflective process by the participants. These two themes were not specific aspects of the program. Rather, both were secondary aspects of the program. The program facilitators organized the program structure in order to introduce participants to a variety of locations throughout the community with the goal of connecting participants to the numerous resources. The second theme was learning from others in the program and mentioned by the participants as an integral learning experience for them.

Community Connectiveness

Leadership Cheyenne met in several locations throughout the county in which this research study took place. The goal was to introduce leadership candidates to new environments. The findings indicated that this goal was successfully achieved, because a major theme emerged from the post-assessment interviews regarding the *connection to the community* as a direct result from attending the leadership development program. Participants described how the program opened their eyes to the community, and they described in their own words how the program influenced their thinking. Within the nine-month program, the participants met and toured several different local businesses, industries, and agencies. Specifically, the program included a tour of a manufacturing company, hospital, township hall, middle school, railroad station, chamber of commerce, technology

center, courthouse, and jail. All of these organizations were located within the boundaries of the county where the program was held.

Zach described the community travels as, "now being much more confident because of knowing more people." Traveling throughout the community has opened his eyes to the interior walls of organizations within this community. This is as opposed to just an external view that one would see if they had no exposure to the insides of these organizations.

> "DB: What about the leadership travel and going to different locations throughout the community? How did you feel about that?
>
> I feel a little more confident in the community. And not only can I make a difference, but I know people now. It is like when you go to a party if you don't know any one, you just sit there like a little wallflower until you meet a couple of people then you can start telling your jokes and being yourself. (001 – page 6) I loved that, especially as somebody who had zero experience in the community and visiting the buildings. To me, I thought that was one of the most important aspects of it was the field trips and the visits." (001 – page 3)

He also was impressed by the charming community. "From a visual perspective, there are still things looking like they are in disrepair. When you look under the hood a little bit, there is a lot of charming things about this county," he stated. Zach felt the community was in good hands because of the people who assumed leadership roles, "if these are the kind of people that make up our community, then you say to yourself we are going to be all right. You know because these are good people and they care."

Ned affirmed that he would not have been aware of the community organizations if he had not been involved in Leadership Cheyenne. His understanding of the community and the issues that it faces are clearer because of his experience in this program.

> "Well for me the high points have been community-based activities. Going around to the different places and taking the tours and meeting different people to see what goes on. And, of course, meeting and getting to know

> some different people in the community because probably these are people I am going to deal with them in the next few years. I have enjoyed it, and I looked forward to going to them every month. (004 – page 1) I guess more the community aspect of the whole leadership program is what I've really come away with. What it is and what it takes." (004 – page 8)

Referring to the community tours, Ned stated, "I just wouldn't have gone there on my own volition." The experience has given him a better understanding of the community and a different perspective of what is happening. An economic survey was completed for this community, which indicated that the entire county was economically depressed. This topic was something that he had heard before but never realized the negative impact that had been created due to the loss of the industrial base in this community.

How the community organizations interact with one another was learning that Lori highlighted. Understanding the bigger picture of the community definitely opened her eyes.

> "Well, I think that the program did a lot to show how different aspects of the community interplay with each other in their missions and their direction and what the criminal justice system does as compared to what the hospital is doing. We had an education component, and we had a local manufacturing component. I think the strength was visiting and going on site. I got a lot out of that. I really liked that piece. I liked having a picture of the government and a picture of the healthcare industry." (009 – page 1)

Lori felt that if individuals were just at the beginning of their leadership careers, the community knowledge learned from this program would be helpful in keeping individuals from walking on land mines. Even though she was more experienced in her leadership role, she felt the community piece was outstanding. The community travels throughout the program gave her an in-depth picture of the community and broadened her horizons.

Being better informed about the community was stated by Sam as a significant outcome of the leadership development program. People sometimes make decisions without

having all of the facts. Sam discussed that the community travels assisted him in gathering information for future decision-making opportunities.

> "So how I look at this is the information that was provided to me is it gives me a foundation as to whether I chose to get involved or I chose to go and get involved in certain issues. I am going to be much better informed. If I am not informed, I am going to know where I can go to get the information. That is how I see the benefit of any of those things. I was talking to people when I came back from the courthouse and the jail visit and I told them, 'look, any kid who is in trouble if they are in the middle school should go spend three hours in the county jail'." (027 – page 3)

All of these participants focused on getting a clearer picture of the community as a major benefit of the leadership development program. The participants were exposed to the many facets of the community and learned more about the community in which they work through the Leadership Cheyenne program. Even if the participants had previous exposure to certain organizations, they were better informed through the information presented in this program.

In further reflection of the community awareness aspect of the program, Ned shared his thoughts about the experience of going to the middle school for one of the sessions and listening to the public educators discuss their role within the community. His reflection was based on his family experience of being affiliated with a public school system.

> "One thing that sticks out in my mind is when we went to the middle school. It sticks in my mind because my dad is a teacher and my mom is involved in public schools. My sister is a teacher, and it seems like we have a lot of education people in our class. I think that is one of the bases of a good community is having good schools." (004 – page 2)

One of the graduation requirements for this program required each participant to attend one community or civic organization meeting during the nine months. Troy spoke about his experience of attending a local businesswomen's association meeting.

> "I was interested in what my mother-in-law does, because she has been president of the businesswomen's association before. And three or four of her friends that I know are in there. It was just a neat group, and they made it fun. They brought up a lot of issues that they are working on that you don't think of how tough it is. How tough it is to get money from people. Those are other things that I haven't had to think about. So this is a different perspective that I have learned from the course." (028 – page 11)

A couple of the participants interviewed discussed the community connection in relationship to individuals who step up to the plate and take charge. Communities are built by leaders who commit to community involvement.

> "You know, you are not alone. I will say you talk about community involvement too. That was one of my goals of the course. I just wanted to understand what revolves around the community. Yesterday, I received a thank you letter from the mayor of one of the surrounding cities in our community. It was addressed to me, and it wasn't a leadership thing. It was addressed to me directly and just thanking me for letting him attend the leadership meeting. What a great person, and a good leader to go that little extra step to acknowledge you." (026 – page 1)

George took comfort in the fact that "he is not alone." In his pre-assessment interview, he referred to his volunteer fire fighting experience as something he felt that he enjoyed and service that he gave back to this community. From this leadership development program, he found that others are interested in giving back to this community in perhaps not the same way as George but by volunteering in other community and civic organizations. In his post-assessment interview, he affirmed for himself that people want to give back and that was assuring to him.

> "I have a whole different perspective now on the community leaders. Again, I will be honest I am one who takes for granted those people who like to do that. I just rely on them to make sure our community works well. This course really showed me that it takes a lot of people like the people in our class to step up in the future and do this. Do you really want to be pulling from the bottom of the bucket for your community leaders? No you don't. We learned the hard way here at (my organization) when we had to hire 410 people, and we took warm bodies to fill the positions. You have training

> issues, and you have all kinds of different issues. I think that is one of the biggest things that this program has done for me." (028 – pages 10 and 11)

Troy stated, "Taking a leadership role within a community is taken for granted." This program highlighted the opportunities that are available to individuals and reinforced for Troy that individuals need to take responsibility and action in order to have a vital community. The reality is that communities need to have informed people take on leadership roles throughout the various agencies and organizations.

Zach reflected on community leadership in a different way. His thoughts focused on an example of someone leading the community who seemed not to have the attitude of, "what is good for the entire community," at the focus of his attention.

> "He pretty made much it in no uncertain terms that he didn't want to share anything. He was on his own. I forget the term he used, but they are in their own little kingdom out there (township). To me to have someone in a leadership role to flat out say, 'We are not going to play nice in the sandbox; we are going to do it ourselves.' It kind of shocked me. Because I was thinking if here he is leading a community and if that is how he thinks, it is kind of short sighted." (001 – page 2)

Summary of Community Connectiveness. As previously stated, the goal that the facilitators initially discussed with participants was to introduce them to a wide range of community organizations, leaders, and resources that perhaps they were not aware of before this program. Participants reported that this original program goal was achieved. The community awareness and connection that the participants mentioned in the post-assessment interviews focused on the importance of having a vital community and prepared leaders to get involved. Two of the participants indicated that their thinking regarding community connectiveness changed their perspective, which indicated to the researcher that their original meaning perspectives were transformed.

Learning from Others in the Program

Through the post-assessment interviews, it was also clear each participant learned from the other participants in the program in this study. The study participants engaged in provided a forum for both formal and informal dialogue throughout the duration of the program. While this interaction did not necessarily provide new learning, the observing, conversing, and listening to other fellow participants were insightful and thought-provoking reflections reported by participants. The participants described this portion of their experience in various ways. Learning from others in the interview feedback on this element of their experience provided a common theme in the research and was a major benefit to the participants.

Charles seemed to be taken by surprise by the fact that he learned more from other participants rather than from the course content. He felt that leaning on others was helpful to his learning.

> "But I didn't realize, I guess, I would learn so much from other people as opposed to maybe the contents of the course. I think that was kind of one of the more key things is to see other people and how they take to leadership and their interpretation on it. So trying to get the most out of everyone there. I think that was key trying to lean on others to see what their approach to it is." (006 – page 2)

The reflection of Karen focused on the good mix of people with varying career backgrounds that helped add to the class experiences. Also, she stated that the on-line discussion was helpful to read what others were thinking. This forum provided her an opportunity to "think about things differently."

> "I think that the class had a really good mix. We had a lot of different personalities in the class. People who were at different levels of their career, which I think added to the mix because you know people learn through experiences. So there were people who had really good experiences. (020 –

> page 1) Because you have to admit in our class, we had some people that really had thoughts of their own. Some of them think out of the box. On a whole I think our class was pretty outspoken. There were not too many shy nuggets in there. So it was kind of interesting to read their perspective and their experiences." (020 – page 6)

Fred confirmed that the majority of his learning came from interacting with the other participants in the class. The experience affirmed for him that no leader is without flaws.

> "I think the majority of learning came from the voice of the participants, because we did have some time to talk to people. And I've talked to a number of them there just to ask them questions about similar situations that I may have run into and what they would have done. It is a network of people you can count on. Hopefully after this is over, you can still count on them, which they all seem to be open to. It is neat to see that no leader is perfect. No leader is flawless, and you have to have flaws. But you also have to have good people behind you to support your flaws if you do have them." (025 – page 1)

Listening to others in the class helped both George and Troy reflect on what they defined as their tunnel vision. Their program peers assisted them in focusing their attention on becoming better listeners.

> "I sometimes have trouble with being passionate. You think your idea is the right idea and listening to the other leaders and people in the course helped me. Just the simple skill of sitting back and listening and not having that tunnel vision I'm right! I don't know how else to describe it. If only you would listen to me, you would know that I am right. But it's nice to step back, open your ears, and listen to what is happening." (026 – page 7)

George felt that one of his goals of the program was to "grab the view of other people." He stated that it was great to be in a class where people had the same goals and the same yearning to learn as he did. The program made him more comfortable about wanting to improve and enhance his leadership skills. His timidness about sharing his thoughts regarding leadership was diminished because of the other participants in the program.

> "I learned to let others talk and learn from what they were saying and then expound on that. Even though I do that to a small extent here at my

> organization, I think it really taught me to be more careful to listen better. I think I am a good listener, but I think this course has taught me to listen better to others. (028 – page 3) Just the experiences that I have gotten from others in the class and viewing their leadership styles I think were probably the highlight of the course for me." (028 – page 2)

Troy stated that the program made him a better leader because of the "high caliber of people in the class." His enjoyment was being able to learn from others in the program and be introduced to new perspectives and leadership styles.

Summary of Learning from Others in the Program. One of the major strengths of a leadership development program is that a great deal of learning occurs through one human being watching another (Cacioppe, 1998). This aspect of learning from others was apparent in the findings for this research study. Participants highlighted several examples where their learning was influenced by interacting with others. As the literature noted and this study confirmed, successful training programs are reliant on facilitators, presenters, and participants all being engaged in the program through both their verbal and non-verbal language. Who facilitates the leadership development program, individuals who participate in the program, and how information regarding leadership is presented all are crucial elements for a successful program as affirmed by this study.

Interesting to note is that as the post-assessment interviews unfolded, the researcher reflected on how the participants were affected by the program. It was evident that the opinions, views, and perspectives of participants were not all changed in the same way. In some cases, they may have never before been exposed to differing opinions about various topics. For some, being in a comfortable setting with other learners, with whom they developed a relationship, allowed them to be more relaxed and open to new learning. Further, some participants had limited exposure to other leaders from other work

environments. Thus, participants in the program definitely broadened their horizons and, ultimately, their views.

Summarized Analysis of all Nine Leadership Cheyenne Participants

The themes of *building relationships and community connections, enhancement of leadership skills, and public speaking and confidence building* emerged as key elements from the interviews with the participants of Leadership Cheyenne regarding their expectations of this leadership development program. These original themes became evident as the pre-assessment interviews were conducted and were reaffirmed by all twenty-six participants of the leadership development program. The study attempted to describe the values, beliefs, and frames of references held by participants in a leadership development program about what constitutes good leadership. The post-assessment interviews revealed that five participants confirmed that their original expectations were met from attending this program.

As we know from the research, learning takes place in a variety of formats, environments, and from varied sources (Cacioppe, 1998). All nine participants outlined different specific aspects of this leadership development program that influenced their thinking and original meaning perspectives. These specific aspects included *True Colors personality assessment* (five participants mentioned this aspect), *presentations* (five participants mentioned this aspect), *panel discussions* (three participants mentioned this aspect), and *group activities* (six participants mentioned this aspect). All were mentioned by participants as key components of the Leadership Cheyenne program. Other supplementary themes that surfaced from the post-assessment interviews with the participants were *community connectiveness* (four participants mentioned this aspect) and *learning from others*

(five participants mentioned this aspect). All of these elements definitely influenced participants' thinking in a variety of ways as was evident in the post-assessment interviews.

As a group, participant reflection about the program during the post-assessment interview process provided insightful data, confirming that adults do, indeed, learn best when exposed to a variety of learning experiences. Learning opportunities for participants did not necessarily have to contain new content knowledge. In fact, participants reported that the opportunity of being exposed to a wide-range of perspectives, ideas, activities, opinions, and topics in a variety of modalities resulted in more meaningful and substantive critical self-reflection.

A significant common result that surfaced throughout the post-assessment dialogue with participants was that learning how to become a critical self-reflective thinker was integral to all participants in their ability to think about what they were learning and how it could impact their leadership styles or leadership roles. Chapter Seven will thoroughly examine this result, as well as explore the interpretations, implications, and conclusions of this research, i.e., the use of a leadership development program as a tool in the transformational learning experience of the participants in Leadership Cheyenne.

Chapter Seven
Leadership Development as a Transformational Process
Interpretations, Implications, and Conclusions

Introduction

This study focused on how participation in a leadership development program influenced the original meaning perspectives held by participants regarding what constitutes good leadership. To accomplish this, the researcher participated in and studied a nine-month leadership development program and interviewed selected participants before the program began and again at its conclusion. The themes that emerged from these pre- and post-assessment interviews were identified by analyzing verbal feedback given to the researcher by these selected participants. Results of the study were compared with the literature written about transformational learning, the process of learning, learning organizations, and leadership development programs.

Utilizing the conceptual framework presented by Mezirow on transformational learning, the study provided a description of the transformational experiences described by participants, regarding their participation in a nine-month leadership development program. The study also highlighted specific aspects of Leadership Cheyenne that participants described as influencing their meaning perspectives.

An analysis of participants' expectations were explored in Chapter Six, as they related to the specific aspects of the program that influenced the participants' thinking about what constitutes good leadership. A critical review of the anecdotal data collected from participants examined whether the transformation of individual meaning perspectives was present during the post-assessment interview. What did the participants say during their

second interview that led the researcher to believe that a transformation of their meaning perspectives took place? What words did the participants utilize in order for the researcher to reach the conclusions of possible transformation? What specific aspects of the program identified by the participants led the researcher to believe that the leadership development program influenced their thinking?

As stated earlier, the presence of transformation is not an exact science. Transformational learning is individualized and cannot be generalized from one individual to another. Mezirow (1991) describes transformation as the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective; and finally, making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings. This chapter will interpret the findings of this study and provide an argument that attempts to confirm the presence of transformation in individual participant thinking regarding their meaning perspectives being directly influenced by their experience in Leadership Cheyenne.

Limitations of the Study

Several key points may be made regarding the limitations of this study. Even though the transcripts of the interviews provided a rich ethnographic description of this particular leadership development program, the information collected was based on a relatively small number of participants. Although many career occupations, organizational positions, and companies were represented, the study relied on a single Leadership Cheyenne class to supply the raw data. Thus, implications of the data may not be generalized to other

leadership development programs, because the goals and objectives were specific to this particular program class. Even though this program has been in existence for six years with approximately 125 individuals participating, this was the first study conducted to examine the program to this extent and for this particular purpose. However, there was an attempt to link this research study with data from other effective leadership development programs that reached similar conclusions, as outlined in the literature review in Chapter Two.

Certain aspects of the leadership development program were primed to affect the outcomes. First, the organizers of the program purposely met at different organizations throughout the community, in order to expose the participants to various business cultures and missions. The purpose of this exposure was to introduce the participants to places that perhaps they would not encounter unless they attended Leadership Cheyenne. Therefore, as the participants indicated in the findings of this study, community connectiveness was an expectation of the facilitators as an anticipated outcome.

Secondly, panel discussions held throughout the program provided exposure to the diverse opinions and specific viewpoints held by the panelists. One could argue that because of the selection of certain panelists by the facilitators that the learning outcomes that took place were also primed due to the personalities and views of the panelists. Since some of the individuals on the panels had previously shared their views with other Leadership Cheyenne classes, the facilitators knew what to expect from their presentations.

A third aspect of the leadership development program was the group activities. These were selected as key elements by the organizers and provided the opportunity for the participants to learn from other leaders. This aspect of learning was also deliberately primed by the facilitators in order that the participants would experience learning through specific

thematically structured learning activities. Having participants involved in activities where they were required to work in teams also provided an additional venue for participants to learn from others.

Finally, the readings assigned to the participants by the facilitators were carefully selected to expose them to meaningful information that would provoke divergent thinking and exposure to different viewpoints. The selection of the primary text utilized in this course (Max DePree's book *Leadership is an Art,* and other leadership articles written by experts such as Stephen Covey, James Autry, Kouzes and Posner, Perry Smith, Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, Annie McKee, Garry Wills, Peter Senge, and Parker Palmer) also prepared the participants for a certain type of leadership development experience. Obviously, the facilitators selected particular authors who would introduce, or in some cases, reinforce a certain type of leadership style or viewpoint. In contrast, the facilitators did not choose authors who wrote about or believed in an autocratic leadership style, which would have had a different influence on the conversations and learning within the program.

All of these factors are indicators that there are indeed limitations to this study. However, these factors could also indicate that any leadership development program, given the right environment and planning, could lead to similar findings as those resulting from this particular leadership development program.

Interpretations

As discussed in Chapter Two, transformational learning occurs for a variety of reasons. However, the triggers that cause transformation to take place differ from one individual to another. Perspective transformation can occur either through an accumulation

of transformed meaning schemes resulting from a series of dilemmas or in response to an externally imposed traumatic or life altering dilemma. Examples of such dilemmas would include death, illness, separation or divorce, children leaving home, being passed over for promotion or gaining a promotion, failing an important examination, or retirement.

The process of transformation can also result, not only from critical life events, but from emotional or intellectually based events. Hence, the leadership development program chosen for this study provided disorienting dilemmas for the participants that could begin the process of transformation through an eye-opening discussion, book, poem or painting or from efforts to understand a different culture with customs that contradict their own previously accepted beliefs. Even though any major challenge to an established perspective can result in a transformation, this study utilized disorienting dilemmas from Mezirow's work to mean any experience that helped participants broaden their thinking about leadership. The experience participants had led to a deepening or expansion of their understanding about leadership.

Throughout this chapter, the researcher utilizes the phrase "disorienting dilemma" because it is the term Mezirow uses and this study was based on Mezirow's theory of transformation. However, the researcher realizes by using this phrase for the experiences the participants encountered in Leadership Cheyenne indeed helped the participants learn but may not have been as "disorienting" as Mezirow would have meant in his work. Mezirow's disorienting dilemmas often call into question deeply held personal values and threaten one's sense of self and comfort level with the situation. Thus, this study examined whether the effects of providing various types of experiences, referred to in this research study as

disorienting dilemmas, for participants caused a transformation within their thinking about leadership.

As presented in Chapter One, a disorienting dilemma can take many forms and provide a variety of different outcomes for individuals. Mezirow states that a life-altering event can provide a trigger that leads one into the process of transformation of strongly held personal meaning perspectives. This study did not examine the transformation of one's meaning perspectives by life-altering events that took place in one's life. Rather, this study attempted to analyze a nine-month leadership development experience and particular aspects of the program that provided possible triggers or disorienting dilemmas that resulted in some form of transformation of participants' thinking about what constitutes good leadership. Even from the research questions, it is evident that the researcher was not attempting to search for some deep personal change in individuals caused by life-altering events.

Based on participant interviews, three major themes emerged as a result of examining the transformation of participants' meaning perspectives about what they felt constitutes good leadership. These themes provide a framework for a more in-depth interpretation of the findings discussed in the previous two chapters. *New Conceptualization of Leadership, Altered Self-concept,* and *Expanded Portfolios of Leadership Skills* will be discussed in the next section to provide concrete analysis of the researcher's interpretation of the presence of transformation.

New Conceptualization of Leadership

From the researcher's perspective, all participants of Leadership Cheyenne began the program with well-grounded meaning perspectives on their definition of what constitutes

good leadership. In the pre-assessment interviews, nine of the participants clearly articulated their own interpretation of what constitutes good leadership. All participants outlined their personal journey of what brought them to this program. They formulated their own thoughts and opinions based on their varied experiences and feelings. The researcher then compared these data with the information that was shared by each participant during the post-assessment interview to determine how his/her thinking had been influenced.

Two of the nine participants highlighted their experience from the leadership development program in such a way that indicated that they had formed new concepts to add to their views of what constitutes good leadership. Both of these participants spoke in their pre-assessment interviews about their ideas and notions about what constituted good leadership. However, both gained new perspectives about leadership through this experience and could identify the experience as influencing their original meaning perspectives.

Zach was influenced by the servant leadership presentation, which in his own words expanded his original concept of leadership. The presentation on servant leadership and the related thought-provoking discussion provided new concepts and a disorienting dilemma that Zach had not thought about before attending Leadership Cheyenne. He already had well-grounded meaning perspectives that, in his words, seemed to be focused on integrity and honesty. After this presentation, he added new concepts to his view that were introduced under the category of serving others.

Troy, on the other hand, was influenced by the program as it related to community leadership. His original thinking on leadership never included the concept of leadership within a community and what it takes to lead a community. He freely admitted that this was a new concept for him and something that he had never really thought about. For Troy, the

trigger of a disorienting dilemma was being introduced to various segments and organizations within the community throughout the nine-month program. Because of the discussions and exposure to various organizations within the community, Troy began to look at this community in a different light. He determined that community leadership is not just something one can take for granted, but requires individuals to voluntarily step up to the plate and make things happen.

Both of these examples provide clear evidence of a transformation of original meaning perspectives for these participants. The disorienting dilemma that triggered the onset of transformation was different for both of these participants, but the result was the same—a new conceptualization of leadership.

Altered Self-concept

One could assume that all participants of Leadership Cheyenne had to have at least some confidence in their own leadership abilities before attending this program. However, what was apparent in the research was that all participants entered the program looking for new, enhanced or enriched ways to become better leaders. As was reported in the findings, some participants were searching for an enhancement of their leadership abilities. Reflecting on the conversations with the nine participants, the researcher discovered that through this leadership enhancement theme emerged an altering of ones' self-concept. In fact, two of the nine participants indicated that the transformation of their meaning perspectives modified their own self-concept.

The disorienting dilemma for Fred was the presentation of *Who Moved My Cheese?* This presentation began the process, in his words, to think about his leadership differently,

and thus, from that point forward he felt the program experience taught him to persevere more than he had previously. Fred also discovered that the program made him aware that he wanted to have people aspire to be like him one day. He shared an inspirational story of Rudy—a colleague that taught him the real meaning of leadership. His aspiration was to be like Rudy one day and have someone look up to him as he did Rudy. There was clear presence of transformation with this participant in regard to altering his self-awareness and how he felt about his own leadership abilities.

Karen was inspired through the program experience by the community travels and exposure she had to new ideas and concepts. Because of her exposure to the community through Leadership Cheyenne, she had a new sense of her own worth to both her career and the people she encountered. She altered her meaning perspectives on what this community had to offer and what role she could play to assist others in reaching their potential. Another indication of transformation through an altered self-concept for Karen was a commitment to herself to pursue her graduate degree. She had placed this pursuit on the back burner, but the researcher sensed a new self-confidence that emerged from her attendance in this program that gave her the encouragement needed to begin this endeavor. In her own words, the pursuit of a Masters degree was something she had wanted to do for quite some time, and this program provided her the confidence to reflect on her own abilities and gave her the inspiration to move forward.

As was the case for the previous theme, the disorienting dilemma for both of these participants differed. However, the similarity in the transformation of meaning perspectives was an altered self-concept.

Expanded Portfolios of Leadership Skills

Based on the pre-assessment interview, all nine participants in this study described in detail how they had formed their meaning perspectives on what constitutes good leadership. They gave examples and models of how they had framed their thinking based on their own experiences and individuals they had encountered in their lives from whom to model their leadership. As the post-assessment interviews were conducted, the researcher sensed a shift in three of the nine participants' thinking from their original models of good leadership into expanded skill sets that they had not mentioned during the first interview.

Ned, who attributed most of his leadership knowledge to his grandfather, was influenced by the program to expand his concept of leadership. He did not mention one specific aspect of the program that allowed him to begin thinking on a larger scale. However, he specifically mentioned people skills and delegating to others as additional leadership skills that he would now include in his thinking regarding what constitutes good leadership. For the researcher, the disorienting dilemma that appeared to be present for this participant was the program content itself, along with being exposed to other participants' thinking. This expanded viewpoint allowed Ned to not only focus on his leadership and work, but to be open to others who were sharing their thoughts and ideas with him.

George, on the other hand, could specifically identify one presentation that influenced his thinking and triggered an expansion of his original thoughts on what constitutes good leadership. The disorienting dilemma for him was the presentation on servant leadership. Through this presentation, he stated that he had gained a broader view from other people and it reinforced the concept that one needs to gain respect in order to lead effectively. His

expanded view about leadership focused on the concept that respect needs to be earned through the actions of leaders, not idle words without action.

Sam recognized that he was very rigid in his leadership style and realized that you need soft skills in order to lead effectively. The disorienting dilemma that provoked this expansion in his leadership skills was the personality assessment, *True Colors,* which was completed during the first session of Leadership Cheyenne. In his own words, he felt that his soft skills did not come easy for him, and these skills were far down on his list of leadership traits. He realized that people need to know that you care about them and their thoughts if you are going to gain their buy-in to the organizational goals.

During the post-assessment interview, all of these individuals highlighted a reflective process that was triggered by specific aspects of Leadership Cheyenne. Even though the specific disorienting dilemma differed for all three of these individuals, the major theme which emerged was an expanded portfolio of leadership skills as compared to their original pre-assessment thinking. These expanded skill sets were not new to any of the three participants. Rather, the skills were an expansion of their thinking from the pre-assessment interview when asked what they believed what constitutes good leadership.

Implications for Practice

There are several implications of this study. The first implication is regarding the theory of transformation. The researcher focused on two key questions: (1) What were the implied assumptions of this study regarding transformational theory? (2) What would transformational theorists predict about the results of this study?

Because this was the seventh year of Leadership Cheyenne, the organizers had modified the program in various ways, in order to meet the needs of the community and employers sending employees to the training. Obviously, one of the assumptions that could be made regarding the program was that the experience of the nine-month leadership development program would provide different results to each participant. An expectation would be that employers would not be supportive of employees attending the program if they did not feel that the program would be beneficial. Perhaps the word "transformation" was not mentioned by the individuals attending the program through the conversations with the researcher, but the participants used terminology that implied they were searching for expanded viewpoints of how to be a better leader.

Because of the nature of the study, deep personal change was not evident in the outcomes of this study. In the viewpoint of the researcher, transformational theorists would agree that the study did not lend itself to examining deep inner personal changes that may have taken place within the participants. First, the experience itself was not attempting to examine participants from this perspective. Secondly, the study was only nine months in duration and not a long enough period of time to affirm such change. Finally, the researcher depended on self-reported findings and did not investigate the leadership styles or behaviors of these nine participants in their work setting.

Finally, the implications center on the research itself. The researcher explored the implications of the research by answering the following questions: (1) Did the study identify any new distinctions or factors that would be important to control in further investigations of this type? and (2) Because this study was based primarily on the use of self-reports of

participants, did the results indicate that further studies should follow this particularly methodology?

In further studies of this type, the researcher would recommend interviewing participants based on a pre-identified set of controlled criteria. This particular study selected participants based on meeting two criteria: (1) Did the participant have at least five years of supervisory experience with an organization? and (2) Was the participant attending this leadership program voluntarily because of a desire to learn more about himself/herself as a leader? These questions allowed for the opportunity of transformational learning to at least be a possibility for participants. The researcher assumed that participants, who had at least five years of supervisory experience and were attending the leadership development program voluntarily, were at a point in their careers where they had experiences that would aid in a transformational experience and were open to learning new and more effective ways to lead.

It was evident through observation and informal conversations with other participants in the training program that they were mandated to enroll in this experience. The outcome of the study would have been much different if some of these participants would have been part of the research. The assumption by the researcher concluded that participants would be less willing, perhaps even disgruntled, to explore new and different ways of leading because of the leadership development experience not being their option or choice. If participants were not attending the program voluntarily, the researcher assumed that the outcomes of this research study would be different than what was found in the findings of this particular study.

The research findings were primarily a self-reported evaluation by the nine participants. Because the researcher used transformational learning as the foundation for the research study, this self-reported methodology seemed most appropriate. However, one

could argue that the data could have been enriched through interviews with colleagues, subordinates, and superiors of the nine research participants to gain further insight about whether or not the program had influenced their leadership behavior in the work setting.

The implications of this study relate to three groups: *Organizers of Leadership Cheyenne, Participants of Leadership Cheyenne, and Employers who send or support employees to attend Leadership Cheyenne.* Questions considered in the implications categories were: (1) Who might be interested in reviewing these findings and why? and (2) How might these potential readers change their thinking or practice on the basis of the findings of this study?

Organizers, participants, and the employers who support individuals attending Leadership Cheyenne can all gain from the findings presented in this study. In the literature, effective evaluation measures were absent in most studies of leadership development programs. Therefore, the researcher attempted to address effective evaluation measures of participants in a leadership development program as outlined by Conger (1992). Self-reflection by participants, timeframe of the delivery of the program, evaluation methods for assessment, and measurement of program objectives being met were all components of this leadership development program.

The organizers of Leadership Cheyenne have modified this program over the years to meet the needs of both the participants and the employers supporting the participants. From this study, the implications for practice for the organizers are to continue to offer this type of leadership development program but with the few minor modifications that were indicated by some of the participants. The on-line component of this program was originally intended to keep the participants connected from month to month. However, the participants varied in

their reaction to this aspect. The complexity with any seminar, course, or program is that one needs to realize the difficulty in pleasing everyone and meeting all expectations. Thus, the reality is the program should continue to meet the needs of the majority.

Participants of any leadership development program should also be aware of what the course content will and will not provide for them. As was the case in this study, the program did not meet the needs or expectations of all of the participants. The organizers must address this issue with both the employers and the employees who are considering attending to ensure that all are aware of the program objectives before enrolling. This would eliminate any misconceptions or disappointments with the program content.

Employers who are sending employees to any type of leadership development, but particularly to this program, should be aware that individuals need to understand the reason they are attending the program. The importance of this awareness is to ensure the participants understand the reason why it is essential for the organization to groom effective leaders for the future success of the organization. The two criteria utilized to select participants for this study should also be taken into consideration. Human nature tells us that if individuals voluntarily attend this type of leadership development program, rather than being forced to attend, the researcher assumes the results will be more beneficial not only for the employee but for the employer. Forcing individuals to do something they do not want to do could have a negative impact on the original intention. However, to fully validate this claim, the researcher believes this would be another assumption to study in the future and is beyond the scope of this particular research study.

The most obvious implication for practice from this study is the study content itself—individual transformation. If organizations want to have the best prepared individuals in

leadership roles, they must support them by exposing them to similar leadership development program experiences such as Leadership Cheyenne. The results of this study imply that leadership development programs can influence and possibly transform or impact individual learners in various ways. The findings of this study provided data that indicated participants of the same leadership development program were influenced a variety of ways.

If companies are committed to affecting organizational change, in order to stay competitive and remain on the cutting edge of current business practices, key individuals in the organization need to participate in programs that immerse them in substantive learning that leads to new, expanded, or altered ways of leading and thinking about leadership. Individual transformation is encouraged when employees are given structured and specific opportunities to experience learning venues that provide the freedom to discover how they might positively impact a changing organizational culture by being outstanding leaders. This transformational experience will affect some of their firmly held beliefs on what constitutes good leadership and will impact and/or improve their leadership style.

Conclusions

There are indications that further research may offer more insights regarding this leadership development program. Studying subsequent Leadership Cheyenne classes, talking to these nine participants in another year to assess their thinking, and talking to the colleagues of these particular nine research participants to gain the perspectives of the behavioral changes that may have been evident from their participation in this leadership development program would all be relevant research studies and supply meaningful data to further enrich this program for future participants.

There is reason to believe that a more comprehensive approach to leadership development and the impact that such an experience has on individuals should be considered in future planning. This particular study has used the term, *transformational learning,* since it provided a more complete account of individual learning than other adult learning theory approaches. This is illustrated by the qualitative model used in this study, which indicated a range of experiences that were verbalized through the individual interviews with the participants that were less likely to be noticed with a quantitative inquiry using surveys, evaluations, or other quantitative techniques. When exploring the literature written on leadership development programs as outlined in Chapter Two, several researchers have suggested inadequacies of current methodologies and studies regarding measuring the impact a leadership development program has on participants. Thus, the researcher recommends that further studies of this type should investigate the impact of a leadership development program on participants' learning as a qualitative approach utilizing pre- and post-assessment measures in order to assess the long-term effect on participants' thinking about leadership.

The conceptual model of effective leadership development programs that exists today may have undergone significant changes from past years as noted from the literature review in Chapter Two. The themes that emerged in the findings of this study of building relationships, community connections, and enhancing leadership skills regarding participant expectations and outcomes of the leadership development program were consistent with the literature written on leadership development programs in Chapter Two. Public speaking and confidence building were additional expectations and outcomes that surfaced in this research study and were not present in the leadership development literature.

Organizational learning is dependent on individual learning, and therefore, organizations must be willing to support employee growth both individually and collectively as a "team." The research conducted by Conger (1992), Tichy and Devanna (1986), and Vicere and Fulmer (1997) also contained this same argument. Hence, the researcher believes there is a need to examine leadership development programs as they relate to organizational change and how employees fit into the "big" picture of the organization. This examination is a much different and expanded research study than was presented in this study. This type of study would explore different measures of employee participation and value within their organizations.

Understanding how a leadership development program can provide an opportunity for transformational learning of individual thinking to support organizational goals and visions is crucial in planning strategies that will provide long-term benefits to participants. The researcher believes the benefit to participating in any form of leadership training can provide a huge morale and confidence boost to employees who, in turn, hopefully support the organizational change that needs to occur. The more employees are exposed to a variety of leadership development opportunities, the more individuals can learn and bring back new learning to incorporate into leading their teams effectively. As Sogunro (1997) illustrated, every employee is a potential leader and his/her leadership ability should be developed.

This study provides some direction for the future of leadership development programs in relationship to the transformational learning of individual participants. The leadership development themes of new conceptualization of leadership, altered self-concept, and expanded portfolios of leadership skills were found to be outcomes for effective involvement in this leadership development program. Significantly, the aspects of the leadership

development program need to be in agreement with the most recent literature about effective leadership skills and advancements in the research of good leadership attributes. It must also provide exposure to various perspectives on how an individual fits into the broader scope of both the organization at large and the community in which it resides.

It is particularly appropriate that the individuals who participate in a leadership development program represent varied career backgrounds and experiences. Variation in career experiences lends itself to many more learning opportunities and outcomes for the participants. Further research into leadership development programs that integrate substantive discussion from a wide array of perspectives and individuals with various career vantage points may promote new and deeper understandings of such programs. Also, further research may create new meaning perspectives about what constitutes good leadership for leaders of the future. Leadership and communication skills are vital in every phase of American society. Training programs such as Leadership Cheyenne must continue to exist in order to provide adequate leadership development for future leaders and speakers. Leadership is the critical element of successful organizations and therefore, leadership skill development cannot be left to chance.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Questions for Leadership Development Training Participants

Pre-assessment questions:

- **Tell me about yourself.**
  - Personal information regarding formation of values, beliefs, and frames of reference
  - Educational background
  - Current position
  - Career background
  - Supervisory experience
  - Leadership development experiences

- **Why were you chosen to attend this leadership training?**
  - What do you hope to gain from this experience?
  - How important is this type of training for your career?
  - Do you think that experiences like this can make someone into a leader?
  - What is the value of this experience in terms of leadership development?

- **Based on your background thus far, what constitutes good leadership?**

- **How do you believe meaning perspectives (values, beliefs, experiences, role models, frames of reference) have influenced your answer to the previous question?**
  - Reflecting on your career, do you believe you have experienced a time when you realized your values, beliefs, opinions, or expectations had changed?
  - What influenced this change?
  - What experiences in your life have molded the way you approach your working relationships with others?

Note: Main questions are in **bold** to address the research questions for this study and sub-questions follow main questions as probes to be used as follow-up questions.

Appendix B

On-line Reflective Questions for Participants During the Nine-month Leadership Development Experience

1. How did the leadership development program affect you the first few weeks back on the job? (Any particular experiences or stories?)

2. How has the program affected the way you lead or manage today? Has the training seminar changed you as an individual, manager, or leader?

3. Have your leadership skills been enhanced and if so, how? Examples? Any tangible results? Examples?

4. Are you in any way different today as a manager or leader than you were nine months ago? Give examples. Do you feel you are a better leader or manager?

5. Have your relationships with your superiors, peers, and/or subordinates been affected? Examples?

6. Thinking back over the past nine months during this leadership development-training program, did you experience a time when you realized that your values, beliefs, or expectations had changed? Do you know what triggered it?

7. What parts of the leadership development training are the most memorable and meaningful to you?

8. Do you feel the program changed you, as a person, in a fundamental way? In an incremental way? What would have been the key catalyst? Describe the role "reflection" played in your thinking during this program.

9. Did you find one form of feedback more effective than another? Do you feel sure you can attribute these changes to the program, or did other events in your life affect them?

10. What hindered the training experience when you came back to the office? What helped the training experience take hold when you came back? (For example, organization/boss factors.) What have been the most difficult obstacles in your path preventing you from putting into practice some of the things that you would have liked to put into practice?

11. Would you consider attending another leadership development program in the future? Why or why not? Do you think training can develop leadership skills?

12. What type of leadership skills did you develop during this training that had a positive influence on your working relationships?

13. Why do you think that the program worked so well – didn't work so well – didn't work at all for you? Is it due to factors within or outside the program? Examples?

Appendix C

Interview Questions for Leadership Development Training Participants

Post-assessment questions:

- **Reflecting on your response to this question nine months ago, how does your answer differ or remain the same as to your expectations of this leadership training?**
    - Did you gain what you had hoped from this experience? In what ways?
    - How important is this type of training for your career?
    - Do you think that experiences like this can make someone into a leader?
    - What is the value of this experience in terms of leadership development?

- **Based on your participation in this leadership development program, has your definition of what constitutes good leadership changed or been influenced in any way?**

- **How do you believe meaning perspectives (values, beliefs, experiences, role models, frames of reference) influenced your answer to the previous question?**
    - Reflecting on the past nine months, do you believe you experienced a time when you realized your values, beliefs, opinions, or expectations had changed?
    - What influenced this change? (external factors not affiliated with the leadership program or internal factors directly affiliated with the leadership program)

Note: Main questions are in **bold** to address the research questions for this study and sub-questions follow main questions as probes to be used as follow-up questions.

Appendix D

Consent Form for Voluntary Participants

Title: Leadership Development as a Transformational Process
Researcher: Denise A. Bannan, Doctoral Candidate
Doctoral Advisor and Principal Investigator: Stephen Kaagan, Ph.D.

The purpose of this research in which you are agreeing to participate is a dissertation study about the experiences of participants in a leadership development-training program. The research will explore how individuals transform their meaning perspectives on what constitutes good leadership and to what extent the leadership development program contributed to that transformation.

The participants will be provided with pseudonyms and any identifying information (e.g., name, title, etc.) about the subjects will be deleted or protected with pseudonyms. Reports of research findings will not permit associating subjects with specific responses or findings. The identities of all research participants that are discussed, as part of the data collection, will be kept confidential. Names and other identifiers in written work will be removed or masked. All information about subjects will be stored in a secure location. This secure location will be in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office with access only to the researcher. The raw data will be kept also in this locked cabinet in the researcher's office. The data collected from the interview conducted will be shredded after the defense of the dissertation in fall of 2003. All data reporting for the research from the subjects will be reported by the researcher only in aggregate so that individual subjects may not be identified or associated with the data provided in the dissertation.

The data might be used in reports about the project, in published articles or books, or presented at conferences. There is no compensation for participation in this study. You should be assured that in any such uses, your identity will NOT be revealed. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

Rights as a Research Subject: If you have any questions at anytime during the nine-month leadership development program pertaining to the purpose of this study and your participation in the study, please contact Denise A. Bannan at (989) 723-5615 or Dr. Stephen Kaagan at (517) 355-1833. You do have the right as a voluntary participant to withdraw from this study at any point even after the interview has taken place. If you have questions/concerns regarding your rights as a research subject, you can contact (anonymously) if you desire: Ashir Kumar, MD, Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRHIS) by regular mail at 202 Olds Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1046; by Phone: (517) 355-2180; by Fax: (517) 432-4503; or by e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu.

By signing below, you agree to voluntarily participate in this study.

_____ _____
Participant's Printed Name Date

_____
Participant's Signature

To ensure accurate data, the researcher requests to audio tape the interviews. After transcription of the audio tapes has taken place, the researcher will destroy the audio tapes. Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement that the interviews be audio taped for the purpose of ensuring accurate data.

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

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