

Emerging Leadership Practices:  
A Narrative Research Study of  
Organizational Development Professionals' Reflective Practices  
in the Digital Era

by  
Jeff Pierce

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Dissertation Committee:

Margaret Gorman, EdD  
Advisor

Tova Sanders, EdD  
Second Reader

Jim DeLung, PhD  
Third Reader

### Abstract

This research explored organizational development practitioners' experiences constructing leadership practices. Its purpose was to understand how practitioners who design and deliver leadership development training and interventions constructed their practices. This study used a reflective lens to explore practitioners' experiences. Eight practitioners, either organizational development professionals or private consultants, participated in this study. A qualitative narrative methodology was used to identify participants' rich experiences. Ten categories emerged from thematic analysis, which were grouped into three themes. First, leadership development is holistic and global. Second, leadership development is not always supported. Third, reflection plays a key role in leadership development practices. The theoretical implications are that practitioners consistently engage in reflective practice and that reflection often occurs before practice. The conclusions and implications for practice are that leadership development has a long-view and sustained approach; that there is a focus on developing the whole person, including interpersonally; and that it is critical to have a strategy for highlighting and reinforcing the value and real-life importance of leadership development from the top down.

*Keywords:* leadership development, reflection, training, leadership interventions

### Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all my friends and family, including:

My father, Steve Pierce; my late mother, Louisa Pierce; and my beautiful daughter, Madison

Pierce

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The experience at Northeastern has been intellectually challenging and one of the most rewarding professional accomplishments of my life. The insights and perspectives gained through this work has been invaluable. Many long days, nights, and weekends have been devoted to reading, writing, and research. Traveling across the country for residencies, working long hours making deadlines, and being satisfied by accomplishments was rewarding. This endeavor was accomplished while working full time, teaching, and raising a daughter.

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## Table of Contents

|                                                              |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Abstract .....                                               | 2         |
| Dedication .....                                             | 3         |
| Acknowledgments .....                                        | 4         |
| <b>Chapter 1: Introduction .....</b>                         | <b>8</b>  |
| Statement of the Problem .....                               | 9         |
| Purpose Statement .....                                      | 12        |
| Research Question .....                                      | 12        |
| Theoretical Framework .....                                  | 12        |
| Overview of the Research Plan .....                          | 16        |
| Significance of the Study .....                              | 17        |
| Assumptions/Delimiters/Limitations .....                     | 18        |
| Key Terms and Definitions .....                              | 19        |
| Summary .....                                                | 20        |
| <b>Chapter 2: Literature Review .....</b>                    | <b>22</b> |
| Leadership Development .....                                 | 22        |
| Evolution and Growth of Leadership Theories .....            | 22        |
| Leadership Development Theory and Research .....             | 24        |
| Leadership Development Interventions: Training Methods ..... | 27        |
| Leadership Intervention Evaluation and Review .....          | 32        |
| Summary .....                                                | 35        |
| Reflective Practice Origins and Components .....             | 35        |
| Knowing-in-Action .....                                      | 36        |
| Reflection-in-Action .....                                   | 37        |
| Reflection on Knowing- and Reflection-in-Action .....        | 37        |
| Reflective Practice Theorists and Perspectives .....         | 38        |
| Reflective Practice in the Professions .....                 | 41        |
| Summary .....                                                | 42        |
| Leadership in the Training and Development Field .....       | 42        |
| Summary .....                                                | 44        |
| <b>Chapter 3: Methodology .....</b>                          | <b>46</b> |
| Purpose Statement and Research Question .....                | 46        |
| Rationale and Approach for Methodology .....                 | 46        |
| Research Design and Method Application .....                 | 47        |
| Participant Demographics .....                               | 48        |
| Research Design .....                                        | 49        |
| Pilot .....                                                  | 49        |
| Preliminary Participant Contact .....                        | 50        |
| Data Collection: Interviews .....                            | 50        |
| Analysis of Research Data .....                              | 53        |
| Trustworthiness of Study and Researcher .....                | 54        |
| Member Checking .....                                        | 54        |

|                                                                           |           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Positionality .....                                                       | 55        |
| Summary .....                                                             | 56        |
| <b>Chapter 4: Research Findings .....</b>                                 | <b>57</b> |
| Study Participants .....                                                  | 57        |
| Data Analysis .....                                                       | 59        |
| Data Collection .....                                                     | 59        |
| Reduction of Data .....                                                   | 59        |
| Emerging Codes and Categories .....                                       | 60        |
| Professional development .....                                            | 63        |
| Leadership development is a process .....                                 | 64        |
| Leadership development approach and perspective was interpersonal .....   | 65        |
| Technology's role in leadership development .....                         | 66        |
| Gap in ecosystem of leadership development .....                          | 67        |
| Resistance to leadership development .....                                | 68        |
| Networking as reflection .....                                            | 69        |
| Feedback from and interactions with learners facilitated reflection ..... | 70        |
| Research development promoted reflection .....                            | 71        |
| Journaling as reflection .....                                            | 72        |
| Summary of Findings .....                                                 | 73        |
| Summary .....                                                             | 75        |
| <b>Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implications .....</b>                      | <b>76</b> |
| Interpretations and Conclusions .....                                     | 76        |
| Leadership Development is Holistic and Global .....                       | 77        |
| Leadership Development Was Not Always Supported .....                     | 79        |
| Reflection Played a Key Role in Leadership Development Practices .....    | 81        |
| Implications for Theory .....                                             | 83        |
| Implications for Practice .....                                           | 84        |
| Implications for Future Research .....                                    | 86        |
| Summary and Reflections .....                                             | 88        |
| References .....                                                          | 90        |
| Appendix A: Introductory and Recruitment Correspondence .....             | 98        |
| Appendix B: Pre-Interview Email .....                                     | 99        |
| Appendix C: Informed Consent .....                                        | 100       |
| Appendix D: Transcript Check Email .....                                  | 103       |
| Appendix E: Interview Protocol .....                                      | 104       |
| Appendix F: Participants' Stories .....                                   | 106       |
| Appendix G: Participant Interview Matrix .....                            | 109       |

|                                                       |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Figure 1: Schön's reflective practice framework ..... | 15 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----|

### List of Tables

|                                                                           |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Table 1: Leadership Intervention Literature .....                         | 31 |
| Table 2: Reflection Literature .....                                      | 39 |
| Table 3: Participant Demographics .....                                   | 48 |
| Table 4: Data Collection Process .....                                    | 49 |
| Table 5: Alignment of Interview Questions to Concepts and Framework ..... | 51 |
| Table 6: Emerging Codes and Categories .....                              | 60 |
| Table 7: Themes and Categories .....                                      | 76 |

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Organizational dynamics have been changing throughout the years. Organizations realize that they need to be continually growing and adapting to keep up with the demands of these changes. Workplace knowledge and expertise also need to keep up with these changes. These impending changes highlight the importance of employee and, even more so, leader and manager development (Collins & Holton, 2004). Leadership development literature has shown that there are both performance and financial payoffs for organizations that develop their leadership capacity (Ardichvili & Manderscheid, 2008; Collins & Holton, 2004).

The case for leadership development's importance has been highlighted through organizational efforts. Human resource development professionals reported in one survey that identifying and developing leaders was their most compelling problem (Fegley, 2006). This sentiment has translated into organizational expenditures. Most organizations spend the largest portion of their training revenue on leadership development (Ardichvili & Manderscheid, 2008). Kellerman (2018) estimated that corporations in the United States spend \$50 billion annually on leadership development. These organizational leadership development efforts have not only been prominent in the United States but have become an international phenomenon: leadership has evolved into the “panacea” (p. 3) of the new millennium (Bolden, 2004).

However pervasive the leadership development industry is becoming, there are still questions about how effective these efforts are at enhancing leaders' skills and organizational performance (Collins & Holton, 2004; Patel & Hamlin, 2012). Leadership development (unlike leadership theory, which often concentrates on one theory) has a vast array of theories from which to choose in developing individual leaders and their capacities to lead others. Furthermore, there must be a distinction between leader development and leadership development, which are

interwoven. Leader development involves developing leaders' individual skills, while leadership development involves a more complex process of influencing individuals, groups, and systems. Evidence- and theory-based leadership development has only been rigorously studied during the last 30 years, so more empirical research is needed to develop a much better understanding of the phenomenon (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014).

This chapter explores the history of organizations' leadership development practices and establishes a foundation for research. It introduces the problem with past and current practices, how research on this topic is progressing, and the theories associated with it. A theoretical framework is used as a lens to glean insight into this phenomenon. This leads to the study's research plan, including a description of strategies used and how data were analyzed. Finally, the significance of the study as well as the potential limitations are discussed. This investigation of organizational leadership development practice and research evolved from this foundation.

### **Statement of the Problem**

An organization's performance relies on the effectiveness of its leaders. The development of effective leaders provides organizations with the ability to create and maintain strategic initiatives (Amagoh, 2009). Therefore, it is paramount that organizations take special care to develop their leaders. Amagoh (2009) suggested that leadership development be systematic or institutionalized within an organization's culture (p. 990). Despite organizations recognizing the importance of leadership development for maintaining a competitive edge in today's business environment, there does not appear to be widespread urgency about it.

To further illustrate the lack of organizational urgency involving leadership development, most businesses are not growing their leaders. In one study, only 44% of organizations had a leadership development structure in place (Giber, Carter, & Goldsmith, 2000). In addition, in the

1980s IBM attributed their market losses to a lack of effective leadership (Ready & Conger, 2003). Moreover, Leskiw and Singh (2007) showed through a review of the literature on leadership development best practices that organizations are best prepared for the future when they have an overall plan with appropriate structures in place.

Furthermore, organizations' global and local competition requires them to be more efficient. This demand forces organizations to become flatter and more adaptable, requiring stronger leadership skills throughout. In addition, organizations need to prepare for the exodus of older workers and the integration of a new generation of workers, also requiring different leadership (Leskiw & Singh, 2007). To meet these demands, leaders need effective leadership skills. Therefore, how to best develop leaders and enhance their effectiveness should be explored (Amagoh, 2009). Otherwise, organizations will not have a basis for determining how to grow future leaders, which is essential for organizational performance. While there has been more research on this topic in recent years, there is still a need to determine which methods and practices are best suited for enhancing leadership effectiveness (Amagoh, 2009; Day et al., 2014).

Research shows that organizations are not making efforts to determine whether leadership development interventions or leadership practices are effective. Leadership development initiatives are assumed to be effective without legitimate evaluation or validation (Collins & Holton, 2004). One of the most prominent meta-analyses of leadership development interventions discussed why organizations were not trying to evaluate these interventions. In that study, Collins and Holton (2004) noted that the competencies required for effective leadership are complex and intermingled, that it is difficult to objectively measure leadership effectiveness either individually or organizationally, and that some researchers believe it is difficult to measure

the effect of leadership development interventions on organizational performance (p. 218). As a result, there is a gap in the literature concerning how organizations are interpreting the effectiveness of their leadership development (Amagoh, 2009; Collins & Holton, 2004; Day et al., 2014). However, existing leadership development literature has been measured using organizational results and quantitative meta-analyses, which are systematic reviews of the effects of interventions (Lacerenza, Reyes, Marlow, Joseph, & Salas, 2017).

This gap provides an opportunity to contribute to the leadership development intervention literature from a different perspective. Starting with why and how leadership development interventions emerge, rather than with the results, could offer a relevant perspective on the topic. Thus, the perspectives of those who design and deliver leadership development interventions could provide the needed insight concerning how to improve its effectiveness. Furthermore, qualitative research has been missing in this area. Therefore, this qualitative examination of leadership development interventions or leadership practices from the design and delivery perspective provides a seminal perspective to the field.

The pervasive theoretical perspectives through which leadership development has been viewed are cognitive and behavioral (Allen, 2007; Amagoh, 2009; Day, 2000; Day et al., 2013). From these perspectives, myriad theories have provided the foundation from which leadership development has been viewed and evaluated. Traditionally, since the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, leader development mostly focused on individual leadership skills (Day et al., 2014, pp. 66-67). However, this does not account for the developmental processes through which leaders evolve and become effective. This deficit drove the evolution of leaders' developmental processes to encompass dynamics involving dyads, groups, teams, organizations, and other multilevel collectives (Day et al., 2014; Day & Harrison, 2007).

This move from the individual leadership perspective to the array of social components encompassing leadership development has redirected the theoretical focus to be more holistic. This approach has not eliminated the individual leader development perspective, but it has amalgamated it with leadership development. As a result, the study of individual leadership theories now addresses multilevel concerns of leadership development, namely the leader, the relationships therein, and the organizational climate and culture (Day & Harrison, 2007, p. 363). This change to a multilevel, collective theoretical perspective of leadership development produces an opportunity to view the field from a different theoretical framework. Beyond traditional quantitative research into organizations' leadership development results, like Burke and Day's (1986) and Collins and Holton's (2004), lies an opportunity to examine the field from a reflective practice approach. Using a reflective practice approach to understand how leadership development interventions are designed and delivered from the onset sheds light on the field.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to examine how leadership practices are constructed. Specifically, this study focused on how organizational development professionals used reflective practice during the design and delivery of leadership development practices. This examination hoped to produce salient leadership development scholarship and improve practice.

### **Research Question**

This study's research question is: How do organizational development professionals describe the construction of their leadership practices?

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study's theoretical perspective, Schön's reflective practice, not only supports the premise of the research question but also provides a lens through which one can interpret this

study. This theoretical framework stems from Schön's (1983, 1992) questioning of the premise of *technical rationality*, a positivist approach to practice in which formal knowledge is considered valid and absolute. Schön's response built upon Dewey's (1938) notion that not only does inquiry resolve indeterminate situations, but it also creates new problems. Therefore, Schön (1992, 1995) set out to build upon Dewey's version of reflective thought to further refine the constructivist approach to resolving problems, henceforth called *reflective practice*. Schön believed that there were varied components of reflective practice. In particular, he felt that reflective conversations with a situation could occur through design, which is the foundation from which this study examines leadership development. Moreover, the theory of reflective practice allows organizational development professionals to interpret and describe how they design and deliver these developmental interventions.

Reflective practice has varied components. Schön (1992) called for inquiry about practice that transforms knowledge from tacit to explicit. Schön described reflective practice in terms of *knowing-in-action*, *reflection-in-action*, and *reflection on knowing- and reflection-in-action*. Knowing-in-action refers to the everyday, taken-for-granted actions in which practitioners engage. These actions have been thought to be "intuition" or "instinct" (Schön, 1992, p. 124). These include actions, such as completing a routine task, that do not require forethought because of preestablished patterns. Many of these actions are tacit, meaning practitioners may have a hard time explaining how these things are done because of their routine nature. These actions are what the organizational professionals of this study routinely engage in every day.

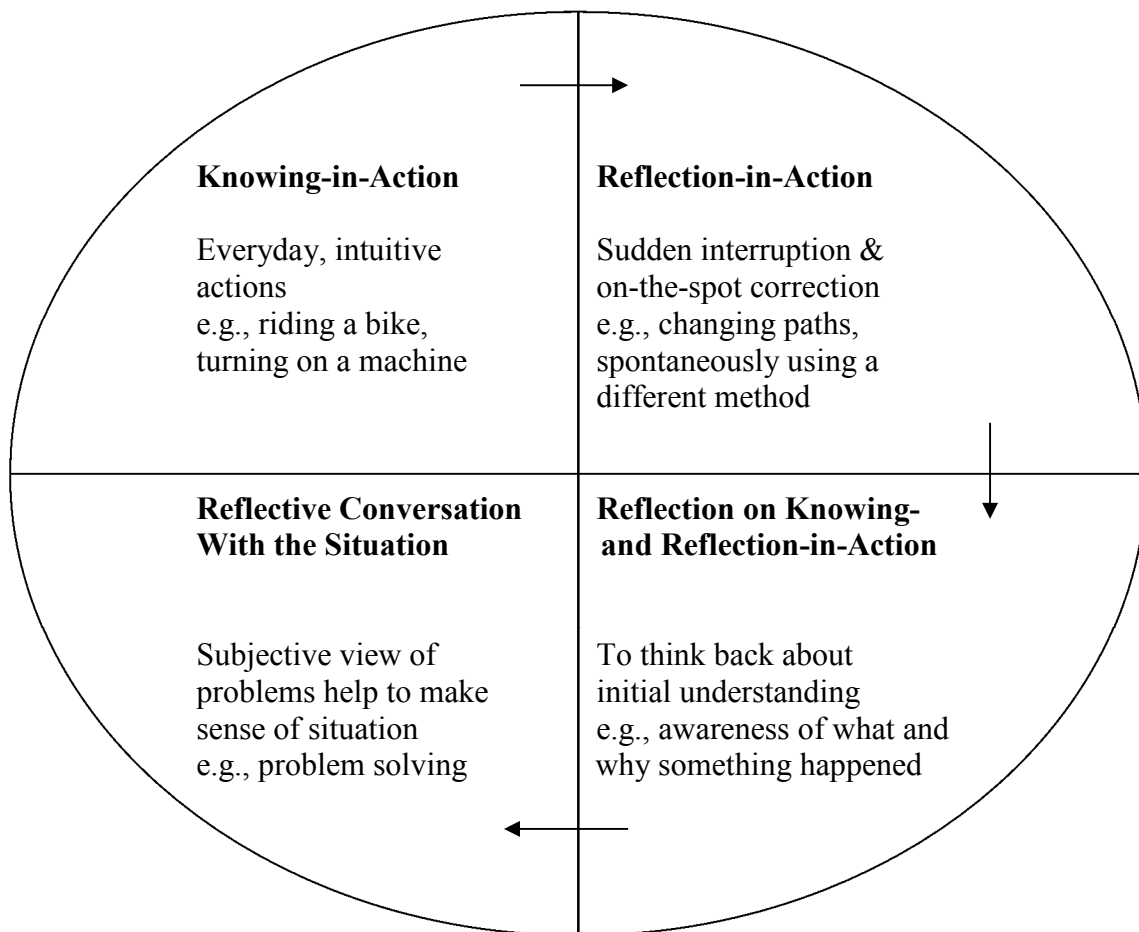
The actions of everyday practice lead to the next step in Schön's (1992) version of reflective practice. The next step, reflection-in-action, refers to how practitioners respond to a sudden interruption in everyday actions. Practitioners alter their paths through a conversation

with the situation, which Schön describes as the process by which practitioners encounter a surprise or “back-talk” (p. 125) during the problem. As these unexpected situations emerge, the practitioner improvises in the moment to correct the problem. This sudden alteration of a situation occurs through the actions of a process or the language of a conversation. The on-the-spot maneuvering to identify and change course is only momentarily addressed, while the original action continues. These sudden changes in actions are what practitioners, and this study’s organizational professionals, are thought to encounter in their everyday practice.

Practitioners’ improvisations during practice are only temporary and lead to the next phase of Schön’s reflective practice: reflection on knowing- and reflection-in-action. This step is analysis or afterthought about the prestructures of routine actions in knowing-in-action or about in-the-moment adjustments to actions in reflection-in-action. This part of the process involves understanding these actions and being able to describe them. Before practitioners can accurately describe these events, they must observe themselves in the event. The subsequent description of these spontaneous actions is different from the activity itself. As reflection-in-action is associated with a conversation with the situation (surprise or talk-back), reflection on reflection-in-action is associated with a reflective conversation with the situation, which occurs as conscious thought is used to reflect on previous actions in order to make future adjustments (Munby, 2012; Schön, 1992). Schön (1992) espoused that reflective conversation with the situation occurs either during the mode of discovery or the mode of design. Schön particularly emphasized the mode of design because practitioners, by their very nature, are designers in a sense through everyday practice.

Schön (1992) said that those who design – practitioners – participate in reflective conversations with the situation. Practitioners decide to engage in activity through prestructures established from past practice. These actions inevitably create problems that will be solved in the

moment (reflection-in-action) but will then create new problems. The continuing process of solving subsequent problems comes through reflection after the fact (reflection on reflection-in-action). This ongoing process ends with practitioners solving a given problem. The practitioners' subjective appreciations of the materials involved allow them to make sense of the situation and thus objectively solve problems. Schön encapsulated reflective practice through what he called the epistemology of practice: the artistry of practitioners' processes of engagement and solving problems (Kinsella, 2010). Figure 1 depicts Schön's reflective practice framework.



*Figure 1.* Schön's reflective practice framework. Derived from Schön (1992).

This study's framework allowed practitioners to examine the construction of their practice through a reflective lens. This study's population included organizational development practitioners who designed and delivered leadership development interventions. Its focus was on how they interpreted, reflected upon, and adjusted to problems, and then on how they constructed these interventions. This study's qualitative, narrative methodology allowed participants to provide rich descriptions of this process. The study hoped to start filling the gaps in the literature about the effectiveness of leadership development that were described by Collins and Holton (2004). It also hoped to provide a basis for improving leadership development practice.

### **Overview of the Research Plan**

This research employed a qualitative, narrative design that studied organizational development professionals' experiences with their leadership development practices. The participants were chosen from across all industries regardless of their location within the United States, both private and public, to get a broad understanding of contemporary leadership development practices. Only participants who had designed and delivered leadership development interventions for at least 5 years were chosen. This purposeful sample was interviewed using semi-structured interviews. Before the participant interviews, an interview protocol was established and pilot interviews were conducted to refine the protocol.

The researcher interviewed eight participants. The interviews were recorded by phone and transcribed using a professional transcription service. The results of the interviews were inductively analyzed for the emergence of categories and associated codes. These categories and codes were organized and mapped using hand-written coding strategies that ensured efficient extraction and synthesis of findings.

After data analysis and the emergence of codes and their corresponding categories, their reliability was verified. Transcripts and corresponding codes were shared with a peer for interrater reliability. In addition, a research journal, field notes taken during data collection, and analytic memoing during data analyses were incorporated to ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of the research.

### **Significance of the Study**

Leadership development has only been rigorously studied during the past 30 years (Day et al., 2014). This has led to the notion that organizations do not have a consistent standard for leadership development effectiveness (Collins & Holton, 2004; Patel & Hamlin, 2012). Therefore, this study is significant at the global level for both scholarship and practice and at the local level for organizational performance. Empirically, leadership development has been analyzed only through an organizational results perspective, which has created a gap in the literature (Collins & Holton, 2004). This has created an opportunity to study this phenomenon from the infancy of an intervention process. Studying what practitioners are experiencing from leadership before interventions occur and why they are developing particular interventions adds a salient perspective to the literature, hopefully creating urgency for future, similar research.

Along with this contribution to leadership development scholarship, there is an opportunity to improve practice. As with scholarship, this contribution to leadership practice informs the infancy of the process rather than the end results of leadership development practices, which has been the dominant evaluation method (Collins & Holton, 2004; Lacerenza et al., 2017). Exploring and examining why and how organizations and individual practitioners introduce particular interventions could have a profound effect on the design and delivery of future interventions. A better understanding of why and how efforts are made could lead to more

effective leadership development interventions. As a result, these efforts could improve leadership effectiveness.

Finally, leadership development practice, at its roots, is designed to improve organizational performance and finances (Ardichvili & Manderscheid, 2008; Collins & Holton, 2004). Therefore, informing scholarship and practice results in the opportunity to improve organizational performance. Thus, this study contributes at the global level, through informing scholarship and practice, and at the local level, through improving performance.

### **Assumptions/Delimiters/Limitations**

This study was based on the following assumptions:

- There is a relationship between leadership development and the interpretation of effective leadership.
- Leadership ability can be developed, refined, and is evolving.
- Leadership ability is a universal concept that traverses all industries and organizations.
- The design and delivery of leadership development interventions can positively influence leadership.

This study's delimiters are as follows:

- Organizational development practitioners who design and deliver leadership development interventions.
- Both internal and external practitioners who have been in the industry for at least 5 years.
- All organizations were considered as prospective sites due to the universal concept of leadership.
- Data were self-reported through semi-structured interviews.

This study's limitations are as follows:

- This study focused only on the design and delivery of development efforts, leaving out individual and organizational outcomes.
- While this study used organizations from any industry to cover a broad scope, individual industries and jobs might have a unique leadership perspective.
- This study's participants included a portion who worked in a particular type of organization, a municipal's organization development, which might have limited their perspectives.
- This study only used eight participants, which limits its scope to a small sample size.
- This study only used interviews for data collection.
- This study used a qualitative methodology, limiting data to the perspectives of the researcher and participants, subjecting findings to alternate interpretations.
- This study did not examine the effect that demographics such as gender, race, ethnicity, or religion might have on leadership, which limited the influence of these factors.

### **Key Terms and Definitions**

The following terms are defined to clarify the terminology used in this study:

***Leadership:*** While there have been myriad definitions promulgated, the consistent premise has been the process of influencing others toward common goals (Metcalf & Benn, 2013; Yukl, 2001).

***Leadership development:*** Planned and systematic efforts to improve the quality of leadership (Groves, 2007).

***Leadership intervention:*** To manipulate leadership in either lab or field settings to impact some specific process variable or outcome. These include such settings as classroom training and scenarios (Avolio, Reichard, Hannah, Walumbwa, & Chan, 2009).

***Leadership practices:*** Includes all leader, leadership, and managerial training and development programs and processes. While this term is not promulgated through the literature, it encapsulates the versions of leadership development and leadership interventions reviewed in this study (Avolio et al., 2009; Groves, 2007).

***Organizational development:*** The training and development efforts of organizations, to include leadership development (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Campbell, 1971; Goldstein, 1980; Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001).

***Organizational development professionals:*** Those who engage in the training and development efforts of organizations and individuals, including consultants. Both perform the same role for the purposes of this study (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Campbell, 1971; Goldstein, 1980; Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001).

***Reflection:*** For the purposes of this study's theoretical framework, reflective practice, Schön (1992) calls for the inquiry of practice that transforms knowledge from tacit to explicit. The following are components of Schön's (1992) reflective practice:

***Knowing-in-action:*** Everyday actions in which practitioners engage through intuition.

***Reflection-in-action:*** A sudden interruption in action that is adjusted to in the moment.

***Reflection on knowing- and reflection-in-action:*** Understanding the two aforementioned processes and being able to describe them.

***Reflective conversation with the situation:*** Occurs as conscious thought is used to reflect on previous actions, reframe the understanding of the situation, and ultimately make sense of the situation to solve the problem.

## Summary

This chapter introduced the context and scope of this study. The problem of practice was defined through the literature. The lens through which the problem was framed is Schön's (1992) reflective practice theory. Leadership development effectiveness is viewed using a qualitative design through the narratives of organizational development professionals' practices. The overview and significance of the study were discussed. In addition, the potential assumptions, delimiters, limitations, and key terms and definitions were discussed. Chapter 2 will review the literature surrounding the salient constructs of this study.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to examine how leadership practices are constructed. This literature review focuses on three strands of literature: leadership development, reflective practice, and leadership in the field of training and development.

First, this review examines the seminal roots and progression of leadership development and its effectiveness, starting with defining leadership to establish the context in which this study is situated. Then it discusses how leadership development is measured. This leads to an opportunity to explore leadership development's effectiveness with a different lens. Second, it introduces Schön's (1983, 1992) reflective practice and how this study uses this perspective. Looking at leadership development from a reflective lens in the design and delivery stage of practice allows for a fresh perspective on this topic. Third, it describes the training and development industry, the field in which this study takes place. This review of these three strands of literature begins by discussing the seminal roots of leadership.

### **Leadership Development**

The definition of leadership starts this section. Leadership is defined and given context before examining the evolution of leadership development. Next, leadership development's history relative to theory and research is explored. Then the history of the effectiveness of leadership development interventions used in organizations is discussed. Finally, how development is measured is examined.

### **Evolution and Growth of Leadership Theories**

The discussion of leadership development cannot commence until leadership itself is understood. The phenomenon of leadership has become so immersed in society that it is often seen as the panacea of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Bolden, 2004, p. 3). However, while this notion seems to

pervade society, there is no one concrete definition of leadership. As a result, the field has been accused of being unscientific (Day & Harrison, 2007, p. 360). This idea has been perpetuated by the pervasive branding of leadership. Rubenstein (2005) recorded over 80 different brands of leadership. However widespread the different models of leadership have become, the underlying premise stays consistent: influencing others toward common goals (Metcalf & Benn, 2013; Yukl, 2001). The process of defining leadership has been evolving for over a century (Day et al., 2014).

Leadership's roots come from the 19<sup>th</sup>-century belief that leadership traits are inherent and immutable (Zaccaro, 2007). This notion asserted that great men, who were heroic, created and changed society for the better because of their superior genetic makeup. This idea of trait-based leadership extended into the 1900s and was not challenged until the late 1940s. Research led to the idea that trait-based leadership could not adequately explain leadership and leader effectiveness. In Stogdill's (1948) seminal challenge to trait-based leadership, he found that leader traits only account for approximately 10% of their success. This led to examining a leader's actions and how they fit into the leadership landscape.

This new direction spawned research examining how actions and behaviors affect leadership success (Vroom & Jago, 2007; Zaccaro, 2007). The University of Michigan and Ohio State University were at the forefront of studying leader behavior. Two of the seminal constructs in leader behavior came from Ohio State University, the dimensions of consideration and initiating structure. The former dealt with interpersonal skills and behaviors while the latter dealt with task-oriented behaviors (Vroom & Jago, 2007). These explanations, as well as others involving behavior, led to considering how other factors influenced the leadership framework.

It was not until the late 1960s that the situation in which leaders navigate began to emerge within leadership research. This notion indicated that the environment and social factors predicted organizational leadership success, not leader traits (Vroom & Jago, 2007). Structure was described as predicting organizational outcomes much more than individual leader traits and performance. In addition, it was promulgated that outcomes had more to do with the socially constructed process by which others interpret leader success. Therefore, variance in organizational outcomes had very little to do with leadership but were based on structural, social, and environmental factors (Pfeffer, 1977, Vroom & Jago, 2007).

Leadership's evolution started with the great man, heroic, trait-based theories. This premise did not fully describe leadership success; therefore, research turned to a more behavioral explanation of leadership. Then the environment and the situation were explored to explain organizational leadership. This review of leadership's evolution is not exhaustive, as its full history extends beyond the scope of this review. Its purpose was to establish the basis for leadership in order to examine and explore the phenomenon of leadership development.

### **Leadership Development Theory and Research**

Leadership development has evolved into a robust field of both theory and research. However, this was not always the case. Leadership development has only been empirically studied since the 1950s (Burke & Day, 1986; Collins & Holton, 2004), while leadership theory has been studied for more than a century (Day et al., 2014). Moreover, the leadership development field has only seen a surge in evidence-based research during the last 15 to 20 years (Day et al., 2014, p. 63). The emergence of these studies has led to leadership development being seen in a more complex light than leadership as a whole. Leadership theory usually focuses on

one theory. However, leadership development is a complex and dynamic process involving multiple facets (Day et al., 2014).

Leadership development is how leaders are developed both individually and through a more complex social process (Day, 2000; Day et al., 2014). Day (2000) bifurcated leadership development into leader development and leadership development. Leader development is associated with the acquisition of individual skills and dispositions (e.g., self-awareness, initiative, and trustworthiness) that are salient to leadership. This type of development is intrapersonal and creates human capital. Leadership development focuses on developing leaders socially through interactions within their environment. This type of development creates social capital through relationship building and interpersonal exchanges that foster collaboration and other social skills (Day, 2000, pp. 583-586). However, these two constructs often are integrated into a holistic approach to leadership development (Amagoh, 2009; Day, 2000).

Within the context of leadership development, several approaches have been undertaken within organizations to develop their leaders. These approaches have mostly been studied empirically through quantitative meta-analyses, the aggregating of studies to compare the effects of similar interventions (Lacerenza et al., 2017). Lacerenza et al.'s (2017) study of leadership interventions, which is the most recent and comprehensive of such reviews, categorizes interventions into information-based methods, demonstrated-based methods, and practice-based methods. Information-based methods are traditional classes, lectures, and textbook delivery. Demonstrated-based methods provide positive and negative examples of competencies via in-person, video, audio, or other related platforms. Finally, practice-based methods are based on role-play, simulations, and other practice-oriented scenarios. Consequently, research on leadership interventions primarily includes one of these three methods.

Furthermore, recent research shows that technology can support leadership development interventions (Feser, Nielsen, & Rennie, 2017). Some of these platforms have been identified as blogs, video messages, posts, and social media (Feser et al., 2017; Manning-Ouellette & Black, 2017). However, the research is not clear about which methods are most effective. Leadership development's modes of delivery have not been thoroughly examined (Manning-Ouellette & Black, 2017). In one study, Manning-Ouellette and Black (2017) researched whether leadership students from the same course learned more effectively either through traditional classroom methods or through an online platform. They found that the online platform promoted more reflection and experiential application to learning. They posited that the online platform gave students more time to reflect and apply real-life experience to the content in contrast to classroom instruction. Conversely, the classroom space did not provide the opportunity to reflect. As a result, classroom students synthesized material rather than critically examining their approach. These findings provide a foundation from which to further examine digital platforms within leadership development.

Leadership development has evolved from the first empirical studies in the 1950s to contemporary development. Leadership development has been defined by leader development and leadership development, both of which amalgamate into one developmental effort (Amagoh, 2009; Day, 2000). These efforts have been researched in terms of leadership intervention effectiveness only through quantitative meta-analyses. Their qualitative counterpart, meta-ethnography, the synthesis of qualitative research, was not found in the leadership development literature (Atkins et al., 2008; Tondeur et al., 2011). Furthermore, leadership development has been primarily studied through three categories: information-based methods, demonstrated-based

methods, and practice-based methods (Lacerenza et al., 2017). Finally, leadership development theory has the opportunity to be examined through a digital or technological approach.

### **Leadership Development Interventions: Training Methods**

Leadership development has only been studied empirically for a relatively short time. For the purposes of this literature review, the phrase *leadership development* is synonymous with *managerial development*; the latter was used in earlier studies but has transformed into the former, which is used for this study. The first studies involving leadership development can be traced back to the early 1950s (Burke & Day, 1986; Campbell, 1971; Campbell, Dunnette, Lawler, & Weick, 1970). These studies, as well as training and development in general, were thought to be unempirical and anecdotal (Burke & Day, 1986; Campbell, 1971; Campbell et al., 1970; Goldstein, 1980). Campbell (1971) is widely considered to be the first comprehensive and empirical review of personnel training and development, which included some management training (Burke & Day, 1986; Campbell, 1971; Goldstein, 1980). However, Burke and Day (1986) was the first meta-analysis reviewing the effectiveness of leadership development studies.

The evidence presented up until this juncture showed that the connection between leadership training and the acquisition of leadership skills was not evident (Burke & Day, 1986; Collins & Holton, 2004). Therefore, to review the effectiveness of leadership development, Burke and Day (1986) conducted a meta-analysis of 70 nonredundant studies involving managerial training published from 1951-1982 (p. 233). There were several key findings from this seminal research. Burke and Day used the units of analysis of subjective learning, objective learning, subjective behavior, and objective results. Along with the concomitant training methods (lecture, discussion, role playing, motivational, behavioral modeling, and decision making), they found both positive and negative correlations between managerial training and effectiveness.

Overall, they found managerial training to be moderately effective across different content areas and training methods. However, they stressed that their meta-analysis showed the need for more empirically sound research, to include the use of varied dependent variables and more studies for validation.

The next significant meta-analysis of leadership development training, now also referred to as leadership development interventions, was Collins and Holton's (2004) review. They noted that the leadership development literature had grown since the last review; therefore, a reevaluation of the field was necessary. Based on Burke and Day's (1986) review and the overall literature, they said that very little was known about how leadership skills and dispositions contribute to organizational effectiveness. Previous research focused on individual leadership learning and skills, without focusing on organizational outcomes. Therefore, Collins and Holton focused on how leadership development at the individual, group, and organizational levels contributed to the effectiveness of organizational outcomes.

Collins and Holton (2004) used both objective and subjective units of analysis relating to learning and behavior, similar to Burke and Day (1986), to study leadership development. To capture the organizational results component of leadership development, Collins and Holton delineated the units of analysis into subjective system results and objective system results. They located 83 studies that included only formal, structured training methods (feedback, developmental relationships, and on-the-job training studies were a focus but rarely located), from 1982-2001. They found that training interventions were moderately effective across methods and outcomes. However, less than 10% of studies focused on the organizational or strategic level. Although their findings were similar to Burke and Day's on effectiveness, a gap was identified between individual leadership skills and organizational performance.

Furthermore, Collins and Holton (2004) found that their meta-analysis was more reliable than Burke and Day (1986). They called into question Burke and Day's inflation of effect sizes, aggregating multiple outcomes within the same study for nonindependent effect sizes, doubting the rigor of their review. Collins and Holton's analyses only included single outcome measures, treating multiple independent interventions within the same study as separate effect sizes, which they called a more reliable methodology (pp. 227-234). However, they recognized that the meta-analysis methodology was still evolving during Burke and Day's review and that new methods were available during their own analysis (p. 234). They concluded that there was still a lack of empirical research in terms of organizational outcomes, nontraditional development (on-the job, mentoring, coaching, and feedback), and the effect of moderators.

In an effort to further analyze the effectiveness of leadership development interventions, Powell and Yalcin (2009) amalgamated the last two reviews into one study. Powell and Yalcin set out to measure the completeness of these two comprehensive meta-analyses. However, they limited their findings to private-sector organizations (p. 232), which amounted to 85 studies from the last two reviews and a few additional studies, all from 1952-2002. They found that through these years, leadership development did not have a statistically significant increase in effect sizes; in other words, private-sector leadership training did not increase in its effectiveness over this timespan. However, one positive effect found through their analyses was that learning, as an outcome measure, had been effective. They concluded that while learning was taking place, the transfer to the workplace had not been effective.

Continuing contemporary leadership development research, Avolio et al. (2009) approached leadership intervention effectiveness differently. Avolio et al. focused on categorizing interventions through comparing how they were affected either by newer

(transformational or charismatic) or traditional (behavioral or transactional) leadership theories or by the type of intervention. The types of interventions were primarily categorized by traditional training (classroom) or by other nontraditional means (role playing or scenarios). They also used the meta-analysis methodology to measure leadership intervention effectiveness, using the full range of studies available since empirical inception, which included 138 independent studies. They found that leadership interventions had a moderately positive impact across theories and types of interventions. However, what they set out to specifically measure, new versus old leadership, had no significant variance, barring varying moderators. They also found that nontraditional types of interventions had slightly stronger effects than traditional types of interventions. Overall, they found while there was evidence that leadership interventions had a positive impact on participants, the link from the intervention to specific leadership outcomes was not evident and needed to be further examined.

The most recent empirical analysis of leadership development interventions reviewed the studies mentioned thus far in this literature review. Lacerenza et al. (2017) comprehensively cross-referenced these previous studies and located relevant, empirically based leadership development intervention studies produced since then. Lacerenza et al. found 335 independent studies to evaluate. Their findings built on previous analyses that found interventions to only be minimally to moderately effective. They found leadership interventions were moderately to significantly effective. Their findings showed positive impacts across all levels of evaluations (reactions, learning, behavior, and results) that varied based on the moderators. They significantly expanded previous meta-analyses by incorporating 15 different leadership moderators (e.g., needs analysis, spacing effect, voluntariness, and training setting) that past studies did not examine. Thus, they found that some moderators (training approaches) were not

particularly effective; however, others (needs analysis, feedback, multiple delivery methods, spaced training, and face-to-face training) were effective. Their research included nearly three times the number of studies as any previous analysis (Lacerenza et al., 2017, p. 1701). Lacerenza et al. is the most contemporary and comprehensive study of the leadership intervention literature. The history of the leadership intervention literature is captured in Table 1.

Table 1

*Leadership Intervention Literature*

| Author                  | Summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Main points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Burke & Day (1986)      | Seminal empirical analysis of the effectiveness of leadership interventions.                                                                                                                                                      | Leadership interventions found to be moderately effective across content areas and training methods. There were few empirically based studies to review; noted that more were needed.                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Collins & Holton (2004) | Studied leadership interventions because leadership theories had evolved from previous review. Also sought to measure organizational results or performance relative to interventions, which was not captured in the past review. | Leadership interventions were also found to be moderately effective across methods and outcomes. However, a gap still existed relative to organizational performance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Powell & Yalcin (2009)  | Studied the comprehensiveness of the two previous reviews relative to leadership interventions but only included private-sector organizations. A limitation was not including governmental organizations.                         | Found that private-sector leadership interventions did not have a significant overall increase in effectiveness over the period analyzed, 1952 to 2002. Also found that intervention learning was not being effectively transferred to the workplace in practice.                                                                                                                                   |
| Avolio et al. (2009)    | Reviewed leadership interventions from a different perspective. Categorized interventions by newer or older leadership theories and by traditional or nontraditional training methods.                                            | Found that leadership interventions were moderately effective across all theories and types of interventions; there was no difference between newer versus older leadership theories. Found that nontraditional intervention types were slightly more effective than traditional ones. Also found that there was a gap in identifying links between interventions and specific leadership outcomes. |

| Author                  | Summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Main points                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lacerenza et al. (2017) | Most recent and comprehensive review of leadership intervention effectiveness; reviewed previous seminal reviews, to include later intervention studies. Used 15 moderators to measure leadership intervention effectiveness. | Found that leadership interventions were moderately to significantly effective. Found more significant effects from interventions than any of the past reviews. |

The history of leadership interventions began to be empirically researched in the early 1950s. However, Burke and Day (1986) was the first empirical, meta-analytic review of leadership intervention effectiveness. Burke and Day found leadership development interventions to be moderately effective across content areas and training methods. Collins and Holton (2004) studied leadership interventions after the previous review and found similar results: interventions were moderately effective. Then Powell and Yalcin (2009) reviewed the completeness of the two previous empirical reviews. However, a limitation of that study was that it only reviewed private-sector interventions. They found that leadership intervention effectiveness had not significantly increased over the timespan previously studied. Next, Avolio et al. (2009) studied leadership interventions since empirical inception using theoretical and training method moderators. They found that interventions were moderately effective across all theories and interventions, with varied moderator effects. Finally, Lacerenza et al. (2017) conducted the most recent and comprehensive leadership intervention study. They used 15 distinct moderators, most of which had not been used previously, to measure intervention effectiveness and found moderate to significant intervention effectiveness. All of these leadership intervention analyses were quantitative (no qualitative leadership intervention effectiveness reviews were found) and used Kirkpatrick's (1959) four levels of training criteria, which are the foremost empirical evaluation methods for training program effectiveness.

### **Leadership Intervention Evaluation and Review**

In the literature, a levels-based approach has been used to evaluate the effectiveness of leadership interventions. Kirkpatrick's (1959) four levels of training evaluation have been the most commonly used criteria among training programs in general, including leadership intervention training (Lacerenza et al., 2017). The four levels of Kirkpatrick's training evaluation are reaction, learning, behavior (transfer of training), and results. While these levels have been consistently used and studied since their inception, their underpinnings have been relatively stable (Kirkpatrick, 1959, 1994, 1996; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). These levels are described to understand how leadership interventions are measured.

The reaction level is the evaluation of participants' subjective satisfaction with training, based on their attitudes or feelings (Kirkpatrick, 1959, 1994, 1996; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). These evaluations ask participants their opinions about the training, either verbally or in writing (Dyke & Scourtoudis, 2007). The reaction level had been the most frequently evaluated training measure in practice, while research seeks to evaluate all levels (Alliger & Janak, 1989). This measure is the easiest to evaluate, which may have been the reason for this practice. The reaction level has been shown to have little to no correlation with the other levels of evaluation (Alliger & Janak, 1989; Tonhauser & Buker, 2016). However, more organizations are now not only evaluating the reaction level but evaluating the learning level as well (Tonhauser & Buker, 2016). The next level of evaluation is learning.

The learning level is the evaluation of new knowledge and skills acquired from training (Kirkpatrick, 1959, 1994, 1996; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). These evaluations include written tests and simulations (Dyke & Scourtoudis, 2007). As Tonhauser and Buker (2016) postulated, the learning level of evaluation is being used more frequently in organizations. This

level has been shown to have moderate effects on the next two levels of training evaluations, behavior and results (Alliger & Janak, 1989).

The behavior level is the evaluation of how much a participant's behavior has been altered, which is the effect from the transfer of training (Kirkpatrick, 1959, 1994, 1996; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). These evaluations include pre- and post-comparisons of behaviors and observations from the participant's work associates such as peers, subordinates, and supervisors (Dyke & Scourtoudis, 2007). This level has not been measured frequently in organizations, yet it has been shown to have a link to the other evaluation levels (Tonhauser & Buker, 2016). In addition, the behavior level of evaluation has been shown to have a positive effect on the results level (Alliger & Janak, 1989).

The results level is the evaluation of the positive effects or changes in an organization as a result of training (Kirkpatrick, 1959, 1994, 1996; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). These evaluations include tangible effects such as cost savings and improved performance (Dyke & Scourtoudis, 2007). Like the behavioral level, this level of evaluation has not been frequently examined by organizations (Tonhauser & Buker, 2016). Nevertheless, the results level has been shown to have a positive correlation with the behavior level of evaluation (Alliger & Janak, 1989). Overall, however, the results level has not been highly correlated with the other three levels, showing a lack of training causality at this level (Dyke & Scourtoudis, 2007; Tonhauser & Buker, 2016).

Kirkpatrick's (1959, 1994, 1996; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006) four levels of training evaluation has been the foremost method used throughout the leadership intervention literature. The reaction, learning, behavior, and results levels are how training programs are evaluated for measures of success. While reaction seems to be the most widely evaluated measure in

organizations, learning is now being evaluated more often. Yet, the behavior and results levels of evaluation, which are organizations' ultimate objectives in development, are often not evaluated within organizations. In general, however, research shows that formal training measures significantly contribute to the development of competencies (Tonhauser & Buker, 2016).

### **Summary**

This review of leadership development literature started by defining leadership to provide a context for understanding the topic. Then the history of leadership development theory and research was examined. Leadership development theory has coalesced leader development and leadership development into one concept. These interventions were traced from their seminal roots to current literature. There is evidence that leadership interventions in organizations have moderate to significant effectiveness. However, most research showed a lack of organizational results from leadership development and showed that the method by which training is delivered determines its effectiveness. Leadership interventions have been measured and evaluated consistently through Kirkpatrick's (1959) four levels of training evaluation. These interventions have only been analyzed from a quantitative, organizational results perspective. There is an opportunity to examine this field through a qualitative, reflective practice perspective.

### **Reflective Practice Origins and Components**

This study's focus and purpose, examining how leadership practices are constructed, is being explored through a reflective lens. Schön's (1983, 1992) reflective practice is the theoretical framework through which the design and delivery of leadership development interventions will be examined. Therefore, Schön's components of reflective practice will be explored. Then, the different reflective practice theorists who have contributed to Schön's model will be examined. Finally, reflective practice as used in the professions will be reviewed.

Schön's (1983, 1992) reflective practice was born through reworking Dewey's (1933, 1938) studies of reflective thought or inquiry. Dewey felt that inquiry started with doubt and was resolved through a continuum of thought. However, this process ultimately leads to an indeterminate situation or new problems, with no real resolution. Dewey also felt the inquirer was immersed within the situation and was an active participant rather than an outside observer. Dewey's overarching premise was that inquiry was the same whether it involved the epistemology of science or common sense. The pattern of inquiry remained the same.

Schön (1983, 1992) reworked Dewey's (1938) reflective thought to involve professional practice. This was born from Schön and others who grew weary of technical rationality or the application of the positivist approach, hard sciences such as engineering and math, to professional practice. These skills did not address the social aspects of the professions (Schön, 1983, 1992; Thompson & Pascal, 2012). As a result, Schön developed a constructivist approach to solving problematic situations in professional practice, which he called reflective practice. Schön believed that in the artistry of professional practice, implicit knowledge could be made explicit through reflective practice. The components of reflective practice are knowing-in-action, reflection-in-action, and reflection on knowing- and reflection-in-action, with the latter being the reflective conversation with the situation (Munby, 2012; Schön, 1992). Within the reflective conversation with the situation lies the mode of designing. This framework is used to examine the design, construction, and delivery of leadership interventions.

### **Knowing-in-Action**

Schön's (1983, 1992) framework starts with the everyday actions of practitioners. These activities are intuitive prestructures of practitioners' daily events. These activities include routine actions such as turning on a computer and ordinary interactions with others. These actions draw

upon what Schön calls a tacit pattern or path of activity. That is, these actions are understood or implied without having to think about or talk about what needs to be done next. Furthermore, it might be hard to describe these activities explicitly because of their tacit nature. They are considered more spontaneous than thought out (Kinsella, 2010; Schön, 1992).

### **Reflection-in-Action**

A practitioner's routine activities are often interrupted by a surprise. When an unplanned interruption emerges, a practitioner makes an adjustment during the activity (Schön, 1983, 1992). This type of adjustment may come in the form of an athlete's performance or a teacher's classroom instruction. This form of reflection can be either action based or verbal in nature. Whether adjusting during a conversation or an action, reflection-in-action entails spontaneous adjustments during an activity (Schön, 1983, 1992). Schön (1983, 1992) refers to this type of reflection as having a conversation with the situation, not literally but in a transactional sense. A practitioner, while in the situation, observes new ways of envisioning their path and adjusts accordingly. This adjustment involves both thought and action, which then can cause new problems, becoming a cyclical process.

### **Reflection on Knowing- and Reflection-in-Action**

Reflection on knowing- and reflection-in-action involves thinking back to both previous modes of reflection. This reflection involves thinking back to how routine actions were performed during knowing-in-action and realizing the patterns of behavior. This reflection also involves thinking back to the spontaneous adjustments that occurred during the reflection-in-action and reframing these understandings. Overall, this mode of reflection is designed to examine and reframe initial understandings of previous actions. This mode leads to the reflective conversation with the situation, which is reflection on reflection-in-action (Schön, 1992).

Reflective conversation with the situation is an inquiry into a problem and reframing the understanding of this problem. Schön (1992) espoused that reflective conversation with a situation is by its nature a form of designing and is thought to be at the core of practice for all professions. He also espoused that the process of designing is not so much the design activities of a practitioner but the process by which things are built under conditions of uncertainty, such as in an argument or lesson plan (Schön, 1995). Herein, the practitioner is working with the materials of a situation from *prestructures*, or past understandings, that encounter uncertainty or problems. Then *frame experimentation* or dialogue with these materials (the interaction with the situation) occurs to solve the uncertainties. The frame is the initial idea from which the practitioner moves. This experimentation can occur several times throughout the process, creating new problems that are eventually solved through the reshaping of conditions (Schön, 1992; Waks, 2001).

Schön's (1983, 1992) reflective model began with a reworking of Dewey's (1933, 1938) reflective thought or inquiry. Schön's reframing of this original model produced his reflective practice theory. This reflective process has its roots in professional practice and has had several iterations since Schön's seminal theory.

### **Reflective Practice Theorists and Perspectives**

Schön's (1983, 1992) reflective practice context was education. Schön espoused that teaching is a process of design and discovery in which teachers and students collaboratively embark in a process of teaching and learning. Schön's reflective practice opened doors to other domains. Teacher education programs were scrutinized for their lack of reflection during teacher preparation (Etscheidt, Curran, & Sawyer, 2012). In addition, nursing education was also steering toward reflection in their education programs and professional standards (Carroll et al.,

2002). These developments led to theorists reframing reflective theory to fit professional practice in different contexts. This review now focuses on salient reflective practices related to professional practice. A summary of key reflective practice theorists is in Table 2.

Table 2

*Reflection Literature*

| Author                | Summary                                                                                                                                                          | Main points                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dewey (1933, 1938)    | Inquiry is the process of turning thought back on itself. Inquiry starts with an indeterminate situation that is made determinant but then creates new problems. | Dewey's main focus was the theory of inquiry, hence reflective thought.                                                                  |
| Schön (1987, 1992)    | Adapted Dewey's reflective thought into reflective practice. Expounded on inquiry to include a constructivist approach to reframing problematic situations.      | Created different components of reflective practice for the professional practitioner, thereby creating a design-like approach           |
| Van Manen (1977)      | Developed a hierarchy of three levels of reflection. These levels were thought to create a critical view of reflection.                                          | Involves three levels: technical rationality, practical application-contextual, and critical reflection-dialectical                      |
| LaBoskey (1994)       | Reflection is a cognitive process that requires more than a basic understanding of an event or experience.                                                       | Identified three types of reflective thinkers: common-sense thinkers, alert novices, and pedagogical thinkers                            |
| Hatton & Smith (1995) | An attempt to describe reflective thinking in teaching through multiple perspectives                                                                             | Four levels of reflection were identified: descriptive information, descriptive reflection, dialogic reflection, and critical reflection |

Schön's (1987, 1992) reflective practice theory was born from Dewey's (1933) reflective thought. Unlike Schön, Van Manen (1977) developed a version of critical reflection within an educational context. There were three levels in this version: technical rationality involved the technical application of educational knowledge, practical application-contextual involved clarifying assumptions and the application to practice to reach goals, and critical reflection-dialectical involved critically questioning political and moral issues. LaBoskey (1994) created a

continuum of reflective thinking that involved the notion that reflection goes beyond the basic knowledge and understanding of an event. The three levels of this continuum are commonsense thinkers, alert novices, and pedagogical thinkers. This continuum goes from the least complex, commonsense thinkers; to an alert novice, who is more inquisitive; to a pedagogical thinker, who employs long-view, strategic thinking. Hatton and Smith (1995) also identified criteria to assess reflection relative to education. Hatton and Smith defined four types of reflection: descriptive information that simply described an event without reflection; descriptive reflection that provided reasoning for an event; dialogic that resembles a conversation with oneself for possible alternatives; and critical reflection that looks at the broader historical, sociopolitical context (Thorsen & DeVore, 2013).

Among the myriad theorists of reflective practice, the constant of this construct is the ability to look back on or think about events (Finlay, 2008; Kinsella, 2010; Schön, 1992; Thompson & Pascal, 2012; Thorsen & DeVore, 2013). Nevertheless, the critics of Schön's seminal theory have added components to his original construct. Foremost is one piece that was thought to be missing. The thought-out future actions of practitioners has been seen as a gap in the theory (Finlay, 2008; Grushka, Hinde-McLeod, & Reynolds, 2005; Thompson & Pascal, 2012). In addition, the critical component of social context, including power relations and the emancipation of discriminated groups, has been seen as a gap in Schön's theory (Finlay, 2008; Reynolds, 1998; Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Furthermore, Schön's theory has been accused of being apolitical or atheoretical; oversimplifying reflection; and not taking the meaning making, or the hermeneutical aspect, of reflection into account (Thompson & Pascal, 2012, pp. 316-318). However, Schön's reflective aspect of looking back or reflecting on past events for understanding has been constant in reflective practice.

The evolution of reflective practice started with Dewey's (1933) initial conception of reflective thought, which led to Schön's (1987, 1992) reflective practice theory. The reflective practice construct opened doors for the education and health care fields, primarily nursing, to focus on reflection in the education of their practitioners (Carroll et al., 2002; Etscheidt et al., 2012; Mann, Gordon, & MacLeod, 2009). Then myriad theorists emerged with different versions of Schön's reflective practice construct. These versions, with Schön's basic construct of reflection in place, have mostly been empirically studied in the education and health care fields.

### **Reflective Practice in the Professions**

The empirical examination of reflective practice has yielded scarce results from the health care and education fields. These findings were derived only from studies with clear methodologies that included outcomes of reflective practice (Mann et al., 2009; Ruth-Sahd, 2003). In addition, reflective practice studies have been primarily qualitative. Ruth-Sahd (2003) posited that these studies were probably qualitative in an effort to maintain the reflective nature of the theory (p. 491). Duke and Appleton (2000) also maintained that the qualitative nature of reflective studies was to avoid technical rationality, which was the emphasis of reflective theories. In addition, much of the reflective research was from the perspective of students, not educators or practitioners (Ruth-Sahd, 2003). However, this review focuses on empirical research involving practitioners because of this study's topic: organizational professionals' reflective experiences with the construction of their leadership development practices.

Different strategies have been used to enhance reflective thinking in the professions. Throughout the reflective practice literature, it was promulgated that the reflective process started with an uncomfortable feeling or hunch that needed to be explored further. Mott (1994) (as cited in Ruth-Sahd, 2003) found in a qualitative study of 12 practitioners that uncomfortable

feelings were the triggering events that alerted them to reflect on a situation. Furthermore, there is evidence that reflection is an ongoing process. In two separate studies, educators were more effective when building on experience during their reflective processes (Pinsky & Irby, 1997; Pultorak, 1996). Other components that helped the reflective thinking process were written artifacts, such as journals or portfolios (Mann et al., 2009; Williams & Wessel, 2004). Wong, Kember, Chung, and Yan (1995) found that nurses used journals as a form of reflection.

Reflective practice in the professions was studied from a qualitative perspective, maintaining the theory's reflective nature. The education and health care fields were the primary industries studied. Few sound empirical findings were produced (Mann et al., 2009; Ruth-Sahd, 2003). However, some strategies emerged as effective in the reflective practice process.

### **Summary**

Schön's (1983) reflective practice theory started by reframing Dewey's (1933) reflective thought construct. Reflective practice theory was established through several components and led to the creation of different iterations from varied theorists. Effective strategies for practice emerged from empirical studies of this phenomenon. The reflective practice framework lends a unique perspective for examining this study's context, which is leadership training and development.

### **Leadership in the Training and Development Field**

This study's topic, leadership development, is situated in the training and development field. This review outlines the field's context from both a scholarly and practice interest. This outline consists of research into the benefits of this industry. This industry is salient to this research because it is the one from which study participants were chosen.

The importance of training and development in organizations has been regularly publicized since the inaugural *Annual Review of Psychology* in the early 1970s (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Campbell, 1971; Goldstein, 1980; Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001). This review has documented research in the organizational training and development industry. Training refers to the systematic improvement of a particular skill or its effectiveness. Development refers to the acquisition of these same skills, but for the overall enhancement of personal growth. However, in the field of training and development research, these terms are often interrelated and, therefore, are parallel in meaning (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). As organizations attempt to compete in the global market, the need for more effective training and development has risen (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009).

In an extensive review of training and development literature, Aguinis and Kraiger (2009) found that organizational training had a positive effect on job performance. Salas and Cannon-Bowers' (2001) sixth review of the *Annual Review of Psychology* delineated the different components that comprise the training and development process: First are the theoretical advances, such as variables and conditions that affect training, that translate into practice. Then training needs analysis focuses on where training is needed, what needs to be taught, and who needs to be taught. Then pretraining variables are evaluated, such as individual factors and training induction. Next are the training methods and instructional strategies that will be used in training. According to Salas and Cannon-Bowers, three components combine to create instructional strategies: task analysis, methods used, and required competencies. Finally, posttraining conditions, such as the transfer of training and evaluation of training, are considered. These components form the context in which training and development professionals, this study's participants, worked.

This study's topic of leadership development practices is rooted in the training and development field. Leadership development also falls within the purview of organizational development as a whole. Organizational development professionals are the practitioners who make up the training and development field. The researcher found through a search of the *Annual Reviews of Psychology*, which began tracing the development of this field in the early 1970s, that no efforts have been made to delimit practitioners' demographics within this industry (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Campbell, 1971; Goldstein, 1980; Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001).

Furthermore, training and development research has examined the usefulness of technology mediums. Technology-driven instruction, usually in the form of online or Web-based instruction, has mixed results on learning effectiveness. Aguinis and Kraiger (2009) reported that this type of training delivery has shown positive results when specific guidance is given about what and how to study and practice material. This guidance helps mitigate the high levels of learner control, in contrast to classroom instruction. Otherwise, learners who are at lower levels of ability or experience may make poor decisions. Other research has shown negligible differences in effectiveness between classroom instruction versus Web-based technology delivery. However, research recognizes the benefits of technology-driven instruction, but only coupled with specific guidance (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009).

### **Summary**

This chapter began with an overview of the evolution of leadership as a whole, defining the underlying context for this study. Leadership theory and research was explored to introduce the research problem: the lack of proven effectiveness in leadership development interventions or training. Then this study's theoretical framework, Schön's (1983, 1992) reflective practice, was introduced as the lens through which to examine organizational development professionals'

perspectives on their construction of leadership development practices. Finally, the training and development field, from which study participants were chosen, was discussed.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology used to examine organizational development professionals' perspectives regarding their construction of leadership practices. It begins with the overview of the methodology used in this study, including restating the purpose statement and research question. Then the research design, including participant population and recruitment, will be discussed. Next, the data collection and analysis plan will be described. Finally, the trustworthiness of the study and positionality of the researcher will be discussed.

#### **Purpose Statement and Research Question**

The purpose of this study was to examine how leadership practices are constructed. Specifically, this study focused on how organizational development professionals used reflective practice during the design and delivery of leadership development practices. This examination hoped to produce salient leadership development scholarship and to improve practice. This study's research question is: How do organizational development professionals describe the construction of their leadership practices?

#### **Rationale and Approach for Research Methodology**

This research employed a qualitative, narrative approach to study how organizational development professionals interpret the construction of their leadership practices. This study's qualitative approach was appropriate for capturing the participants' lived experiences. This approach is rooted in the constructivist perspective of focusing on the participants' construction of truth rather than on factual or historical truth (Dhunpalth, 2000; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiachm, & Zilber, 1998). The constructivist perspective allows participants to make meaning of their experiences. Their inner identities reflect personal experiences in different ways, allowing for unique representations of practice (Dhunpalth, 2000; Lieblich et al., 1998). This methodology

allows access to the respondents' narratives and their social and cultural contexts (Dhunpaph, 2000).

A qualitative, narrative methodology uses interviews to interpret participants' life stories or the particular settings in which they operate (Lieblich et al., 1998). This method allows participants to provide detailed responses, resulting in rich and holistic accounts of events (Geertz, 1973; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Narrative data interpretation is a robust process that extends beyond the quantitative capturing of numbers, allowing for the uncovering of nuances and layers of stories (Josselson, 2013; Miles et al., 2014). This results in rich data that could not be extracted through questionnaires or experiments. Furthermore, while the qualitative, narrative approach employs a smaller group of participants than traditional research, the quantity and breadth of data allow for a complete story (Lieblich et al., 1998).

This study used a qualitative, narrative methodology to capture the lived experiences of organizational development professionals' leadership practices. This allowed data to include rich and full accounts of participant' experiences. Next, this study's overall research design will be discussed.

### **Research Design and Method Application**

This study used a purposeful sampling method. The aim of this method was to identify organizational development professionals who design and deliver leadership development interventions or training, henceforth called leadership practices. Two criteria were used to select participants. First, to establish depth of experience, practitioners had to have been involved in the design and delivery of leadership interventions for at least 5 years. Second, for consistency of context in data collection, practitioners contributed to leadership development within and for organizations, either as an organizational employee or an outside consultant. The size or type of

organization was not a criterion because the universally accepted definition of leadership is the process of influencing others toward common goals (Metcalf & Benn, 2013; Yukl, 2001). Next, the participant demographics will be discussed.

### **Participant Demographics**

Participant profiles were gathered through the interviews and included their backgrounds in this study's focus industry, organizational development professionals who design and deliver leadership development interventions. This information included their gender, formal education, current role to include private or public sector, and length of time in that role (Table 3). In order to protect the confidentiality of the participants, their identities and organizations are anonymous.

Table 3

#### *Participant Demographics*

| Participant | Gender | Formal education  | Role/sector                                                                                                             | Years in role |
|-------------|--------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1           | Male   | No college degree | Owens leadership development company; private sector                                                                    | 26            |
| 2           | Male   | No college degree | Owens leadership development company; private sector                                                                    | 5             |
| 3           | Female | Master's degree   | Started in private sector consultancy field; now works in government organizational development                         | 30            |
| 4           | Female | Master's degree   | Owens leadership development company; private and public sector                                                         | 9             |
| 5           | Female | Doctoral degree   | Started working for a university, consulting high school leadership; now works in government organizational development | 12            |
| 6           | Female | Master's degree   | Owens leadership development company; private sector                                                                    | 25            |
| 7           | Female | Master's degree   | Started in private sector consultancy field; now works in government organizational development                         | 25            |
| 8           | Female | Doctoral degree   | Community college organizational development                                                                            | 10            |

Initially, 11 participants were identified as meeting the study criteria. Eight of these 11 participants responded to the recruitment email and subsequent correspondence. The specific processes involved with data collection are described in Table 4.

Table 4

*Data Collection Process*

| Process                       | Description                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pilot                         | Test interview equipment and review interview protocol. Revise interview questions, as appropriate, after conducting pilot.                                             |
| Preliminary interview contact | Verified participants met study criteria. Discussed informed consent and scheduled interviews.                                                                          |
| Data collection: Interviews   | Conducted interviews using interview protocol. Took field notes with analytic memoing. Sent data to outside transcription service. Description of participant profiles. |

## **Research Design**

### **Pilot**

A pilot process was used to test recording equipment, assess protocol effectiveness, and refine the interview protocol. There were two pilots, one in person and one via telephone, because study participants were given the choice to participate in person if they were local to the researcher; otherwise participation would be by telephone. The pilots were chosen from a field similar to that of the study participants, within the leadership development realm, for continuity of data. Whether the interview was conducted in person or by phone, the participants were given the questions in advance to allow them the opportunity to provide feedback about clarity and their understanding of questions. The interviews were recorded and the researcher took field notes to capture aspects not identifiable from data (the same method was used during study interviews). This helped the researcher refine the interview protocol. Next, the communications with the potential and actual study participants that led to interviews are described.

### **Preliminary Interview Contact**

This study used a purposeful sampling method to identify eight to 12 potential participants, which was ultimately narrowed from 11 to eight participants. These participants were identified through the researcher's milieu, which included associations and interactions with practitioners involved in the leadership development training and intervention industry. These associations and interactions included training seminars that the researcher attended, the researcher's contacts through his own leadership development course facilitation, and recommendations from these same contacts. The researcher went through the proper protocol to ensure that participants' rights were protected.

The researcher adhered to Northeastern University's Institutional Review Board's (IRB) protocol for the protection of human subjects. Once all study requirements were met and approved through the IRB, recruitment correspondence in the form of emails (Appendix A) were sent to each potential study participant. The researcher responded to potential participants, via email (Appendix B), to schedule a time to verify study criteria and, if qualified, discuss specific interview information such as time, method, and informed consent (Appendix C).

### **Data Collection: Interviews**

Participants had the option to conduct the interview in person if local to the researcher or by telephone if not. Each participant chose to conduct the interview by telephone, at a date and time convenient for them. All eight participants understood the study requirements and signed the informed consent forms (Appendix C) on the day of the interviews, prior to starting. All interviews were conducted by phone using the Rev.com iPhone application. The researcher used the interview protocol in Appendix E; each interview lasted from 45 to 90 minutes. The interview protocol was exactly the same for each interview. The variation in duration of the

interviews was due to how much each participant expounded on questions. The researcher took notes during and right after each interview to capture the nuances of interviews. Through these steps saturation occurred when three of the eight participant stories emerged a pattern, providing credibility to a category. Next, interviews were sent to a professional transcription service, Rev.com. The transcripts, along with an email (Appendix D) explaining the need to verify accuracy, were sent to participants. Only one participant had any feedback or concerns about the transcripts and that was to ensure an organization she described was not revealed.

The data collection process consisted of semi-structured interviews. Participants were asked open-ended questions to yield their narratives. The interview protocol (Appendix E) was used for all the interviews. The interview duration was planned for approximately 45 minutes; all were at least this long and most extended up to 90 minutes. The researcher took notes documenting aspects of the interviews that were not captured on audio. The interviews were constructed in terms of how questions aligned with past, present, and future experiences and the corresponding concepts and theoretical framework components (Table 5).

Table 5

*Alignment of Interview Questions to Concepts and Framework*

| Interview questions                                                                                                                                             | Concepts/theoretical framework                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>Past</i></b>                                                                                                                                              | Background and introductory, knowing-in-action, reflection-in-action |
| Can you share with me how you first became interested in organizational development (OD)?                                                                       |                                                                      |
| When and how did you move into leadership development and training?                                                                                             |                                                                      |
| Can you share with me some of the earlier practices you recall in terms of how OD professionals designed and delivered leadership development?                  |                                                                      |
| Describe how you kept up with emerging trends for preparing leaders earlier in your career.                                                                     |                                                                      |
| Describe how you adjusted your practices based on how you were understanding the extent to which it was meeting the needs at the time – earlier in your career. |                                                                      |
| Describe the type of formal and informal training, mentoring, and education you have had over the years.                                                        |                                                                      |

| Interview questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Concepts/theoretical framework                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b><i>Present</i></b></p> <p>Describe the ways in which OD professionals today gather new insight into emerging trends that reshape their practices.</p> <p>Describe some of your current leadership development practices that are different today than when you first began your career.</p> <p><u>Probes:</u> Describe one or more of your innovative practices and what process led you to that discovery. Was that process discovered in-the-moment or after-the-fact. How did this make you rethink your process for reflecting about your practice?</p> <p>Describe one of your more demanding challenges for your leadership development practice.</p> <p><u>Probes:</u> What have you done to adjust to this dynamic? What methods did you use to reflect on innovative approaches to that situation? To what extent do you observe or experience OD practitioners collaborating to problem-solve these challenges?</p> <p>Describe a time when you had to make an in-the-moment adjustment during a leadership development event in response to a surprise or unanticipated interruption or dynamic.</p> <p><u>Probes:</u> Describe how you took action and the extent to which you generated in-the-moment options. To what extent have you used this same process during other surprise interruptions or dynamics? Why or why not?</p> <p>Describe a time when you had to make an after-the-fact adjustment to a leadership practice.</p> <p><u>Probes:</u> What made you realize that an adjustment or change was necessary? How did this make you rethink your process for reflecting about your practice?</p> <p>Describe an unsuccessful adjustment you attempted, to include whether this occurred in the moment or after the fact.</p> <p><u>Probe:</u> What insights did you take away from this experience that will enhance your adaptive practices in the future?</p> <p>In comparison to earlier in your career, describe how you understand the extent to which your approach to your practice is meeting the needs for building leadership capacity for today's changing workplace.</p> <p>In comparison to earlier in your career, describe your strategies for reflecting on your practice, to include when and how this occurs.</p> <p>In comparison to earlier in your career, describe any changes in how the OD profession or practitioners themselves encourage new reflective strategies for sharing innovative practices.</p> | <p>Current practice, knowing-in-action, reflection-in-action, reflection on knowing- and reflection-in-action</p> |
| <p><b><i>Future</i></b></p> <p>Given the changing nature of the workplace, can you share some of the future practices that the OD field is promoting its practitioners embrace to prepare tomorrow's leaders?</p> <p>Describe some of the future challenges for your own leadership development practices.</p> <p><u>Probe:</u> Describe any new ways you might need to enhance your reflective processes.</p> <p>Imagine it is 5 years from now and you're the keynote speaker at an OD conference providing reflective insights on leadership development practices in the digital age. What is the general theme of your presentation? Its title?</p> <p><u>Probe:</u> What reflective strategies will you encourage the practitioners to engage in?</p> <p>Any final thoughts about innovative leadership development practices or the OD profession?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>Future practice, reflection on knowing- and reflection-in-action</p>                                           |

This section described the study's research design, including the phases of data collection. In addition, the participant profiles and interview questions were discussed. The next section will describe the data analysis process.

### **Analysis of Research Data**

Creswell's (2013) spiral approach was used for this study's data analysis. These steps are data collection and organization, reducing data into codes and categories, and presenting the data for interpretation and discussion. The data analysis steps were interdependent, not independent of each other. Creswell compared this analysis process to a spiral—moving through the data in analytic circles until interpretation and narrative emerge. First, during data collection, converting audio into text produced extensive material. Therefore, the researcher carefully indexed the audio interviews using the password-protected site of a professional service, Rev.com. The researcher listened to each interview once, making corrections to the initial digital transcript based on what he heard. Once the transcripts were finalized, the hard copies were secured by the researcher. The researcher transcribed interviews while concurrently analyzing data throughout the process. Miles et al. (2014) espoused that this process continually renews data collection strategies.

From this inductive process that explored transcripts without a predetermined result, organic codes and categories emerged (Creswell, 2013; Seidman, 2013). For Creswell's (2013) second step of data analysis, reducing data into codes and categories, this process was more narrowly focused through Seidman's (2013) method of analyzing and making thematic connections. The researcher espoused Seidman's method of reading through transcripts on paper, reducing the amount of data that might be missed by reading transcripts on a screen. Through this second readthrough of the transcripts, interesting aspects and potential codes were marked and labeled. All transcripts were coded and labeled by hand, which allowed the researcher to be

more focused on analysis without any software disruptions. The researcher then engaged in what Rowan (1981) called a dialectical process with the participants' words. This resulted in the researcher interpreting the material and synthesizing its meaning for discussion, which is Creswell's last step in data analysis. As the participants' stories emerged from their experiences, patterns were formed. When data patterns were emerged from three participants, nearly half of the total, this satisfied saturation and credibility for the creation of categories. Then the researcher presented the data through a correlation between codes and categories, as illustrated in Table 6. This process narrowed the data into 10 categories or concepts with corresponding codes that identified connections among and between the interviews (Creswell, 2013).

### **Trustworthiness of Study and Researcher**

Creswell (2013) established the trustworthiness of a study through the reliability of data. The reliability of data in qualitative research refers to the stability of responses (p. 253). One way to ensure this study's reliability was validating it through member checking. In addition, the researcher's positionality was explored to identify and protect against potential research bias. Finally, the researcher used journal entries taken throughout the entire process, field notes taken during data collection, and analytic memos capturing underlying aspects of the data analysis process to further enhance the trustworthiness of the data.

### **Member Checking**

The researcher used member checking to establish the reliability of data. The member check consisted of a peer review of transcripts with researcher codes on a separate sheet. The goal of this member check was for the peer to match researcher codes with transcripts. After the peer member check, transcripts were sent back to the researcher with corresponding codes. The member check revealed that the appropriate codes matched transcript lines. Discrepancies were

discussed, as a few of the codes were interchangeable. The focus of this process was to verify intercoder agreement regarding the researcher's findings (Creswell, 2013, p. 253).

### **Positionality**

My relevant experience was from both participating as a student and facilitator or practitioner of leadership development interventions. I have approximately 15 years of experience as a student of interventions and have approximately 5 years of practitioner experience delivering interventions. Both types of experience related to leadership interventions helped me understand the data. However, it was my responsibility to identify, understand, and mitigate how these experiences may have biased the interpretation of data.

My role as a student of leadership development interventions began in a first-line supervisor's role within a large government organization. As a result, I embarked on self-development, primarily through self-initiated leadership training classes and programs. These experiences gave me a perspective on basic leadership philosophies and learning. Then I was promoted to a middle manager role within this same organization, gaining more of a global perspective on leadership, and began teaching as a leadership development practitioner. In addition, I furthered my education through graduate studies in leadership and taught at the university level, furthering my understanding of the practitioner's perspective.

Furthermore, these work experiences included public service as a police officer. These experiences provided me a unique perspective to both training and development and the world in which we live. Within the training realm, the law enforcement culture provided a particular lens from which to develop oneself. This included myriad certification based training but not an abundance of leadership training. Therefore, my leadership development was primarily self initiated. Concerning how I interacted in and with the community as a police officer, this

perspective exposed me to the spectrum of society. Through these experiences I was cognizant of how each circumstance had a unique story of which I was not completely aware. I identified and understood the dynamics of these experiences related to the study and made a consistent and conscious effort not to allow subjective interpretations of data affect the research.

### **Summary**

This study's qualitative, narrative methodology was explained. The rationale for the use of this methodology, the three phases of the research design, the data analysis, and trustworthiness were reviewed. Next, Chapter 4 will discuss the findings of this study.

## Chapter 4: Research Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine how leadership practices are constructed. Specifically, this study focused on how organizational development professionals used reflective practice during the construction of leadership development practices. The research question used to guide this study was: How do organizational development professionals describe the construction of their leadership practices?

This chapter reports the findings of the data analysis for this study, which examined organizational development professionals' construction of leadership practices through a reflective lens. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides a general description of the participants. Next, the data analysis process, including the emergent codes and categories, will be examined. Finally, an overall summary of the findings will be discussed.

### **Study Participants**

This section describes the eight participants. This report is based on analysis of the transcripts, audio of the interviews, and field notes taken on their stories. The following participant descriptions capture the general backgrounds of their professional journeys.

Participant profiles were developed through analysis of transcripts, audio, and field notes. This subsection reports out the participant profiles gathered from their narrative stories. Participants' backgrounds were found to have similarities and parallels. These background connections were grouped based on their leadership practice journeys.

Participants 1 and 2 were self-made consultants who both originally worked in the sales field. Both participants moved from sales to managing teams. These positions naturally led into the field of leadership development. After developing themselves through their organizations' internal corporate training and development channels, they started their own leadership

development companies. Neither had a college degree and both considered themselves self-made leadership consultants though experience and attending numerous trainings and seminars.

Participants 3 and 7 started in private industry's learning and development field. Participant 7 began in human resource learning and development, while Participant 3 began in leadership development. However, both practiced leadership development in the private sector before moving to a municipal organizational development department, where they focused on leadership development practices. Both had masters' degrees and attended numerous trainings and seminars for development.

Participants 4 and 6 had different starting points. Participant 4 began in the private industry as a trainer, moving into leadership development. Participant 6, in contrast, began in the training industry as an individual consultant, moving into leadership development as well. As a result, both participants started their own leadership development companies, specializing in the private sector but also working with government entities. Both had masters' degrees and attended numerous trainings and seminars for their development.

Participants 5 and 8 had both worked in education, designing and delivering leadership development interventions and training. Participant 5 moved from developing leadership interventions for high school teachers and principals to working for a large municipal organizational development department, still focusing on leadership development. Participant 8 developed leadership interventions and training for community college administration and faculty. Both had doctoral degrees and engaged in continuous education for their development.

The iterative transcript review process included analysis of transcripts, audio, and field notes to glean the essence of how they constructed their leadership practices. Participant profiles were created through this process. Participant demographics were reported in Chapter 3. For a

more descriptive analysis of each participant's story, see Appendix F. Next, the data analysis of the transcripts will be discussed.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis process used for this study was Creswell's (2013) three-step process. These steps are data collection and organization, reducing data into codes and categories, and presenting the data for interpretation and discussion. These steps are interdependent of each other until interpretation and narrative emerges. The second step of this process, reducing data into codes and categories, more specifically utilized Seidman's (2013) method of analyzing and making thematic connections.

#### **Data Collection**

The data collection process was aligned with the qualitative, narrative methodology. It used semi-structured interviews to uncover the participants' stories related to the research question. During the process, both audio and hard copies of the interviews were kept in either a password-secured site or in a locked space. Next, the researcher conducted analysis through reducing the data.

#### **Reduction of Data**

The reducing of data began with listening to the interviews to ensure the transcripts were accurate. This involved a thorough read of the transcripts without making any notes or marking them. Then the researcher read the transcripts again, this time marking interesting aspects throughout. This allowed the researcher to mark and label potential codes within corresponding sections. The researcher also created an interview matrix extrapolating the essence of each question from all interviews (Appendix G). This process yielded a robust analysis and alignment of potential codes to categories.

Then the researcher began reducing the data into codes and categories. The researcher's dialectical process (Rowan, 1981) with the participants' words allowed for interpretation. The amalgamation of participant profiles, transcript marking and labeling, and the extrapolation of the essence of interview questions through the interview matrix contributed to the identification of relevant codes and their corresponding categories. Ten categories emerged from this process, which led to a synthesis of meaning across all interviews.

### **Emerging Codes and Categories**

The researcher used descriptive phrases to create codes to identify salient responses from participants. These codes were analyzed across the interviews to identify patterns of emerging categories. Ten categories were identified, each with five to 35 codes from the interviews, based on how robust the topic was. Table 6 shows the codes and associated categories in terms of their alignment, including sample evidence.

Table 6

#### *Emerging Codes and Categories*

| Category                             | Range of codes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Sample evidence                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Professional development<br>(8 of 8) | reading as development, development by writing, self-development, development by consulting, on-the-job training, education as development, networking as development, mentorship as development, coached as development, attending numerous seminars, association member, self-made, life-long learner, certifications as development, continuing education as development, continuously leaning | Participant 1: "A lot of my development comes from my own work as a leader and in my work in coaching and consulting with organizations."<br>Participant 4: "And informally, I would say that [he] was, he was coaching us. So, he was definitely an influence early on." |

| Category                                                                  | Range of codes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Sample evidence                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Leadership development is a process (8 of 8)                              | OD focused on events, LD a process, continuously learning, about changing mindsets, condensed development (1 skill per month), leadership is universal, leadership is complex, grass roots approach, practical applications, coaching enhances training, changing behavior matters, measure success, development about whole person, leadership at every level, conversations about succession, spaced reinforcement, aptitude is not leadership, leadership operationally based (now), leadership is learned, no events, long-term approach to LD, expectations to training, on-the-job learning, plan for LD, leadership philosophy important, consider culture and change, experience highlights leadership value, connecting different levels                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Participant 1: "But finding as many different ways as we can to extend a learning event into being a learning process."<br>Participant 4: "But what I also discovered is that each person needed to take responsibility for themselves and their own learning. So, my training combined a combination of overall professional development but kind of covertly move into personal development at the same time. So, it's a wonderful mesh between the two." |
| Leadership development approach and perspective is interpersonal (3 of 8) | interpersonal skills primary, generational awareness, create self-awareness, build trust, listen to understand, personal fulfillment of helping/healing, walk the talk, development about whole person, primarily EI (interpersonal) training, human connection, hearing people, listening is key, getting away from relationships, awareness of audience, leadership more humanistic, mannerisms match message, leadership is interpersonal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Participant 4: "What I do is, in my training, I'll talk about emotional intelligence; I talk about self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management, which are the core pillars of emotional intelligence."                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Technology's role in leadership development (8 of 8)                      | use existing technology, grassroots approach, practical applications, innovation not big, online is pervasive, is online effective, preparing for technology, multifaceted learning approach, online training convenient, technology useful, using the web, getting away from relationships, people as foundation, skills changing rapidly, time pressed, instant learning, apps for learning, transitioning to online learning, blended training is future, online content streamlines learning, micro-learning is future, using "snippets" of information, reinforce learning in classroom, new generations want speed, micro-learning disseminated creatively, on-demand training favorable, 24/7 training access, can't measure on-demand training, can't tailor on-demand training, technology lacks communication, learning new technologies, apps for training, identifying technological gaps, training is about people, not training to technology | Participant 1: "Rather than trying to convince people to go do something else, let's use the tools that [we] are already using in ways that don't require them to change."<br>Participant 6: "That whole idea about pictures and how we learn much faster from pictures and so how does that tie into leadership development?"                                                                                                                              |

| Category                                                                    | Range of codes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Sample evidence                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gap in ecosystem of leadership development (5 of 8)                         | LD is broken, leadership not being taught, gap in leadership development, leaders not prepared, resistance to development, senior leadership resistant to LD, academics resistant to LD, broader OD network failing, training is reactive, lack of performance reviews                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Participant 3: "And also have this mindset of continual growth. And so that's where I see you have the opportunities for leaders to continue to get better. I don't think leaders see that."                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Resistance to leadership development (6 of 8)                               | challenge to motivate learners, resistance to LD, disruptions, resistance to development, invite dissenters to participate, coach thru difficulties, government organization resistant to innovation, no motivation for LD, senior leadership resistant to LD, academics resistant to LD, academic arrogance, resentment from participants                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Participant 6: "They don't have a real push behind them for why they should be developing their leaders."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Networking as reflection (4 of 8)                                           | networking w/partners, collaborate with academia, OD collaboration big, sharing best practices, collaborating w/like professionals, collaborating w/stakeholders, collaborate w/leaders, formed common networks, internal OD networking good, always about collaboration                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Participant 3: "And so then I can have conversations with them, and I truly believe in people sharing best practices."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Feedback from and interaction with learners facilitated reflection (8 of 8) | participant interaction, feedback from participants, adjusting delivery, buy-in to adjust, accommodate classroom, engagement with learners, build trust, listen to understand, learn through difficulties, need safe environment, reflections from feedback, personal fulfillment of helping/healing, walk the talk, invite dissenters to participate, open to feedback, group empathized, human connection, asking critical questions, mannerisms match message, in-the-moment adjustments, in-the-moment time for adjustments, follow up w/participants, impromptu activities, relaxing participants, adapt to audience's needs, adapting to less authoritative, removed ego from approach | Participant 5: "So I ask critical questions to make sure that we are all on the same page."<br>Participant 8: "It was honestly a 5 minute like, okay brainstorm. This will work. This has to work."                                                                                                                                                              |
| Research development promoted reflection (8 of 8)                           | needs assessment, need business plan, tailoring to clients' needs, consistently customizing, debrief the right people, failures create data, survey/evaluation feedback, redundancy for preparation, consult stakeholders, review outside sources, research for classes, research audience backgrounds, sharing best practices, learner research is key, customer involvement, consult end user first, providing a specialty, interviewing all levels, interviewing negative people, collaborate w/leaders, used external resources, follow up w/participants, consider culture and change, buy-in from management, after-the-fact adjustments, measure longitudinal feedback                | Participant 2: "I understand what the issues and challenges are. I speak with the stakeholders, I look at what their desired outcome is, and then I begin to research."<br>Participant 3: "Because there's a lot of studying and research to get the content to put your classes together. So all that stuff has really helped me to find out what's out there?" |

| Category                             | Range of codes                                                                                                                      | Sample evidence                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Journaling as reflection<br>(3 of 8) | writing to reflect, in-the-moment writing, writing to reflect on sessions, writing out past problems, write out analyses afterwards | Participant 5: "I take some notes sometimes... So it's how I kind of keep track of how I have changed, how I'm keeping up with my thoughts and ideas." |

Next, data from the transcripts are discussed in terms of how they emerged from the interviews. The data produced patterns among and between the interviews. This discussion shows how evidence from the participants' stories supported the creation of the categories.

**Professional development.** Professional development was identified in all eight interviews. Participants' professional development was a salient and often discussed topic, because each of them had to develop themselves to prepare for a career in this field. However, participants' paths to the training and development field varied. Only Participants 1 and 2 did not have a college degree. Furthermore, Participants 1, 2, and 6 felt, in large part, that they had self-developed through experience with consulting. Participant 1 said:

Really a lot of what we've learned has come from work in the trenches with organizations in consulting with them, work in the trenches with individual leaders, coaching them. It's been a huge part of what's...how we've developed what we do. In addition, Participants 1 and 2 attended myriad seminars and conferences as part of their development.

The other six participants were college educated, four with master's and two with doctoral degrees. In addition, four of the eight participants described the personal mentorship they received as instrumental to their development. Participant 4 described her mentorship as development, explaining: "But once I discovered how powerful it was to have a coach, a business coach, an executive coach, I have always had some sort of coach or mentoring." Five participants described attending seminars and conferences as further development.

**Leadership development is a process.** All eight participants experienced leadership development as a process, rather than as event oriented. All participants espoused the continual development of leadership attributes. Participant 1 was very focused on how leadership development was too event focused and needed to be more of a process:

We're still spending too much time focused on building an event that we think is going to meet a need, but rarely gives us as much value back in the workplace as we want. Because here's the thing, we spend too much of our time building skillsets and not enough time helping people change their mindset and creating a habit set of them doing something new and different at work.

Participant 3 also believed that leadership development was a continual process of developing leaders. She reported:

Well, future challenges it's that reach, getting to everyone to get them to want to be a continuous learner. No matter what approach might work, it's still getting them on board to want to be a better leader. It's also having some data that we can present to support our results and what we're doing to impact the organization. I think those are the things that are going to help people to feel more comfortable with what we can do.

In addition, Participant 4 discussed how leadership development is a long-term process and not event oriented:

And I've also discovered that the learning and the long-term learning for the work I do needs to happen over time, and it doesn't happen in a 45-minute keynote presentation. It happens in a 4-month program where they're taking the skills that they learned, and they're taking them right into their work environment, taking them home with them, and learning to live them. And they are being those leaders that walk the talk.

Leadership development's long-term commitment resonated throughout all interviews. Participant 6 contended, "I engage all of the leaders right from the start because if leaders are not engaged in leadership development it's not going to work. I try to get them to articulate a leadership development philosophy." Participants believed that if leadership development was to be effective, it had to be taken seriously and continually refined.

**Leadership development approach and perspective was interpersonal.** Three of the eight participants believed that leadership was interpersonal (Participants 2, 4, & 5). Thus, leadership development was also interpersonal. Participant 2's approach to leadership development was heavily focused on interpersonal skill development. He explained:

That voice continues to be very consistent because it's approaching them from an interpersonal skills perspective, which we didn't often talk about. We talk about the intelligence. We talk about IQ. We talk about task-oriented things. We don't talk about EQ and how important that is in the workplace, and that is sort of my revolutionary moment and opportunity today.

Participant 5 also discussed leadership development from a more personal and holistic approach:

Even 5 years ago, and I know 5 years in today's world is a lot, it is a more human approach. What I have changed and I've seen throughout the years, is this more one- or two-dimensional part of a leader, who I was seeing the operational side, was seeing, like ok, a leader gets things done, and that's what we saw for principles, and here for managers, you get things done, and now it is now more, how can a leader be more...influence people, right?

In addition, Participant 4 discussed implementing interpersonal leadership development. She noted, “So, then, I actually have them move into an experiential training, right there in the training, around social intelligence.” These participants integrated interpersonal aspects throughout their leadership development practices.

**Technology’s role in leadership development.** All eight participants said technology played a role in leadership development. However, all participants believed that leadership development is best served with a combination of technology and person-to-person engagement and communication. Furthermore, four participants felt that interaction with learners was the predominant factor in development (Participants 1, 2, 4, & 8). Participant 4 explained that development is primarily about people:

And we see that, and I believe that we, yes, the digital age is here for certain components, but I believe that the most successful piece of a business are the humans. And so, it’s the humans that are using the digital age, it’s the humans that are building the parts, it’s the humans that are driving the vehicles and building. It begins with the humans...and it’s about developing those people first.

In addition, Participant 1 asserted, “Why do I want to try to convince people to go sign up and use this app if I can get the same kinds of results by using what they’re already using?”

However, every participant believed technology was pervasive and would be most effective when combined with personal engagement, especially in the future. Participant 7 discussed using this method:

A way to use snippets. I think that's where we're heading. You can watch a quick YouTube on something and get the gist of something. So, how can you use those snippets of teachable topics, to be on a constant getting information out? I think that's where we're

heading...effectively used that tool of those micro-teachings on the topic of leadership, then being able to reinforce it in the classroom. And see their behavior truly changed, as an outcome of both of those.

Furthermore, Participant 6 described how technology would provide more instant development. She explained, “Tapping into some of these other apps that are out there, so that there’s much more of an instantaneous response as opposed to getting dumped on 5-day stuff. Now it’s much more incremental.” All participants believed technology played a role in leadership development, but people or engagement was still the overarching piece.

The overarching finding within this category was that every participant believed technology was pervasive and the future in leadership development. However, each felt that the interaction with learners was the primary piece to development. Their experiences revolved around the in-person development with technology as a supplemental component. This sample population did not heavily involve their practices around the digital component of leadership development.

**Gap in ecosystem of leadership development.** Five of the eight participants described experiencing through their practices a lack of value for, and a resulting gap in, leadership development. Participants 1, 2, 3, 7, and 8 experienced leadership as not valued as a whole. Participants 1, 2, and 8 experienced leadership as not valued at a system level. Participants 3 and 7 experienced leadership as not valued at a group or individual level. Participant 1 explained that often it was a challenge to have leaders recognize that leadership development was mostly universal and thus learnable, but they would resist on the basis that they were specialized:

I think that one of the challenges is...it’s not once, but it’s often. It’s getting leaders to recognize the fact that 90% of leadership is the same regardless of your situation or

industry. Where most people think it's 90% different, it's really 90% the same and 10% different.

Participant 8 said that, from her experiences, the entire community college at which she worked did not recognize the value or need for leadership development. She noted, "And the second issue that's always a problem is that they find no value in the training, in the leadership training."

Participant 3 discussed how she believed many individual leaders, though not all, do not take leadership development seriously. She explained:

And what I'd like to see happen is I feel a lot of existing leaders at my current organization that feel that they got leadership training a long time ago. And so they think it's a one and done. Not realizing that you always have to stay on top of things and be prevalent.

All of these participants experienced a gap in the ecosystem of leadership development as a whole.

**Resistance to leadership development.** Six of the eight participants discussed resistance to leadership development. Participants 6 and 8 experienced entire organizations being resistant to leadership development. While Participants 1 and 7 discussed senior management at times being resistant to leadership development, Participants 1, 3, and 4 discussed learner resistance. Participant 6 described her experience with one organization that she interpreted as having very little desire and not making much effort in leadership development on a large scale:

They are 20 years behind. They have a lack, tend to, I'm not talking for every single person but so many have a lack of initiative as individuals. The leaders tend not to have a vision. They tend not to be open to creative options. I'm talking about a group of people

as opposed to a specific challenge, but I have all but given up. The interesting thing is they have a mission, many of them do not have visions and I'm talking about organizations now.

Participant 7 believed that the senior leadership in one organization felt they did not need any further development, just the supervisors under them. In discussing this topic, she explained, "I think that the senior team has to be very supportive of the leadership training. They may or may not think they need it, so that's hard sometimes to get them to buy into that." Participant 1 experienced during one of his training sessions a class participant responding to class content in a very harsh manner. He explained, "Drastic and obvious resistance. Like the person saying, 'Well that's bullshit'" Moreover, all participants felt that resistance to leadership development was a significant element in their practices.

**Networking as reflection.** Four of the eight participants discussed networking with others as a form of reflection during the construction of their practices (Participants 3, 4, 5, & 6). Participant 3 discussed networking and collaborating with other organizations in constructing her leadership practices:

It's amazing what you can find out when you listen to what has been successful in other arenas. And then you say, "Okay, what will work in my organization? How can I take that and then tweak it and move it over?" And so I still believe in talking to people. I love the peer exchange of other training and OD professionals helping each other. I'm also a part of a couple of associations.

Participant 4 often worked with other professionals in the field for insight on emerging trends and best practices. She asserted, "Okay. I believe that organizational development professionals, or anybody working with professional development, it's about gathering with

professionals in that same field.” While there were not many direct comments about networking with others in the construction of their practices, this category appeared to underlie many of the participants’ practices.

**Feedback from and interactions with learners facilitated reflection.** All eight participants noted that feedback from and interaction with learners facilitated reflection. This was in-the-moment reflection that all participants used to adjust practices. Some participants used verbal feedback from class participants to adjust practices, while some just adjusted through class interactions. Participant 5 discussed interactions with class participants during an unanticipated event: “If I have a situation which I didn’t expect, the first thing that I do is I try to ask critical question to the person.” This type of engagement helped her come to an understanding and adjust in the moment.

Participant 6 once experienced that class participants’ needs were extremely different from what she was facilitating. Therefore, Participant 6 consulted a few of the class participants during a break and said, ““So what’s going on”? They didn’t really want to talk to me but finally somebody finally opened up.” From their feedback, she “adjusted on the spot” to address the discrepancy between training expectations and class needs. Otherwise, she may not have adjusted, ultimately not meeting class needs. She further explained why she felt able to adjust effectively through learner feedback and interactions:

Especially if I’m in front of a group, a training group of some sort and I find out that they need something else. I’m well read, number one. Number two, I have a very broad content, so those two things really help me. What’s really helpful now is that I can quickly look something up.

Other participants used class interaction only, without verbally consulting class participants to use in-the-moment reflection to adjust. Participant 8 once observed that there was extreme dissention among participants. She explained, “I got a crisis. I got to solve this crisis right now.” Therefore, she had the class engage in an unrelated game to ease tensions, which worked. She further explained:

So, I think I ran to like essentially a risk management, like because these are all the things, the contingencies I’m going to have to deal with, what can I do to satisfy all of that, and move forward. So, I kind of ran through I think some of the contingency planning.

She felt there were no other options but to reflect in the moment in order to solve this problem.

**Research development promoted reflection.** All eight participants said that researching for upcoming training, whether it was potential class audiences, organizations, or class material, promoted reflection. Participant 2 would individually research, before trainings, class participants’ LinkedIn accounts to glean something about their backgrounds:

Then what I do at that particular point is I look at their profile, and their profile tells me, again, who they are, obviously, the organization which they’re working with and they’re all working, obviously, from the same organization. But it also gives me some history in terms of their education, as well as their background. Then I use that as a way to better communicate or get to know my audience, even though I’ve never met them before.

This research allowed him to reflect about participants’ backgrounds and better tailor the training.

Participant 3 discussed reflecting and gathering new insights through researching current trends in the industry and course content. She explained:

Because there's a lot of studying and research to get the content to put your classes together. So all that stuff has really helped me to find out what's out there. What's the trends? What are people doing? What are some success stories? And then what are some of the stories of failures and how can you learn from the failures of other organizations?

Participant 5 discussed researching by examining the audience or end user of a training or development effort as an effective way to reflect on best practices. She noted, "I think what made me change for the future, is that when you're involved and understand your end user, you have a much better product or process in the end." All participants researched either the audience, organizations, or development topics to facilitate reflecting on best practices.

**Journaling as reflection.** Three of the eight participants used some sort of journaling to help reflect on their practices. Participants 5, 6, and 8 said that after sessions they would write down ideas from and dynamics about the training for future best practices. Participant 5 described taking notes and drawing graphics to help keep up with her thoughts and ideas about her practices:

I am much better today at documenting than I was in the beginning. In the beginning, it was just relying on my memory, and today I realized that it is not reliable. So I make some notes, and make sure my graphics sometimes, so that a graphic...and pictures help really to naturalize or to clear some of the processes and ideas. Now I'm a much better, because I document better than I did before.

Participant 8 described taking notes about practices right after a session: "After each session now I will spend an hour after each session and write down my thoughts." This journaling helped her identify trends for potential adjustments.

Participant 6 described journaling or writing in the moment, during a training session, to come up with ideas during an unanticipated dynamic:

Well, I'd say that having job interviews, role plays was one of those options that I created in the moment. I had never done that before. I think I came up with a quick plan while they were doing one thing. I was writing on a flip chart.

These participants used journaling as a form of reflection, primarily after training sessions (one participant did it during sessions), to help adjust training and create ideas for best practices.

### **Summary of Findings**

This study examined organizational development practitioners' leadership development practices. This examination was conducted through semi-structured interviews with study participants. The study's research question was used to guide this examination: How do organizational development professionals describe the construction of their leadership practices?

Study findings were discussed in terms of how they connected to the research question. These findings can be divided into three themes. First, leadership development was found to be holistic and global. Second, leadership development was found to not always be supported. Finally, reflection played a key role in how practitioners designed and delivered their practices.

First, leadership development efforts were always looked at from a holistic and global perspective. Participants believed their own professional development was instrumental in preparing for and maintaining a role in this field. Participants prepared for, created, and followed up practices using the paradigm of developing learners through a process. While individual events occurred during training, it was never anticipated that these would be the ends of learners' development. Participants tried to have sustained leadership training events for learners, and one

even constructed a longer term process of development through experiential means (e.g., filling a different leader's role for experience). In addition, several participants experienced leadership development as working to develop the entire person, professionally and personally, with interpersonal development paramount. Finally, technology was believed to have a role in the leadership development process, but the person was still perceived as the most important aspect of development.

Next, leadership development was found to not always be supported. Lack of support took two different forms. First, most participants experienced a gap in the ecosystem of leadership development. This gap manifested as a lack of value for development in the organization, from upper or senior leadership to individuals. This lack of value made it difficult to gain buy-in for leadership development. Second, most participants also experienced resistance to leadership development. This resistance was described as direct opposition to leadership training and development. This opposition occurred either in the form of verbalizing discontent during training or a lack of buy-in from organizations or upper management for future development. This challenged participants' development efforts.

Last, reflection was found to be important for participants' leadership development practices. Participants experienced reflection primarily through collaboration with others. This form of reflection occurred through networking both with other professionals in the field for the newest trends and with organizations to collaborate about development. Reflection through collaboration with others also took the form of interactions with learners that helped participants adjust practices. In addition, reflection was used during research development for their practices, which helped participants with ideas and insight. Finally, a few participants used journaling or writing about practices to help them reflect.

### **Summary**

This chapter began by restating the purpose of the study and the research question that helped guide data analysis. Then, the study participants were discussed and described. Next, the iterative transcript process was explained, which led into the data analysis. Patterns emerged from the participants' stories, which created categories. Finally, the overarching summary findings of participants' experiences were discussed. Chapter 5 will present the researcher's conclusions from these results, including implications for theory, practice, and future research.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implications

This study was designed to examine how organizational development practitioners construct their leadership practices. This study explored both private- and public-sector practitioners who design and deliver leadership practices, either while embedded in an organization or as an outside consultant. Schön's (1983, 1991) reflective practice theory was the lens through which this study was examined. Eight volunteers participated in semi-structured interviews. This qualitative methodology used an inductive process to extract participants' stories through their narratives. From three phases of data analysis, three overarching themes with 10 categories emerged.

This chapter presents the conclusions and implications of the study results. First, research findings are presented and interpretations and conclusions drawn. Next, the study's implications are related to theory, practice, and future research. Finally, concluding thoughts about this research are provided.

### **Interpretations and Conclusions**

This study's participant narratives yielded 10 categories regarding how they constructed their practices. These categories were related to each other through three themes, as shown in Table 7. First, leadership development was believed to be holistic and global. Second, leadership development was believed to not always be supported. Third, reflection played a key role in participants' design and delivery of leadership practices. These themes and categories are discussed in more length in this section.

Table 7

*Themes and Categories*

| Themes                                                                                    | Categories                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Leadership development is holistic and global                                             | Professional development<br>Leadership development is a process<br>Leadership development approach and perspective was interpersonal<br>Technology's role in leadership development |
| Leadership development was not always supported                                           | Gap in the ecosystem of leadership development<br>Resistance to leadership development                                                                                              |
| Reflection played a key role in participants' design and delivery of leadership practices | Networking as reflection<br>Feedback from and interaction with learners facilitated reflection<br>Research development as reflection<br>Journaling as reflection                    |

### **Leadership Development is Holistic and Global**

Participants believed that leadership development was holistic and global. This belief emerged from four categories: participants' professional development, leadership development is a process, leadership development approach and perspective is interpersonal, and technology's role in leadership development.

First, participants' stories were constructed through their perceptions about how they fit into the bigger scheme of leadership development. This involvement started with how participants prepared themselves. Each participant had an extensive background in their own development, which enabled them to facilitate others. Participants had different modes of professional development; most had college degrees and all had extensive experiential training. This experiential mode included field-specific seminars and training or on-the-job experience developing and consulting others. Some participants felt their development was primarily derived from working in the field and self-development, rather than from formal training and education. Furthermore, all participants believed that experience in the field – training and consulting – was the driving force behind their development.

All participants experienced leadership development as a process. While events were involved, training was tailored to clients with the expectation of continued development. Participants believed that continued sessions over time were necessary to optimize development. Many participants' practices developed leaders through programs that involved training spanned over multiple sessions. Lacerenza et al. (2017) said that development and training over spaced intervals was superior to large amounts at once, as in a week-long seminar. Participants believed that these continuous development efforts started with learners buying into a leadership philosophy.

Participants perceived that learners needed to believe in a leadership philosophy in order to be committed to development. Moreover, participants believed that leadership development was part of a learner's overall improvement. Development was about transforming the whole person, professionally and personally, into living the process. A resonant sentiment among most participants was that leadership development was about changing mindsets, not about building a skillset. Participants also believed that organizations needed to support a leadership philosophy for learners to be fully invested. Amagoh (2009) said that organizations needed to have a systematic process of developing leaders to maintain initiatives. Findings from this study suggest that leadership development for both learners and organizations should be viewed as a way of life and a philosophy, not just skill orientation.

In addition to developing the whole person through leadership development, some participants identified an interpersonal approach as salient to their practices. These participants believed leadership in general to be interpersonal. Therefore, they had an interpersonal leadership development approach and perspective. These participants believed that leadership was about the human side, hence fostering relationships not just operations. This notion was

supported by Daniels (2009), who described the importance of the interpersonal component of leadership. These participants integrated interpersonal teachings and exercises into their development. They felt that this aspect of leadership development was one of the most salient aspects of their practices.

Finally, all participants believed that technology played a role in the overall scheme of leadership development. However, the overarching premise was that interaction with learners was the most important aspect of development. Participants espoused a blended approach with technology, using both media and in-person development. An emerging trend in leadership development is using technology as a supplement to in-person development. This would allow learners to reinforce what was taught in the classroom. Overall, participants felt that technology was only a supporting component of development.

This subsection discussed the theme of leadership development being holistic and global. The categories included within this theme described how development was looked at from a big picture perspective and was not one dimensional. The following subsection presents the theme of leadership development not always being supported.

### **Leadership Development Was Not Always Supported**

Participants believed leadership development was not always supported. This understanding emerged from two categories. These categories were a perceived gap in the ecosystem and resistance to leadership development.

Participants felt that there was a gap in leadership development as a whole. Specifically, participants experienced a lack of value being placed on leadership, either at a system level or at the group and individual levels. Some participants believed that leadership development was not valued at the systems level. They felt that the focus within industries and organizations was on

individual job skills rather than leadership. Consequently, participants felt that leadership was not taken seriously and was generally not a focus. This resulted in a gap in individual leadership skills and attributes. This theme evolved into the next, which is that the system-level gap affects groups and individual learners.

This study's findings suggest that the system-level gap extended to organizational resistance. Participants perceived entire organizations, upper management, or individual learners as being resistant to leadership development. Some participants experienced a culture of leadership development resistance. The study findings imply that if there is little or no value or focus on leadership development at the organizational level, this will have a cascading effect on the organizational members. Amagoh (2009) and Leskiw and Singh (2007) both found that organizations need to have a structure and plan in place to effectively develop leaders. These findings have implications for groups and individuals within organizations.

Participants also found that both groups and individuals were resistance to leadership development. Participants experienced resistance to development efforts from senior or upper management and from individual learners. Senior leadership either felt that development was not necessary for them, only for their subordinates, or would actively resist development practices. In addition, individual learners resisted development practices. Several participants found that this phenomenon was due to focusing solely on individual job duties and skills or learners believing that their leadership abilities were sufficient through experience or past training. It appears that if groups and individuals are going to be committed to leadership development, this starts with the organizational level reinforcing its importance and value.

This subsection discussed the theme of leadership development not always being supported. The categories within this theme were the gap in and resistance to leadership

development. The following subsection presents the theme of reflection playing a key role in the design and delivery of leadership development practices.

### **Reflection Played a Key Role in Leadership Development Practices**

Participants believed that reflection played a key role in how they designed and delivered leadership development practices. This belief emerged from four categories: networking as reflection, feedback from and interaction with learners facilitated reflection, research development promoted reflection, and journaling as reflection.

First, participants believed that networking with others promoted reflection. A consistent theme among participants was their association with personal mentors, coaches, or other practitioners in the field. Participants often collaborated with these professionals, exclusively or to consult about the design and delivery of their practices. This collaboration facilitated participants' reflection about their practices after the fact. This type of reflection is aligned with Schön's (1987, 1992) reflection on knowing- and reflection-in action, which is thinking about practices afterward and reassessing. In addition, some participants experienced a lack of overall support from the organizational development field. However, most participants perceived other practitioners, as well as personal mentors and coaches, as supportive. These networking opportunities were instrumental to participants' construction of their practices.

Second, participants believed feedback from and interaction with learners facilitated reflection. All participants used this form of in-the-moment reflection during practices. Participants would reflect during practices through feedback from learners or autonomously. Some participants would seek feedback and have dialogue with learners to glean insight and reflect about dynamics within the class. In addition, participants would recognize development dynamics through their interactions with learners and autonomously reflect. Through both of

these types of interplay within the training environment, participants would reflect in the moment and many times adjust practices. This type of in-the-moment reflection is aligned with Schön's (1987, 1992) reflection-in-action, which is recognizing unexpected events while they are occurring and adjusting on the spot.

Third, participants' narratives showed that research development promoted reflection. Participants researched the design and delivery of their practices through learners, organizations, or content material. Some participants believed knowing their audience was a key insight for tailoring practices. Similarly, researching organizations and their stakeholders gave them insight into how they approached their practices. Consulting stakeholders before and sometimes after practices provided breadth and depth about expectations for trainings. Furthermore, participants researched training content to build their practices. All three sources of research allowed participants to develop strategies to develop and adjust practices.

Participants' research into these components facilitated reflection. Research promoted reflection mostly before practices and was an ongoing cycle that allowed the construction of practices. Schön (1987, 1992), the seminal author of reflective practice, saw reflection during and after practices as versions of his theory. This study showed that research for the design and delivery of leadership development practices fell somewhat outside the scope of Schön's reflection, because it also occurred before practices. This form of reflection is more closely related to LaBoskey's (1994) continuum of reflection. This version of reflection goes beyond the notion that reflection is the basic knowledge and understanding of an event. The last of LaBoskey's three levels of reflection is a pedagogical or a strategic thinker, which is more aligned with this study's participants' approach to reflection during research development.

Finally, participants' journaling or writing down ideas and details about practices promoted reflection. Participants wrote about their experiences to capture ideas that would help with future practices. One participant included graphics in her writing that helped her imagine processes. Mann et al. (2009) and Williams and Wessel (2004) discussed reflection being used in practice through written journaling and portfolios. This form of reflection enhances recall of the information and experiences captured during practices.

This section provided interpretations and conclusions of the study findings. The 10 categories fit into three themes. Next, the study's implications for theory, practice, and future research will be discussed.

### **Implications for Theory**

This study used Schön's (1987, 1992) reflective practice theory as its theoretical framework. Schön espoused that practitioners' understanding of events came through levels of reflection. These levels were knowing-in-action, reflection-in-action, and reflection on knowing- and reflection-in-action, or having a reflective conversation with the situation. This study's findings showed that these forms of reflection were consistently used throughout participants' practices. Reflection about current and future practices were ongoing in participants' design and delivery work structure. They engaged in everyday repetitive actions such as training delivery, which is knowing-in-action. They encountered surprise interruptions such as learner dissent or disruption and unexpected circumstances. As a result, participants recognized the disruption and adjusted in the moment either through learner feedback or autonomously, which is reflection-in-action. Finally, they reflected afterwards to understand and make sense of what occurred during practices and thought about how to adjust for future actions. This form of reflection is reflection on knowing- and reflection-in-action, or having a reflective conversation with the situation.

However, participants consistently reflected before practices, which has been viewed as a limitation of Schön's (1987, 1992) reflective practice framework (Finlay, 2008; Grushka et al., 2005; Thompson & Pascal, 2012). The category that most promoted reflection before practices was research development. Participants researched learners, organizations and their stakeholders, and training content so they could reflect before practices. This reflection before practices is aligned with LaBoskey's (1994) continuum of reflection. LaBoskey's method extends the notion that reflection is basic knowledge and understanding of an event. He discussed three levels of the reflection continuum, one of which was a pedagogical or strategic thinker. Study participants' experiences, especially during research development, aligned with this overall strategic, long-view form of reflection. The researcher suggests that practitioners' reflection during and after practices is constant and necessary and is aligned with Schön's reflective practice theory. However, reflection before practice is also of paramount importance (LaBoskey, 1994).

This subsection discussed the study's implications for theory. The theoretical framework used was Schön's (1987, 1992) reflective practice theory. Next, this study's implications for practice will be discussed.

### **Implications for Practice**

The findings from this study suggest several implications for practice that have the potential to improve field conditions. First, practitioners should approach leadership development from a long-view perspective. Then, they should focus on the development of the whole person, including interpersonal components. Finally, practitioners should focus on how to more effectively introduce and maintain leadership's value and importance.

Study findings showed that leadership development was not a one-and-done activity. Instead, if leadership development was to be effective, efforts had to be structured and sustained.

Geerts, Goodall, and Agius (2020) contended that leadership programs should vary in delivery methods in order to be effective. In addition, research shows that leadership training should be reinforced long after initial efforts (Dyke & Scourtoudis, 2007; Lacerenza et al., 2017).

Therefore, practitioners, whether embedded in an organization or an outside consultant, should try to sustain structured development efforts far into the future. For these efforts to be sustained, the researcher suggests having a development infrastructure in place that supports reinforcement from the onset of their practices. Reinforcement should be in the form of in-person, spaced training. In addition, continued reinforcement could be in the form of technology, either online management systems or simple-to-use smartphone applications, that can be accessed at any time. In sum, these development efforts should be structured, varied in design and delivery, sustained over time, and evaluated for effectiveness.

Next, this research showed that focusing on the whole person, not just on the skills themselves, was key to development. The researcher found that the development of the whole person included their interpersonal capacity. Sánchez, Pérez, and Aránega (2020) said that successfully navigating one's own emotions and managing relationships, better known as emotional intelligence, is instrumental in leadership. They found that this type of interpersonal intelligence was just as important as general intelligence in the development of leadership capacity. Therefore, the researcher suggests that both private consultants and organizational development practitioners adopt interpersonal capacity as primary in leadership development.

Finally, this study found that leadership development was not always valued or taken seriously. It also showed that learners are sometimes resistant to new leadership ideas or philosophies. Lacerenza et al. (2017) said that development efforts aimed at the higher levels of leaders or managers were not as effective as those aimed at lower levels. Their results indicated

that perhaps higher levels of leadership were more entrenched in their ways, thus more difficult to change. This study not only found that at higher levels but also aspiring leaders were, at times, resistant to development efforts. These findings suggest that if higher levels of leadership are resistant to leadership development and thus do not support it, then the lower level employees they interact with and influence could adopt this same mindset. Therefore, the researcher suggests that practitioners should have a strategy for highlighting and reinforcing the value and real-life importance of leadership development from the top down. Practitioners should first have buy-in and support from higher levels of leadership. Furthermore, the higher levels should either participate with the others learners or participate in stand-alone, level-appropriate development that mirrors philosophies the lower levels receive. This integration of development could be better accepted at all levels.

This subsection discussed the study's implications for practice. These implications were that leadership development should be approached from a long view; practices should focus on developing the whole person, to include interpersonally; and to more effectively introduce and maintain the value and importance of efforts. Next, this study's implications for future research will be discussed.

### **Implications for Future Research**

The current study was limited in its scope. Therefore, to build on study findings, future research should focus on the several areas discussed in this section.

It was found through this research that leadership development has usually been studied through a quantitative lens (Lacerenza et al., 2017). Therefore, to build on this study's qualitative analyses of leadership development and further bolster this field, future research should use this same lens. A qualitative lens provides a unique perspective on participant experiences

(Dhunpaph, 2000; Lieblich et al., 1998). This qualitative perspective coupled with the following research areas could yield more specific study results.

One of this study's limitations was the transferability of leadership development to other research. Leadership has been widely accepted as influencing others toward common goals (Metcalf & Benn, 2013; Yukl, 2001). Therefore, this study's focus on leadership development was based on this general premise. However, future research could focus on particular industries or jobs to identify more specific development approaches. This type of leadership development research could shed a different light on specific industries. Next, this research did not delineate participant or learner demographics. It focused on the general application of leadership development. Future research could limit itself to a particular demographic of practitioners or learners. This narrower focus could show how a particular group might think or react differently to practices.

Next, this research did not focus on particular industries. As a result, there was not a focus to include technology-based organizations or consultants. In addition, this research did not specifically focus on selecting participants from regions where technology is pervasive. Therefore, future research could focus on either specific industries, organizations, consultants, or regions that may be technology oriented. Using technology as a foundation from which participants are selected could provide deeper insight into how leadership development practitioners operate in the digital world.

Another study limitation concerned what level of leadership was researched. The study focused on all levels of leadership or management to get a broad view. Future research could focus on a particular level of management or on aspiring leaders not yet in such positions. This

perspective would further discover how leadership development is perceived and how specific groups respond to practices.

This section identified several implications of this study's research. Implications for theory, practice, and future research were discussed. It identified how these might improve both scholarship and the practice of leadership development. The next section offers the study's summary and reflections.

### **Summary and Reflections**

This concluding section provides a summary of the research findings, culminating with the researcher's overall reflections about leadership and leadership development.

This study examined how organizational development professionals, or practitioners, construct their leadership development practices. The research was designed to discover their experiences from a particular perspective. It used a reflective lens to describe their experiences. This design resulted in participants describing their experiences through reflection during and after their practices. The reflection that occurred before practices was based on a strategic focus. Furthermore, participants described best practices and challenges. They explained how their practices were viewed from a global perspective, not just as events. Facets within this perspective included their own development, how developing others was a holistic process, and how technology fit into this process. Participants also described their challenges with leadership development not being valued as much as it should and with resistance to their practices.

The researcher's reflections on these findings are based on how scholarship informed practice. First, the theoretical framework used in this study, Schön's (1987, 1992) reflective practice, reinforced that practitioners often follow theory-based tenets. This underscores how theory can and should be more integrated into practice. If practitioners were more aware of how

theory and practice inform each other, they could use the framework to their advantage. Second, the research findings reinforced that leadership development is a long-term process during which practitioners should carefully design and deliver practices. As a result, there should be different modes of delivery for training reinforcement as well as sustained efforts so there is a better chance that learner behavior will change. Lastly, the perceived gap in leadership and leadership development is consistent with both scholarship and practice. This phenomenon could be addressed through practitioners' sustained efforts to introduce and reinforce the value and importance of leadership and leadership development from the top down.

In terms of how this study shaped the researcher's perspective of leadership development, there were several. First, the findings about leadership development's evolution from event orientation to a process showed how the researcher's journey was similar. This focus reinforces how development is an ongoing cycle of renewal to include in-person practices, reinforcement through technology, and personal accountability. Next, developing the entire person, to include interpersonal components, was also aligned with the researcher's experiences. This focus was primary to the researcher but reinforces the value in this area. Then continual improvement of the researcher's skills and dispositions was always of paramount importance, but in the development field, it is equally if not more important. The researcher is not just renewing his skills and dispositions but imparting and reinforcing the same in others. Finally, the pervasiveness of technology in leadership development is a contemporary necessity to remain relevant and effective. This focus has and will continue to evolve in the researcher's enhancing of knowledge and abilities to stay at the head of the industry. Therefore, based on the literature and study findings and through the industry and the researcher's efforts, there is the potential to improve leadership development and the leadership field as a whole.

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## **Appendix A: Introductory and Recruitment Correspondence**

You are invited to participate in a research study that focuses on leadership development interventions or training. This research will be conducted by Jeff Pierce, a doctoral student researcher at Northeastern University, under the direction of Dr. Margaret Gorman Kirchoff, the principal investigator. This research will capture how organizational development professionals, sought from all industries in both private and public sectors to gain a broad view of perspectives, interpret and construct leadership development. Whether they are embedded in a formal organization or are an independent contractor who provides leadership development and training for organizations, only participants who are currently working and have at least 5 years of experience with leadership development training will be eligible. The hope is that this research will both inform scholarship and improve practice.

This research will consist of one interview lasting 30 to 45 minutes. If you are local to the researcher (Phoenix AZ area), there is an option to participate in person; otherwise, it will be conducted via phone. The entirety of the interview will remain confidential: there will be no identifiable information used. You will be provided a professionally transcript of the interview to verify accuracy. In addition, if needed, I may contact you by phone to discuss clarification of data. If you are willing to participate in this study, please contact me at the email below. If you have any questions about this study or would like to volunteer to participate, please feel free to contact me or the principal investigator, Dr. Margaret Gorman Kirchoff. Participation is voluntary. If you do not email me at [pierce.j@husky.neu.edu](mailto:pierce.j@husky.neu.edu) to volunteer, you will not be contacted again regarding this research. Please note that per Northeastern University IRB, emails sent to any of my other email addresses must be deleted with no response. Thank you for your consideration.

Jeff Pierce, student researcher  
[Pierce.j@husky.neu.edu](mailto:Pierce.j@husky.neu.edu) or 602-904-0458

Dr. Margaret Gorman Kirchoff, principal investigator  
[m.kirchoff@neu.edu](mailto:m.kirchoff@neu.edu)

## **Appendix B: Pre-Interview Email**

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your interest in participating in my study: Emerging Leadership Practices: A Narrative Research Study of Organizational Development Professionals' Reflective Practices in the Digital Era.

At this time, I would like to identify a date and time that would be convenient for you to speak with me on the phone. During this preliminary contact, I would like to verify study criteria and, if we move forward, schedule an interview time, interview method, and cover the informed consent form. You may choose to have an in-person interview if you are local to the researcher (Phoenix AZ area); otherwise, it will be conducted by phone. The date and time of the interview will be at your convenience.

I am including a copy of the informed consent form for your review and signature. We will discuss this in more detail at the start of the interview to ensure you are fully informed regarding participation in the study. Do not sign this form until we meet for the interview. If you have any questions about the informed consent, at any time, please email me at [pierce.j@husky.neu.edu](mailto:pierce.j@husky.neu.edu) or call me at 602-904-0458.

As a reminder, participation in this study is voluntary, and without any compensation or benefit to you. Your input will help me complete my doctoral degree, and as a result, it will provide insight into the field of leadership development both in scholarship and in practice.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,

Jeff Pierce  
Student Researcher  
Department of Education, Organizational Leadership Studies  
Northeastern University

## Appendix C: Informed Consent

### Northeastern University, Department of Education, Organizational Leadership Studies

**Name of Investigator(s):** Margaret Gorman Kirchoff, principal investigator; Jeff Pierce, student researcher

**Title of Project:** Emerging Leadership Practices: A Narrative Research Study of Organizational Development Professionals' Reflective Practices in the Digital Era

### Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

We are inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but the researcher will explain it to you first. You may ask this person any questions that you have. When you are ready to decide, you may tell the researcher whether you want to participate. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will ask you to sign this statement and will give you a copy to keep.

### Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?

We are asking you to participate in this study because you work as an organizational development practitioner who has practiced in the area of leadership development training for at least 5 years.

### Why is this research study being done?

The purpose of this study is to explore how organizational development professionals describe their experiences with leadership training and programs. The purpose is to contribute to scholarship and improve leadership development practice.

### What will I be asked to do?

- You will be asked to participate in one interview session, consisting of several questions, conducted by the student researcher. Sessions will last for 30-45 minutes and be at a time and location convenient for you.
- An iPhone App will be used to audio record interviews, which will then be converted into a transcript within 24 hours by Rev.com.
- Transcripts will be sent to you to verify accuracy and address any concerns.

### Where will this take place and how much of my time will it take?

The student researcher will conduct the interview session at a time and place convenient for you. The interviews will either take place in person if you are local to the student researcher (Phoenix, AZ area) or by phone. The interview will last between 30-45 minutes. Transcripts will be sent to you to verify accuracy and address any concerns. You will be asked to send the student researcher, electronically, any mislabeled or incorrect information, or contact him via email or phone discussing concerns or describing that there are no issues.

### Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?

There are no foreseeable risks to you for taking part in this study.

### **Will I benefit by being in this research?**

There will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in the study. However, the information learned from this study may help contribute to scholarship and improve leadership development practice.

### **Who will see the information about me?**

Your part in this study will be confidential. Only the researchers on this study will see the information about you:

- All participants will be given pseudonyms.
- No identifiable participant information will be used in this dissertation research or in any other journal or report.
- Participants will be asked to review their transcript before analysis to ensure no identifiable information is included.
- Paper data will be de-identified and locked in a filing cabinet only accessible to the student researcher. This data will be destroyed at the conclusion of the dissertation research.
- Electronic data will be de-identified, stored in password protected files, and only accessible to the student researcher. This data will be permanently erased at the conclusion of the dissertation research.
- All hard copies of confidential data (informed consent) will be destroyed 3 years following the study.

In rare instances, authorized people may request to see research information about you and other people in this study. This is done only to be sure that the research is done properly. We would only permit people who are authorized by organizations such as the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board to see this information.

### **What will happen if I suffer any harm from this research?**

There are no foreseeable risks to you for taking part in this study.

### **Can I stop my participation in this study?**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may quit at any time. If you do not participate or if you decide to quit, there are no adverse consequences as a result.

### **Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?**

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Jeff Pierce, student researcher, at [pierce.j@husky.neu.edu](mailto:pierce.j@husky.neu.edu) or 602-904-0458, who is the person mainly responsible for the research. You can also contact Margaret Gorman Kirchoff, the principal investigator, at [m.kirchoff@northeastern.edu](mailto:m.kirchoff@northeastern.edu)

### **Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?**

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, Mail Stop: 560-177, 360 Huntington Avenue, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

**Will I be paid for my participation?**

You will not receive any payment for participating in this study.

**Will it cost me anything to participate?**

There will be no costs to you associated with participation in this study.

**Is there anything else I need to know?**

This is student research only.

**I agree to take part in this research.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person agreeing to take part

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of person above

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person who explained the study to the participant above and obtained consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of person above

### **Appendix D: Transcript Check Email**

Dear Participant,

It was a pleasure meeting and talking with you on [date]. Thank you for taking the time to share your experiences with me. As discussed, I am sending you a copy of the interview transcript for your review. Please read through the transcript and make any necessary changes or additions to include any ideas or concerns that you think are important.

Once you have finished reviewing the document, please send it back to me with those notations. If there are no changes, please email me at [pierce.j@husky.neu.edu](mailto:pierce.j@husky.neu.edu) or call me at 602-904-0458 and let me know. Thank you for your participation.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,

Jeff Pierce  
Student Researcher  
Department of Education, Organizational Leadership Studies  
Northeastern University

## Appendix E: Interview Protocol

My name is Jeff Pierce, and I'm a doctoral candidate at Northeastern University. For the final requirement of my doctoral studies I'm interviewing experienced OD professionals who design and deliver various leadership development programs to gain their insights into if or how they've seen an evolution in our approach for developing leadership capacity in the Digital Age. This interview should last approximately 40 minutes. All interviews remain anonymous and confidential with no identifiable information used. You will receive a transcript copy before I move into data analysis. Your participation is voluntary and with your permission, I'd like to audio record our conversation. Is this ok?

Our conversation today covers your experiences across 3 timeframes: past, present, and future. First, let's begin with your background and your path into the organizational development profession and into leadership development.

- Can you share with me how you first became interested in organizational development (OD)?
- When and how did you move into leadership development and training?
- Can you share with me some of the earlier practices you recall in terms of how OD professionals designed and delivered leadership development?
- Describe how you kept up with emerging trends for preparing leaders earlier in your career.
- Describe how you adjusted your practices based on how you were understanding the extent to which it was meeting the needs at the time, earlier in your career.
- Describe the type of formal and informal training, mentoring, and education you have had over the years.

Now, I'd like to focus on the OD field today and current leadership development practices.

- Describe the ways in which OD professionals today gather new insight into emerging trends that reshape their practices.
- Describe some of your current leadership development practices that are different today than when you first began your career.  
Probes: Describe one or more of your innovative practices and what process led you to that discovery. Was that process discovered in the moment or after the fact? How did this make you rethink your process for reflecting about your practice?
- Describe one of your more demanding challenges for your leadership development practice?  
Probes: What have you done to adjust to this dynamic? What methods did you use to reflect on innovative approaches to that situation? To what extent do you observe or experience OD practitioners collaborating to problem solving on these challenges?
- Describe a time when you had to make an in-the-moment adjustment during a leadership development event in response to a surprise or unanticipated interruption or dynamic.  
Probes: Describe how you took action and the extent to which you generated in-the-moment options. To what extent have you used this same process during other surprise interruptions or dynamics? Why or why not?
- Describe a time when you had to make an after-the-fact adjustment to a leadership practice.

Probes: What made you realize that an adjustment or change was necessary? How did this make you rethink your process for reflecting about your practice?

- Describe an unsuccessful adjustment you attempted, to include whether this occurred in the moment or after the fact.

Probe: What insights did you take away from this experience that will enhance your adaptive practices in the future?

- In comparison to earlier in your career, describe how you understand the extent to which your approach to your practice is meeting the needs for building leadership capacity for today's changing workplace.
- In comparison to earlier in your career, describe your strategies for reflecting on your practice, including when and how this occurs.
- In comparison to earlier in your career, describe any changes in how the OD profession or practitioners themselves encourage new reflective strategies for sharing innovative practices.

Now, I'd like to shift our conversation to the future. The Digital Age is transforming our workplaces and how we prepare tomorrow's leaders.

If needed explanation or examples: Digital Age=artificial intelligence, internet-of-things, cyber-cloud-social media-mobile learning, multi-generational digital citizens

- Given the changing nature of the workplace, can you share some of the future practices that the OD field is promoting that its practitioners embrace to prepare tomorrow's leaders?
- Describe some of the future challenges for your own leadership development practices.
- Probe: Describe any new ways you might need to enhance your reflective processes.
- Imagine in 5 years you are the keynote speaker at an OD conference providing reflective insights on leadership development practices in the Digital Age. What is the general theme of your presentation? Title?
- Probe: What reflective strategies will you encourage the practitioners to engage in?
- Any final thoughts about innovative leadership development practices or the OD profession?

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. I'll email you a copy of the transcript in the next 48 hours for your review before I move into data analysis.

## **Appendix F: Participants' Stories**

### **Participant 1**

Participant 1 was a seasoned, self-made professional who started in corporate sales, moving into internal and corporate training that ultimately led to leadership development when he started his own company 26 years ago. He believed that leadership development is more than just an event, it is a process. He believed that the evolution of leadership development has not changed much. He believed that leadership development is “broken” and that it needs to get back to a people-oriented process of learning.

### **Participant 2**

Participant 2 was a seasoned, self-made professional who began as a corporate sales leader, moving into training and then starting his own leadership development company 5 years ago. He believed leadership development is best accomplished through a grassroots approach, primarily in-person training and development. He believed leadership development is based on an interpersonal approach. He did not feel organizations develop leaders effectively: leadership is something that has to be learned.

### **Participant 3**

Participant 3 started as a leadership development trainer in the private industry 30 years ago, moving into government OD. She believed customer feedback, from all levels, is key to creating development opportunities. She believed networking with internal and external OD practitioners facilitates best practices. She felt that there was a gap in new and current leader abilities and that coaching and culture change are effective tools for addressing this phenomenon.

### **Participant 4**

Participant 4 began as a human resource manager for a private company, starting a private leadership development business about 10 years ago. She believed the human connection through interpersonal development is key to leadership development. There are leaders at every level of the organization and there should be conversations about career succession. She believed leadership development is about both professional and personal development and was always reflecting before, during, and after events for best practices.

#### **Participant 5**

Participant 5 began as a professional coach for a country's Olympic team, transitioned 12 years ago into professional and leadership development in high school education, and now works in government OD. She believed supervision used to be operational but now had a humanistic, interpersonal approach to leadership. She believed that persistent collaboration with other OD professionals and all stakeholders, especially the end user, optimizes development. Leadership needs to be learned and it is not about aptitude or a skill.

#### **Participant 6**

Participant 6 started a private learning and development company at the outset of her career, 25 years ago. Because every client is different, she felt training should always be tailor-made for them and not about events. Leadership development is focused on what the client needs from the beginning and then following through with them, both of which are key parts of reflection. In addition, adjustments should always be occurring, including in the moment. Having information right now (e.g., smartphones) and not having to wait for an event is also a key piece of leadership development.

#### **Participant 7**

Participant 7 began 25 years ago in a private company's human resources, evolved into learning and development in the private and public industries, and now works in government OD. She believed that leadership development is not always supported, especially by senior leadership. Senior leaders do not look to improve their own competencies but do support leadership development at lower levels. She believed in including all stakeholders for continual assessment and adjustments. She believed leadership development was moving towards microlearning (in small bits) that will be reinforced through in-person training and development.

### **Participant 8**

Participant 8 was well educated, which led her into academic leadership development at a large community college 10 years ago. She believed that academic leadership development is very insulated and is not collaborative. Most of her training and development, beyond her degrees, is self-developed through trial and error. Academics are seen as very resistant to leadership development because of their expertise in their fields and having taught in classrooms. Leadership development has and always will be people focused. This is the case because it is people, not technology, who are being developed or taught.

## **Appendix G: Participant Interview Matrix**

**Question 3:** Share earlier practices of how organizational development (OD) professionals design and deliver leadership development (LD).

**Participant 1:** tried to use needs assessments to define problem-then buy product to fix; need to establish business need and plan to develop leaders.

**Participant 2:** assumed leadership abilities but did not have, so partnered with HR to gain management training—how to interview, manage people, coaching, counseling, etc.

**Participant 3:** looked for leadership problems (needs assessments); looked at coaching/counseling or employee relation skills and basic supervision training.

**Participant 4:** earlier practices were command and control and how to be a good boss; didn't think taken seriously due to being a woman and family member; times have changed—leadership needs to be lived and practiced.

**Participant 5:** while working with a university (LD realm), worked directly with middle and high schools developing competencies for teachers, developing programs through a three-fold evaluation system—teacher self-evaluation, principal observation and feedback, and focus group with several teachers.

**Participant 6:** previously about generic but specific competencies—generic LD; C-suite executives sent to prestigious university for LD; managers had stretch and rotating assignments, job shadows, and 360 assessments.

**Participant 7:** older practices consisted of in-person, material-based training; customized standardized training—experience from the 90s—need in-person practice, not virtual; used case studies for situational practice, was more “nuts and bolts,” compared to practicing conversations; same training for facilitators—used leaders as co-facilitators for credibility—in-person, materials based; student training and facilitator training aligned.

**Participant 8:** LD in academia from younger student perspective, now from an older student perspective (more realistic)—transitioned to an adult learning model; faculty transitioning into administration/leadership roles—needed to develop/train how to be leaders, only had job knowledge in fields; used role playing—participants uncomfortable acting, thought was unrealistic and it was eliminated; reading assignments between session were not received well and this was eliminated as well; LMS was used just for homework assignments, now much more interactive (apps and social media connectivity).

**Summary of Responses:** three of eight (1, 3, 5) discussed needs assessments as earlier prevalent practices; two of eight (2, 8) discussed leaders not having requisite leadership skills.

**Question 4:** How kept up with emerging trends for preparing leaders earlier in career.

**Participant 1:** voracious reader, talked to smart people, and understanding business world.

**Participant 2:** did not want to fail so was proactive and started speaking with other team members, leaders, and mentors.

**Participant 3:** attended seminars, networked with other organizations sharing best practices, subscribe to publications so participants and staff could keep abreast of contemporary practice.

**Participant 4:** HR went from only record keeping (personnel) to having a seat at the table—training (mid to late 90s); also emerging trends came from county workforce development board and local government community.

**Participant 5:** developed herself with a masters and doctorate (innovation); attended workshops, participated in meeting, committees, and volunteered; eLearning becoming popular, so made an easy transition integrating it with face-to-face learning.

**Participant 6:** LD association (ATD) member since 1980—presented at 32 of those conferences—LD oriented; read a lot—used book content to tailor training and development; attended numerous LD conferences—keeping up with fads and trends alike.

**Participant 7:** certified in SHRM, professional HR certifications—more nuts and bolts of HR; belong to talent organizations; consulting w/organizations and organizational assessment work, which helped with gleaning feedback about trainings; used blended approaches, online and in-person for more technical, topical knowledge—not as effective with LD that needs in-person training for behavior change; online practice not as likely as in-person—more experienced based; attended networking events; reading and researching leadership models.

**Participant 8:** reading was only development—more academic reading—thought to be in a silo, only keeping up with trends was self-development, no mentorship.

**Summary of Responses:** three of eight attended seminars as keeping up with trends (3, 5, 6); three of eight discussed reading (1, 6, 8); two of eight discussed being part of talent organizations or associations (6, 7); six of eight discussed collaborating with others (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7).

**Question 5:** How adjusted practice in the past based on how it was meeting needs at the time.

**Participant 1:** it's not about an event but a process of development.

**Participant 2:** when issues arose took upon himself to self-develop—create solutions by self-developing to train others.

**Participant 3:** identified difficulties with feedback from all levels of org, to include executives; essentially a needs assessment wanting to change behaviors.

**Participant 4:** adjusted her own professional development; women in her organization were starting to have a voice; worked with a coach who fired her because of their dysfunction—he encouraged her to leave organization—opened up her to possibilities not seen before, e.g., graduate degree.

**Participant 5:** consult with senior/expert educators and leaders (mentorship and networking key); would have them observe pilot training and gather feedback—this is how she would adjust practices.

**Participant 6:** all LD is custom designed, no events; organizational needs assessments to identify skills and competencies for the next 5 years along w/culture; read books for content to tailor LD.

**Participant 7:** used Myers-Briggs personality indicator as well as certified in Dependable Strengths training—certified in many personality indicator models; leaders having personality and temperament understanding helps with their communication and promotes success.

**Participant 8:** in-the-moment adjustments from measuring participant cues, such as body language; participants (managers) who attended training—followed up with them a few weeks later for feedback—Likert scale feedback, e.g., 1-5 satisfaction.

**Summary of Responses:** five of eight discussed self-development in some way as how they adjusted their practice to meet needs (2, 4, 5, 6, 7); four of eight discussed feedback to adjust their practice (3, 5, 6, 8).

**Question 6:** Types of formal and informal education.

**Participant 1:** no college; attended a lot of conferences; most development comes from working with and consulting organizations and writing about LD.

**Participant 2:** no college; a lot of training conferences; informally based on experience—developed a sales career, mostly interpersonal skills, into training arena with his own company.

**Participant 3:** Masters, MBA w/ concentration in management; exposure to a lot of seminars that facilitated learning; had an internal and external mentor—shared difficulties and successes w/ both.

**Participant 4:** undergrad and graduate degrees in psychology; several mentors and coaches—coach, business coach, executive coach, and strategic mentor (to help acquire corporate contracts).

**Participant 5:** bachelor's, master's, and doctorate in innovation, as well as certificates—always pursuing credentials; also networking, mentorship, and hiring personal professional coaches were key.

**Participant 6:** attend at least eight conferences a year; a lot of writing and wrote for others as well; work with other leaders; master's degree in HR development of which none is useful now.

**Participant 7:** masters in HR/OD; certified as HR professional; master training certification; mentorship important, one “mentor go-to” who is phenomenal, also uses a co-consultant as a “sounding board;” ongoing development through projects; networking is key for new ideas; looks at the Starbucks model as a key development model—determining training needs looking at current systems in place, finding a go-to person for consistent deployment of resources, setting up infrastructure, providing the right tools for success regardless of industry, and buy-in from the top—having leaders who model the right behaviors that they're learning (from question 2 as well) so they can co-facilitate as well—need credibility when facilitating, then rolling out training and maintaining LD.

**Participant 8:** two masters' degrees—education w/emphasis in human relations and applied psych and a PhD in industrial organizational psych.—continuous education training—formal training, informal networking to problem solve worked best; never had mentorship in academia—it was formal education and observations; worked in private sector IT company that OD worked as a team but in academia it's autonomous, “it's like a one-man show.”

**Summary of Responses:** two of eight discussed having no college degree (1,2); three of eight discussed being self-made (1, 2, 6); six of eight discussed having college (3-8); four of eight discussed mentorship or coaching as personal development (3, 4, 5, 7); five of eight discussed attending seminars and conferences (1, 2, 3, 6, 7).

**Question 7:** How OD professionals today are gathering insight into emerging trends.

**Participant 1:** leadership development is “broken,” focused on building skillsets and not changing mindsets and creating habits.

**Participant 2:** looking at trends, generational awareness, research issues, needs assessments, collaborating with HR, interpersonal piece, and reinvesting in leadership because he sees it eroding in organizations.

**Participant 3:** sharing best practices through peer exchanges are important; still using past practices; part of several OD associations has helped; conducting research to develop classes helps to discover successes and failures.

**Participant 4:** collaborating w/ professionals in the same field and at conferences; keep current with training and education; working on World Economic Forum’s 10 skills needed in workforce; talking to leaders and nonleaders in organizations about weaknesses, strengths, and challenges; and feedback from own team.

**Participant 5:** the web is the number one resource for OD professionals; it’s used for sharing and collaborating.

**Participant 6:** used to plan 10 years out now 3-5 years; leadership responsibility—now taking seriously that 50-60% of leaders’ time should be developing his people (as of 4-5 years ago); convince orgs to coach their people; LD results oriented more now—ROI emphasized; need a good evaluation plan in place, from the beginning; need a long-term systematic approach—used to not have expectations once sent to training but now there are; meet beforehand to discuss expectations and how training fits w/org strategy.

**Participant 7:** OD field is lacking in this area and she feels alone (with regard to emerging trends); need better OD networking groups/s; uses online resources often to research.

**Participant 8:** in academia OD/training professionals work in a “silo;” one person gathering the information, not a team; in the broader OD field, professional HR certifications are significant, as well as attending conferences; training is reactive, not proactive.

**Summary of Responses:** three of eight discussed training research as an overarching OD method of gathering insight (2, 3, 4,); four of eight discussed collaborating with others about trends (3, 4, 5, 6); two of eight discussed the OD field lacking in overall collaboration (7, 8).

**Question 8:** Current LD practices that are different today than at the beginning of career.

**Participant 1:** now focused on extending a learning event into a learning process, whether digital, eLearning, electronic perf. tools, coaching, peer learning groups; learning one skill at a time each month; smaller amounts, condensed training—now too much information at once; LD broken; always/ongoing reflecting, so after the fact.

**Participant 2:** Over 30 years' experience has given him insight, gaining emotional intelligence; this in turn has helped provide cognitive tools and remedies for organizations, via training; innovative practice to create safe space for self-awareness and openness during training; after-the-fact feedback from participants allowed the interpersonal, EQ, component to resonate during process.

**Participant 3:** one-one-one coaching first to impact leaders then team training (intact teams)—culture is key to both components; innovative practice—culture change workshop—six step culture change coupled with strategic planning—leaders influence culture; continuous improvement led to this—to continuously improve need conducive environment or culture; in the moment because people were saying management says “can’t do that”—management risk averse; need safe environment or culture.

**Participant 4:** when working in HR about nuts and bolts—now about professional and personal development, also must live it and walk the talk; innovative practice was to integrate EI into experiential training learned from graduate school—three roles to harness reflective listening; before the fact reflecting to bring to team but in the moment when saw it was working, and after-the-fact adjustments for different groups—also before-the-fact preparation for diff groups and in-the-moment adjustment while addressing different groups; after-the-fact time consolidation for other companies—needed training in two not six sessions; reflection about business—challenging clients' needs and about growing business.

**Participant 5:** past practice dev w/principals was based on operational leadership, now more holistic and global—human approach, e.g., generational differences; leadership dev for water dept.; asked audience before training what method desired—dynamic group, in field, so wanted face-to-face training; then adjusted after-the-fact w/eLearning for each module then discovered too much—then readjusted eLearning; reflecting back, consider end-user first, proactively, was best practice, even if it was just for ideas and not end product.

**Participant 6:** helping leaders w/phones using apps for instantaneous responses for rapidly changing skills—more incremental development rather than massive amounts at once; on the job learning—have plan for continuous development—coaching; interviewing negative perspectives around topic provides unique perspective; creating applications (phones) for instant responses; loaned executive program—loan employee to a volunteer agency for needed skill development, e.g., marketing, finance; in-the-moment idea when asked about improving stakeholder relationships—employee exchange program—managers from different organizations switch jobs for a few months to improve

relationships and develop new skills/ideas; process has always been in-the-moment, spur-of-the-moment ideas—good at this—always looking for creative ways to learn; however, an overarching process is 1) needs, 2) vision 3-5 years, 3) action plan, 4) design dev efforts w/ consideration for what's in place 5) sustain progress; 1—needs, laying foundation is establishing a leadership philosophy; reflecting with every client, every day.

**Participant 7:** more empathetic to peoples' concerns or needs, e.g., coaching; senior leaders need to participate/buy-in to LD; leadership is sometimes resistant to LD; one current LD program includes all employees (line level and part time)—they create an improvement plan to include full business plan-cost analysis, marketing, etc., while providing them models of leadership to use-in addition to other LD facets of the program—thought of this as a practical-based leadership program (9 months long);

**Participant 8:** went from role plays to personal scenario problem solving (in pairs); LMS is not more interactive with apps—promotes use; class feedback (on cards) why here and topics to address (icebreaker activity)—then would tailor some on the class content based on this feedback; measuring longitudinal effects of behavior or performance—2 week, 4 week, 6 month follow ups—2 week with participant (Likert style) and the two latter with their next level up, qualitative feedback—would report back to supervisors (of part.) any misalignments for adjustments for affecting multiple levels—wanting to improve human relations and help connect people led to this discovery—there were scarce performance reviews and wanted to improve this as well; all of this was after-the-fact wanting to improve human relations/connections—took to president, single level of approval (better process than committee) and approved; didn't change process for reflecting about practice.

**Summary of Responses:** all discussed leadership development as being a process in some form (1-8); three of eight discussed leadership being people oriented and interpersonal (2, 4, 5); five of eight discussed coaching as part of development (1, 3, 6, 7, 8); four of eight discussed contacting stakeholders prior for tailoring training (4, 5, 6, 7).

**Question 9:** Demanding challenges for LD practice.

**Participant 1:** leadership is universal, so getting people to recognize this—90% the same and not need specialist; build credibility-change mindset, people are people; always learning and reflecting to improve process—tailoring to clients' needs but using past principles. Never going to master leadership—continuous learning/continuous improvement; not in good position to observe what OD professionals are doing—occasionally collaborate with OD.

**Participant 2:** there is a huge gap in leadership development; organizations not developing/training newly promoted supervisors; OD/practitioners not collaborating on problem much but participant collaborates with academia—mutual learning benefit.

**Participant 3:** leadership trends and philosophies have changed with the times—current leaders don't feel they need to further develop, took a class previously and a gap in new leader abilities as well; use one-on-one coaching to address, trying to change culture; look at evaluations to reflect about dissatisfaction w/ current leadership—discuss and reflect with other OD professionals; OD field collaborates well, sharing best practices, both internally and externally.

**Participant 4:** the unknown in the room as demanding challenge—resistance to development—in the moment adjustments—included a challenging participant—became ally; in-the-moment navigating: including participants in discussions, step aside or discuss later; used coaching skills to hear them and praise/encourage them; networking w/ colleagues is how OD practitioners problem solve.

**Participant 5:** being self-aware of own development and practicing what I'm teaching; ensuring balance in her development by acquiring and maintaining certifications—Situational Leadership and Seven Habits; OD field is often collaborating for success.

**Participant 6:** federal government 20 years behind—have no vision; no desire for LD and belief of entitlement—not everyone but as a group or organization; brought in external training that produced great ideas but no support from leadership/org; formed networks, collaborate w/leadership, and use external resources for reflection about innovative approaches; OD practitioners troubleshoot problems/ideas—do this individually or in small groups—some individuals and groups don't want to collaborate or share ideas.

**Participant 7:** attempted senior leadership collaboration, strategic plan, and LD—they, senior leadership, not supportive of LD for themselves only for supervisors below them; senior leadership not interested in developing leadership competencies; culture of hierarchy reporting is restrictive—not neutral since participant is embedded in hierarchy—not always trusted; tried to adjust by talking with senior leadership one-on-one to build relationships and trust, establishing confidentiality, and recommending internal and external LD resources; broader OD network not as supportive (within the state) but internal, within organization, has a strong network.

**Participant 8:** academics are arrogant because they are SMEs in their fields—see no value in LD because they lead a classroom and feel that is enough; resentment from participants because LD facilitator not seen as authority—resistant to LD; adjusted by soliciting participants’ best practices before introducing topics/material—less authoritative approach; could empathize with faculty (once was) but was frustrated because of resistance until removed ego from situation and became more collaborative; academic OD “a lot of talk and no action;” very little collaboration; each college only has one training representative, while the district office has a team of four; when attempting to problem solve there’s a chasm between sides—faculty and staff.

**Summary of Responses:** five of eight discussed a gap in leadership development (1, 2, 3, 7, 8); six of eight discussed resistance to leadership development (1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8); three of eight discussed the OD field collaborating on innovative approaches to problems (3, 4, 6); three of eight have experienced certain groups of OD or field in general not being collaborative (2, 7, 8).

**Question 10:** In-the-moment adjustment during an LD event in response to surprise.

**Participant 1:** resistance to training—rank in room causing problems—ask to leave and debrief as necessary—being a trusted advisor; sometimes anticipate this and ask senior leader if separating group ok, if there is trust; making safe for the group.

**Participant 2:** participants leaving for a portion—adjusted curriculum and class time—create buy-in/ask for feedback/permission for adjustments; accommodation for participants/classroom; redundancy accounts for preparation for disruptions.

**Participant 3:** executive-level leaders sharing program implementation—longer than anticipated, so adjusted in the moment condensing other areas and after-the-fact rearranging schedule; no other in-the-moment options had to be flexible since practice was so valuable.

**Participant 4:** learner didn't want to participate—“well that's bullshit” in the moment, included rest of group about if everyone wanted to be there; they did and group discussed expectations—learner quit the next week and team got tighter; other class another learner didn't want to be there—she indicated she heard him and class listened as well and responded to learner by empathizing—skills later learned in class.

**Participant 5:** it's about guiding an unexpected situation; if there is confusion will ask critical/Socratic questions for understanding; if there's tension then maybe getting closer to people or taking breaks.

**Participant 6:** communications development discovered several attendees were to be laid off—adjusted content in-the-moment “adjusted on the spot,” based on problem; feedback from learners key to establish redirection, solving problem—created simulations, interview role plays and creating resumes (showing examples); used writing (on flip chart) to help reflect in-the-moment; use “spur-of-the-moment,” creativity if there's a need—being well read and having a broad content base helps—use internet as well to help in-the-moment options.

**Participant 7:** co-facilitator unprepared (PP slides not complete) and was improvising—gave class activity while discussed adjustments with co-facilitator—allowed time to adjust; consistently adjusts using impromptu activities.

**Participant 8:** in-the-moment adjustment during a disruption—played a game; wasn't prepared for it, it was “off the top-of-my-head;” intervened during a high emotion environment with a game of hangman—played for 15 minutes; ran a risk analysis of other options (contingencies)—not viable, so played the game; realized that everybody likes games; have used other decompression tools in future classes—tactile artifacts, such as stress balls, to play with at tables—usually during day-long training will play two to three short, unrelated to class, games; research shows that to engage the brain it has to be unburdened, so this introduces laughter and distractions.

**Summary of Responses:** four of eight discussed audience feedback in the moment to help adjust (2, 4, 5, 6); four of eight discussed making an in-the-moment adjust autonomously (1, 3, 7, 8); two of eight discussed creating in-the-moment time to help with adjustments (6, 7).

**Question 11:** After-the-fact adjustments to an LD practice.

**Participant 1:** solid debriefing approaches with training group, learners, or whoever is the right person/people; “learning experiences don’t fail, they create data.”

**Participant 2:** discuss with stakeholder/leader about a group’s needs or challenges; make adjustments to curriculum; create opportunities to adjust; also, discuss w/class about their insight—adjust delivery in-the moment (during class)

**Participant 3:** negative feedback about segment from written evaluations on two successive occasion caused reflection; feedback measured learners’ climate that the segment was not appropriate—removed and thought about the objective and how to add another area of value.

**Participant 4:** from evaluations wanted bigger group discussions, so was after the fact and included next time—well received; then an in the moment to an inquiry, learner asked if they could do it in a group—participant asked class for feedback—well received and answered as group—feedback was very positive; made her rethink having to do things her own “rigid way”—answered this on her own, not prompted.

**Participant 5:** based on response from groups, adjust content—from lecture to case study, adjust for time—invited back and adapted logistics; from evaluations adapted content after the fact; knowing that change is certain and uncertainty is constant, must be comfortable with being uncomfortable—nature of job and after-the-fact adjustment is a must.

**Participant 6:** will always follow up with participants—ex. flip chart in back of room—post-it for any questions or follow up about whatever and send it to everyone; always planning and adjusting; life-long learner who is continually improving processes, which is “built in to my DNA;” every client and situation is different.

**Participant 7:** didn’t have a specific example but modifies after the fact as necessary, believes every session gets better; uses anecdotes, whether hers or someone else’s (with permission), during training—adds value; also updates case studies.

**Participant 8:** when communicating a change management initiative, didn’t have answer for problem—discussed issue with other trainers to solve issue—it was a matter of explaining rationale when not making a change; what made participant rethink her process was to write down scenarios to reflect on approaches to potential future issues.

**Summary of Responses:** all discussed making after-the-fact adjustments (1-8); six of eight discussed collaboration with stakeholders for after-the-fact adjustments (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8); three of eight discussed using written evaluations for after-the-fact adjustments (3, 4, 5).

**Question 12:** Unsuccessful adjustment that was attempted in the moment or after the fact.

**Participant 1:** adjustments create data only, not failures.

**Participant 2:** did not give specific unsuccessful adjustment but discussed reviewing feedback—training did not apply w/one particular senior participant—cautious about changing; use participant history/background (thru LinkedIn) to better communicate w/class—after-the-fact analysis or before-the fact analysis.

**Participant 3:** included an emotional intelligence segment during a prerequisite and during program—feedback was that it was too redundant; after-the-fact adjustment based on survey feedback; insights were that more research about learners' backgrounds/training were needed.

**Participant 4:** had groups in trios sharing but harder to get participation; transitioned to everyone sharing—leadership is about having your voice in the room; takeaway was to limit responses—they were getting too long— from learner feedback and observations.

**Participant 5:** tried to ask critical questions for understanding but learner became defensive and thought participant was attacking and questioning ability to understand—very unsuccessful; need to be aware of body language, tone of voice, and demeanor, which may not be aligned with message.

**Participant 6:** the federal government learned leadership skills/attended classes but trying to get them to do something “big and exciting,” did not occur—consider herself a failure; used after-the-fact adjustments (described in question 9) but none of which worked. She was there for 6 years and could have been there for another 6 but not fulfilling (unwillingness to implement ideas).

**Participant 7:** running out of time during a summary report of a training assessment—didn't account for unexpected circumstances—realized behind in the moment; finished quickly missing important information; after the fact adjusted to be on time in the future—being mindful of getting excited about information (contributed to length of presentation); took away that always have to be mindful of audience's needs and adapt accordingly (e.g., answering questions over agenda items).

**Participant 8:** allowing participants to fully explain solutions, attempting to create a shared trainer philosophy—responses were too verbose and created dissention between groups—created an unintended hierarchy because one group were supervisors and the other was not; insights taken from experience were to research audience to tailor content accordingly.

**Summary of Responses:** four of the eight discussed researching and knowing audience ahead of time to tailor training to their needs (2, 3, 7, 8).

**Question 13:** Extent to which approach to practice meets needs for building leadership capacity

**Participant 1:** much better now than before—how and what deliver; matured in understanding of LD; constant state of improvement.

**Participant 2:** very engaged with organizations such as education, Chamber, and veterans; tuned into what American workforce is needing in training and development; also listen to media outlets—CNN and Fox to meet people “where they are” to earn their trust and build relationships w them—this allows leverage to expand learning.

**Participant 3:** when first started 30+ years ago, training was arbitrary—provided on what trainers thought leaders needed; now there are formal and informal needs assessments; developed consultant’s tool that consults customers up front—what’s performance now and desired performance.

**Participant 4:** was unaware what building capacity was; there’s leadership at every level; it’s also about having conversations with leaders/organizations about the importance of career succession and developing the future leaders.

**Participant 5:** relationship with division heads for (stakeholders) requesting training—dialogue/feedback from them; looking at learning metrics; feedback from end user to see if training is applied/effective in the day-to-day workplace.

**Participant 6:** competency models outdated and appraisal systems becoming outdated—going away in many organizations—need to be continually readjusting instead; only need general competencies, not a model, but need a leadership philosophy helps to be more future focused.

**Participant 7:** meeting constituent needs by individual coaching and external (within organization but outside Department) LD; matured in own approach.

**Participant 8:** didn’t see the importance of leadership earlier in career but now see its value and how it affects organizations; thinking big picture now and consider organizations’ contexts.

**Summary of Responses:** five of eight discussed now having a more global and advanced perspective about leadership and leadership development (1, 2, 4, 7, 8).

**Question 14:** Describe strategies for reflecting on practice, to include when/how it occurs.

**Participant 1:** far more intentional in terms of reflection; take time every day to reflect on practices—what went well and what didn't; if we don't do this type of reflection: "there's a difference between the person with 10 years of experience or 1 one year experience 10 times."

**Participant 2:** seek/listen to understand and be part of a conversation, don't have to lead it; having a growth mindset allows challenging situations to be an opportunity to grow for the better.

**Participant 3:** not a lot of reflecting earlier in my career; now it's talking and conferring with customers—feedback from data collected and other sorts of feedback.

**Participant 4:** reflecting about how to improve business operations is part of it; providing a specialty (leadership development) and not being everything to everyone; also about healing people and giving back—the human connection.

**Participant 5:** In the past relied on memory but now uses a journal to take notes about ideas and draws graphics to help illustrate processes and ideas.

**Participant 6:** write down reflection on projects—what went well, would do differently, what was learned; then meet w/leaders (whoever hired her) and discuss these items—good reflection for her.

**Participant 7:** always do postanalysis using surveys (Survey Monkey) for class feedback, collaborate with staff about what did and didn't work; also use postanalysis with facilitators for best practices.

**Participant 8:** previously would take in-the-moment notes during sessions but changed to after-the-fact notes right after sessions; will make qualitative notes (database) for identifying themes throughout—very academic; tailor training content (PowerPoints) helps with any review process afterwards (e.g., complaints).

**Summary of Responses:** all eight discussed using reflective strategies to improve development (1-8); three of eight discussed collaborating with stakeholders (3, 6, 7); three of eight discussed using some sort of journaling for reflection (5, 6, 8); two of eight discussed collecting data (3, 7).

**Question 15:** Describe changes in how OD profession or practitioners encourage reflective strategies for sharing innovative practices.

**Participant 1:** moving away from PP, closer to people—more participation, engagement, and interaction amongst participants—setting the stage for learning.

**Participant 2:** only in the OD field recently; conduct research and development for my business; more grass roots perspective—look at desired outcomes and employ practical applications; innovation not as important but more so practical applications.

**Participant 3:** OD brand more recognizable now, for her late 90s to early 2000s in previous organization; seeing that executives are more willing to discuss achieving better results in organizations; but still in the phase of marketing ourselves.

**Participant 4:** the more effective practitioners are the ones who support each other and are willing to share, as opposed to the ones who focus on what works for them only; innovation is becoming more collaborative.

**Participant 5:** the way OD professionals support each other; information sharing has always been there but just the methods of delivery may be different, e.g., FB.

**Participant 6:** the focus is on culture and change; these ideas are shared through magazines, blogs, and books—can't always trust internet, must evaluate; culture always considered when working w/organizations in determining feasibility of development.

**Participant 7:** online data gathering—surveys (Survey Monkey) allows for capturing of quotes without recording people that seems to promote anonymity more than smile sheets.

**Participant 8:** feels like in a silo because academia doesn't communicate well with each other in the training realm.

**Summary of Responses:** two of eight discussed going back to practical solutions, being classroom oriented and engaging (1, 2); two of eight discussed collaboration among practitioners (4, 5).

**Question 16:** Given changing nature of workplace, future practices OD field is promoting to prepare tomorrow's leaders.

**Participant 1:** digital tools are the future; but still using the tools that have been around a while.

**Participant 2:** online learning is more prevalent but is it effective—how do we know? found coaching enhances training.

**Participant 3:** two things OD field needs to promote—learning and helping organizations; single skill development is one newer learning mode; leaders need to coach performance and prepare the workforce for technology.

**Participant 4:** online is more pervasive because it's convenient but not as experiential; going away from the relationship, personal components; participant hasn't delved into the digital world—focusing on personal connections.

**Participant 5:** OD is changing, it's technological and digital learning are more accessible, convenient, and available

**Participant 6:** unlearning is as important as learning is an interesting concept—want to tie this with a learning organization concept; facilitating learning through pictures (visual learning) and interested how this ties into LD—a reason why smartphones can be used for learning—not as prevalent w/paper or books.

**Participant 7:** OD field not helpful with recommendations; search online for current trends in the OD field.

**Participant 8:** in-person training is not as favorable any longer—on-demand videos save time and distance, which is favorable—it provides 24/7 access; however, can't measure efficacy of digital training, nor can you tailor on-demand training; there is also a lack of dynamic communication, none in videos and very little in webinars—these are negative consequences.

**Summary of Responses:** five of eight discussed existing methods such as coaching, personal components of learning, and communication as effective (1, 2, 3, 4, 8); seven of eight discussed the pervasiveness of digital or technological learning (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8).

**Question 17:** Future challenges for own LD practices.

**Participant 1:** learners not focused, trying to motivate learners to actually participate in LD; think about technology, but use existing technology, e.g., texts—don't need to change.

**Participant 2:** changing of behavior matters and from a stakeholder's perspective it's not always occurring; therefore, reinforcement or coaching helps enhance learning; it enhances reflective process by redesigning training to include coaching.

**Participant 3:** challenge to motivate learners to develop themselves; also, having data and success stories to support results for future collaboration/working with organizations; talking with other people to reflect and expanding sphere of knowledge through larger network.

**Participant 4:** organizations want convenience with quick fixes—creating a safe zone to be vulnerable, it's about safety for the learner; it's also about the length, breadth, and validating of learning that adds value; every event is different, so consistently customizing—changing and adding value to training; more awareness about learners, e.g., diversity in pictures.

**Participant 5:** people have to realize aptitude is not leadership; leadership needs to be learned—relationship, professional, and organizational development needs to be developed; need to enhance the marketing piece of her product.

**Participant 6:** hard to keep up with the changing times—technology, global learning, cyber security; often readjusting something; leadership skills the same but the situations are changing (so rapidly).

**Participant 7:** no support, the only OD professional for 500 employees—running current and new OD—implementing strategic plan, getting buy-in, as well as logistics orchestrated; transitioning to online learning designing curriculum—got certified in eLearning design—don't like it but good at it; reassessing training needs, transitioning some training (unnecessary in-person) to online—17 locations so online content streamlines learning; enhancing reflective strategies is “always about collaborating;” have own first assessment but always consult SMEs for best practice.

**Participant 8:** competing training perspectives (agendas) are always a challenge; needing to be more diplomatic in negotiations for designing and delivering training; need to learn the different digital platforms, investigate which ones would be the best—don't do that now—apps could be used in the training room; teams compared to one person would be more effective in this area; identifying and rectifying technological gaps during training needs to also be done—don't do now but should.

**Summary of Responses:** four of eight discussed collaborating with organizations (3, 4, 7, 8); three of eight discussed needing to motivate learners to development leadership skills (1, 3, 5); four of eight discussed integrating technology into learning (1, 6, 7, 8).

**Question 18:** 5 years—keynote speaker at OD conference—reflective insights on LD practices in digital age—theme and title.

**Participant 1:** making LD really work; practical approaches, and some might be different from today but not use something, e.g. technology, just for the sake of it being new—it's how it relates to human behavior; people and development have not changed that much—people still learn the same ways.

**Participant 2:** measuring success is key, using an online component but engagement with audience is crucial, whether video, testing quiz, follow up to ensure learning; also, surveys will help with the reflection piece to discover how students want to learn—mode of learning, also keep different generations in mind.

**Participant 3:** multifaceted learning approach, one shoe does not fit all learners; make learning a necessity; what ways can we advance technology with learning; discussing with other OD professionals' best practices.

**Participant 4:** it's about human development—people are the foundation to learning and development, while the digital age is there for some components of learning; reflective strategies to impart are to listen to their people—it's about leaders enabling leaders.

**Participant 5:** persistency of OD learning, sharing, collaborating, dissemination of information; be resourceful, researching all avenues.

**Participant 6:** “coming of the brain plant,” believing that in 10 years there will be technology to implant knowledge into our brains. Said in 5 years would think about the ethics involved—does it violate peoples' privacy; wouldn't need LD/OD practitioners any longer; thinking out loud is the reflection piece—discussing issues and both the receiver and sender can reassess/reflect and it allows two-way reflection.

**Participant 7:** effecting behavior change through micro-learning and then in-person training to reinforce learning; using “snippits” of teachable topics; new generation wants information fast; it's looking at how we can disseminate micro-learning creatively; reflective strategies to use would be relationship building and connecting with customers for assessing behavior change and performance management tools.

**Participant 8:** training is about people—you train to people not technology; reflecting right after, writing down your analyses of the training and using analytic models (such as SWOT); using a brain-based approach to learning—how do people learn best physiologically.

**Summary of Responses:** four of eight discussed technology being prevalent but that it's still about the engagement with people (1, 2, 4, 8); five of eight discussed using a combination of technology and in-person learning (1, 2, 3, 4, 7); two of eight discussed measuring learning (2, 7).

**Question 19:** Final thoughts about innovative LD practices or OD profession.

**Participant 1:** LD is broken; get out of our own ways and fix it by integrating learning into ways that really matter—applying timeless principles and not about technology as much.

**Participant 2:** don't exclude the learner—solicit their feedback for what they need and want; remaining close with the consumers, whether it's surveys, secret shopping, address the learners' needs; data analytics will provide framework for needs but really need to engage/consult the consumer is key.

**Participant 3:** sharpen consultant skills, ask better/more pointed questions and being more comfortable with ambiguity.

**Participant 4:** not everyone has all workplace skills (10 delineated), so honoring and focusing peoples' strengths is key; also, listening to everyone to see where they can bring value; we're all leaders.

**Participant 5:** none, "I never thought I would have so much to say."

**Participant 6:** none.

**Participant 7:** none.

**Participant 8:** mentorship is key in LD for best practices—academic LD/OD is lacking in mentorship.

**Summary of Responses:** no themes identified.