

GROWING ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP MINDSET: A CONSTRUCTIVE DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

by

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ABSTRACT

As the world evolves, the issues humanity must face grow increasingly complex. Organizations need leaders able to navigate the daunting challenges that appear in this constantly changing environment. Through collaborative developmental action inquiry (Torbert & Associates, 2004) this action research case study took place at Southern University, a large private research institution in the United States. Situated in the literature at the intersection of adaptive leadership theory (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, 2009), double loop learning theory (Argyris, 1977, 1991) and constructive developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994), the purpose of this study was to understand how to create the learning conditions for midlevel managers to develop the skillset and mindset necessary to transition from operational management to adaptive leadership. The questions that guided this study were 1) How does a developmentally informed program impact midlevel leaders' mindset for adaptive leadership? 2) What are the conditions under which program participants and the action research (AR) team are able to engage adaptive leadership development? 3) What happens when collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI) is used as a methodology for designing and

implementing a leadership program? This study showed that a collaborative approach to leadership development program design leads to the growth of adaptive leaders. Implications include a model for a collaborative developmental approach to growing adaptive leadership mindset.

INDEX WORDS: action research, collaborative developmental action inquiry, constructive developmental theory, adaptive leadership, double loop learning, horizontal and vertical leadership development

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved husband, Tom Longo. You are my rock, playmate, partner, friend, soulmate. You have always indulged my need to learn without question and I am grateful for your loving support for these thirty years, especially during this doctoral journey. Now, on to our next adventure! To our children, Travis, Austin, and Megan, from whom I continue to learn as you each experience the joy and pain that comes with growing into adulthood while navigating the complexities of this evolving world. Last, to my dear parents, Edwin and Janet Mitchell, I am grateful for all you teach me about unconditional love and commitment, and for your lighting the fire of my desire to learn so very long ago. I am grateful to each of you for all we learn together.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Your work is to discover your work and to give your heart to it.

Buddha

Growing up in the Southeastern United States, as a woman born in the mid nineteen sixties, I have come to understand myself thus far in my life and leadership journey as an accidental leader. As the oldest of four children, and raised in the turbulent socioeconomic environment of the time, I was expected to be a leader in my family. This expectation instilled in me the drive to become a first-generation college graduate. I wanted to grow my mind in order to navigate the increasingly complex demands of my life. Early in my career, I stepped into a leadership position as a technical expert of the work in my department. Without any leadership or management training, I was most definitely an accidental leader. This conundrum instilled the drive for me to pursue graduate school education and opened my curiosity to the field of learning and leadership development.

Through the course of this study, I became acquainted with constructive developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Torbert & Associates, 2004), single, double loop learning theory (Argyris, 1977, 1991), and adaptive leadership theory (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, 2009). It was at the intersection of these theories that I realized that, with the demands of my career and family, the pressures of societal expectations regarding my roles as leader, daughter, sister, wife, mother, student and citizen, I was, quite literally, in over my head (Kegan, 1982, 1994) and had been for most of my life. Constructive developmental theory resonated as I realized that having the knowledge and skills for leadership is not always

enough. I began to relate in a very real way to the demands faced by the leaders at Southern University and wanted to learn, for all of us, how to in paraphrase of the words of one of this study's participants, "shift from being an accidental leader to an intentional leader." Due to the societal pressures, economic instability, and political polarity we experience today, the development of leaders with the insight and ability to navigate the complexity of these circumstances is important work. This study is an offering of all that I and my co-inquirers have learned in the hope that my fellow leaders and colleagues will find support in how to develop intentional, adaptive leadership and to be prepared to face the demands of our modern-day work and lives.

Problem Framing and Concern

Southern University is a large, private research university located in the Southeastern United States. Southern University (SU) was founded in the mid 1800's and set up with a traditional hierarchical leadership structure with a president and provost, executive leadership (deans of the various schools that make up the institution, vice presidents of the functional areas, directors of various divisions, departments, and programs), and frontline middle management (associate directors, managers, and supervisors). Southern University is a pseudonym for the location of this study. Pseudonyms are also used for all study subjects with the exception of the researcher. At SU, deans, vice presidents, and directors are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the areas for which they are responsible. Associate directors and managers are responsible for carrying out the day to day operations of their areas based on this strategic direction. This structure works well for carrying out the mission, vision, and practical operations of the university. As the business of higher education becomes more complex; however, senior

leaders are concerned with the need to prepare midlevel leaders with the competency and capacity to move into more strategic roles.

Around the world higher education is in transition, affected by globalization, emerging technologies that provide mass access, impacts of these changes on relationships between the university, corporations, and government, among others (Knight, 2008). Today, the higher education sector is undergoing a fundamental transformation in terms of societal role, mode of operation, economic structure and value. Democratization and accessibility of knowledge, contestability of markets and funding, digital technologies, global mobility of students and faculty, and integration with industry are factors impacting the landscape for higher education now and in the near future (Ernest & Young, 2012). As a private research institution, Southern University is impacted by these factors as well as by the reduction of federal research funding and the increasing cost and complexity involved in the administration of such funding.

To meet these challenges, Southern University places high importance on developing leaders among faculty and staff as evidenced by the investment in the leadership development programs offered by various departments. There are programs for faculty, executive leaders, new managers and supervisors, run by the Learning and Organizational Development department. This has been recognized by prominent award granting institutions in the field for the most recent consecutive seven years (2011 through 2017). These award-winning leadership development programs are valuable resources for the Southern University community and highly regarded by participants and by the leaders who support their participation.

Although Southern University provides professional development for leaders across a wide range of role levels, at the time this study began, there was not a program specifically for

developing the midlevel leader. This was not uncommon among institutes of higher education. A look at the horizon for the future of leadership development reveals an emphasis on building both competency and capacity. In other words, the traditional approach to leadership development involves a focus on competency development - the relaying of knowledge about leadership and the behaviors expected of an effective leader (Petrie, 2014). This is also known as “horizontal” development (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Cook-Greuter, 1999, 2002, 2004). To prepare leaders for the complex, adaptive challenges (Heifetz, 1994) they face in today’s workplace, the future of leadership development involves enhancing the competency based approach with a focus on capacity (vertical) development. According to Petrie (2014):

There are two different types of development—horizontal and vertical. A great deal of time has been spent on “horizontal” development (competencies), but very little time on “vertical” development (developmental stages). The methods for horizontal and vertical development are very different. Horizontal development can be “transmitted” (from an expert), but vertical development must be earned (for oneself). (p. 4)

At the beginning of this study, discussions with senior leaders across the university revealed the need for development for SU’s midlevel leaders. More specifically, deans and vice presidents across the various schools and divisions expressed that, when a director level position became available, they frequently hired for those roles from outside of the university because internal midlevel managers were not ready to make the step from operationally focused work, to the more adaptive demands at the director level.

This problem is not unique to Southern University. The need for leadership development for midlevel managers is a growing concern across industries (Harvard Business Publishing, 2015). According to Donahue, Routch, and Thomas (2012):

The strength of leadership capability at the mid-level is a primary determinant of an organization's ability to execute its business strategy. If organizations want to be successful, they must take stock of the current readiness of their mid-level leaders, and develop them to meet business needs sooner. (p. 1)

As organizational structure becomes both flatter and leaner, critical management responsibilities have been pushed downward, and the global economy has given rise to a more complex business environment, mid-level leaders have felt the heat. The role has changed so much in recent years that organizations are concerned about mid-level leaders having the skills to succeed (Donahue, et al., 2012). The demands of the business of higher education are increasingly more complex and preparing leaders to navigate this complexity is challenging (Ernst & Young, 2012). Leadership development professionals need support to understand how to develop leaders who are prepared to face the complexities of modern life and business.

Researcher's Role

I began employment with Southern University in 2013 as Director of Learning and Development, assigned to one internal client within the system. I reported to the Senior Director of Learning and Organizational Development, who in turn reported to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources, who in turn reported to the Executive Vice President of Human Resources. The Learning and Organizational Development department was part of the centralized Human Resources division for Southern University.

Although relatively new to Southern University at the time of this study, I had over twenty years of management experience and over fifteen years of experience in the field of learning and development. My role provided me with positional authority and the opportunity to influence decisions within the Human Resources division and within my client base.

However, all my actions were under the authority of my senior leadership and any work on this action research project had to be considered and approved by the Executive Vice President of Human Resources, the Associate Vice President of Human Resources, and my direct leader, the Senior Director of Learning and Organizational Development.

At the time of this study, Southern University was coming to the close of its most recent ten-year strategic plan. The new long term strategic plan included a focus on talent planning across the university, with a goal of developing a pipeline of leaders ready to step into next level positions as they became available. As such, there was a spotlight on leadership development and the need for a program aimed at fulfilling the development needs of the midlevel manager. Funding was available for the development and delivery of a new leadership development program for this group. Given the strategic focus on talent development, the support of senior executive leadership for the development of a program for midlevel leaders, the funding commitment from within the finance and human resources divisions, and my role within the system, the support and resources existed to carry out this action research. Through action research, we took a collaborative approach to understand the learning and development needs of SU's midlevel managers and to determine the most effective ways to support the shift from operational management to adaptive leadership.

Statement of Inquiry Purpose

As the landscape of higher education evolves, Southern University needs leaders with the insight and ability to lead through the challenges of this environment. The purpose of this action research study was to understand how to create the learning conditions for midlevel managers to develop the skillset and mindset necessary to transition from operational management to adaptive

leadership. Based on this statement of the problem and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks undergirding this study, the research questions that guided this study were:

- 1) How does a developmentally informed program impact midlevel leaders' mindset for adaptive leadership?
- 2) What are the conditions under which program participants and the action research (AR) team are able to engage adaptive leadership development?
- 3) What happens when collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI) is used as a methodology for designing and implementing a leadership program?

Through collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI) (Torbert, 1976, 1991; Torbert & Associates, 2004; Torbert & Livne-Tarandach, 2009) the team collaborated with leaders across the organization to create a leadership development program that attended to the system's expectations of the next level leadership role and provided the conditions of learning to support Southern University's midlevel managers for these demands. It was our theory that if we created a leadership development program that provided the conditions of learning by taking a collaborative developmental approach, midlevel manager participants would develop the capability and capacity to transition from operational management to adaptive leadership.

Conceptual Framework

Midlevel managers are profoundly affected by the factors underlying today's complexity, such as globalization, rapid change, and economic uncertainty (Harvard Business Publishing, 2015). Universities are no different given the changing environment of higher education (Ernst & Young, 2012). Leadership development professionals must consider the complexities facing leaders at all levels and provide opportunities that enable leaders to adapt to the challenges they face. The issue of developing midlevel managers at Southern University is situated in the

literature at the intersection of adaptive leadership theory (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, 2009), constructive developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Cook-Greuter, 2003, 2004; Torbert & Associates, 2004, Rooke & Torbert, 2005), and single/double loop learning theory (Argyris, 1977, 1991) while constructive developmental action inquiry (CDAI) (Torbert, 1976, 1991; Torbert & Associates, 2004; Torbert & Livne-Tarandach, 2009), as both a theory and a methodology, provided a holding environment for development as seen in Figure 1.

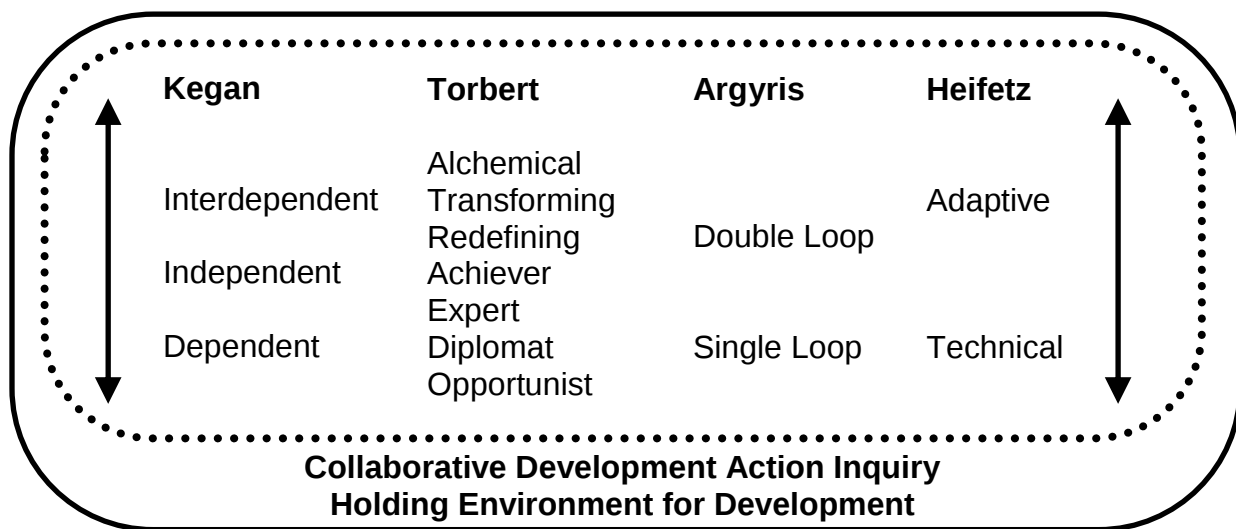


Figure 1. The theoretical and conceptual framework for this study.

The action research team first viewed the issue of developing SU's midlevel managers through the lens with which we were familiar – a competency based approach to leadership. Identifying the theoretical framework helped ensure that we stretched beyond our pre-understanding of the problem. The importance of using theory in qualitative research goes beyond the benefits realized during the study – conscious and consistent use of theory by researchers should improve the stature of qualitative research (Anfara & Mertz, 2015). Looking at the issues SU's midlevel leaders faced informed by the literature on adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, 2009), single and double loop

learning (Argyris, 1977, 1991), and constructive developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Torbert & Associates, 2004; Rooke & Torbert, 2005) added depth to this inquiry. Adhering to the rigors of action research, the team gathered and analyzed data in each cycle, which informed the activities of the next cycle throughout the course of the study.

Significance

McCauley, Drath, Paulus, O'Conner, and Baker (2006) report that, although the literature has produced a number of propositions, the notion that a leader's order of development should impact his or her leadership effectiveness or performance has generated the most research. However, they found mixed support for this proposition and suggest that, to have greater impact on the leadership field, constructive-developmental theory needs to generate more robust research, to link more clearly with on-going streams of leadership research, and to explore the contribution of aspects of the theory beyond individual order of development (McCauley, et al., 2006). According to Ruderman, Clerkin, and Connolly (2014):

One of the advantages of traditional competency models is that behaviors are fairly easy to assess and understand. In contrast, the inner workings of our minds and internal systems are much more complex. When incorporating aspects of the inner world, it is important that leadership researchers and practitioners make these concepts simple enough to teach and understand and yet make sure that the information is accurate and not overly reductionist. (p. 14)

This study evaluated the developmental stages of the participants to gain insight into the specific learning needs of individual leaders in the transition from operational management to adaptive leadership and to learn how to accelerate their development with timely and focused intervention. However, psychological stage development takes time, oftentimes the span of

years. Researchers have called for studies to identify the role of organizations in using constructive developmental theory for leadership development, whether organizations should seek to collect data on potential leaders' developmental stages, how organizations might measure for developmental capacity, and how leadership programs could more intentionally support the shift from one stage to the next (Helsing & Howell, 2013). According to Nicolaides, Dzubinski, and Yorks (2008, 2014, 2015), the fields of adult education and organizational studies have emphasized the need to help adults develop competencies and greater capacities for managing and taking action within the complexity of modern-day life. At the time of this study, leadership literature making use of constructive-developmental theory focused on the relationship between a leader's order of development and his or her leadership effectiveness or performance as a manager. In 2006, MacCauley, et al. stated that there had been almost no research that examined how training programs impacted participants' order of development. However, recent research has used constructive developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994) and CDAI (Torbert & Associates, 2003) as a means for understanding and advancing adult learning (see Chapter 2 for recent studies). The increasing challenges faced by leaders at all levels calls for new insights about how leadership professionals and organizations can provide the supports and challenges necessary to enable leaders to develop the capabilities and capacities necessary to navigate the adaptive challenges of modern day life and work.

Organization and Structure

This chapter introduces and presents an overview of the context of this study and the issues that brought about the need for this research. The purpose of this action research study was to understand how to create the learning conditions for midlevel managers to develop the skillset and mindset necessary to transition from operational management to adaptive leadership

so that they had the capability and capacity to lead through the adaptive challenges of today's complex environment. This chapter presented the research questions that guided this study and the theoretical and conceptual framework that undergirded this inquiry.

The following chapters provide further insight into the story of this action research. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature that provided the theoretical and conceptual framework for this study. Chapter 3 provides the detailed context for this study, the research design, and the methodology that framed this inquiry. Chapter 4 presents the team's experience of enacting collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI) (Torbert, 1976, 1991; Torbert & Associates, 2004; Torbert & Livne-Tarandach, 2009) during the course of this study. Chapter 5 presents key learnings from my interpretation of the data. Chapter 6 shares insights gained from this inquiry with implications for both theory and practice.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.

Abigail Adams

Growing adaptive leadership mindset and the theoretical and conceptual framework of this study are situated in the literature at the intersection of adaptive leadership theory (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, 2009), constructive developmental theory (CDT) (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Cook-Greuter, 1999, 2002, 2004; Torbert & Associates, 2004, Rooke & Torbert, 2005), and single/double loop learning theory (Argyris, 1977, 1991). Additionally, constructive developmental action inquiry (CDAI) (Torbert, 1976, 1991; Torbert & Associates, 2004; Torbert & Livne-Tarandach, 2009) as both a theory and methodology provided theoretical guidance and the framework for this action research study.

Heifetz's theory of adaptive leadership states that leaders must learn to identify the nature of problems as either technical (problems solvable with known information) or adaptive (problems for which no known solutions exists) in order to lead through complexity (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, 2009). To make the transition from the operational focus of management (executing their own tasks and goals) to the broader, more strategic focus of leadership, leaders must be able to make this distinction, and have the skillset and mindset to know when and how to involve the people (their teams, stakeholders across the system) in taking on adaptive organizational challenges. Kegan (1982, 1994) was the first to use the term constructive developmental theory (CDT) and his work is built on the work of John

Piaget (1954). Others who have contributed to this literature include Kohlberg (1969), Loevinger (1976), Cook-Greuter (1999, 2002, 2004). As this study focused on the development of leaders, it is particularly situated in the work of Torbert and Associates (2004), whose work integrated constructive developmental theory with leadership development by extending Kegan's levels of consciousness (1982, 1994) with the concept of leadership action logics. Later, the work of Jennifer Garvey Berger also extended constructive developmental theory into leadership development (Garvey Berger, 2012, 2015) through coaching and developmental leadership program design. Garvey Berger (2015) states that leadership is about creating the conditions for us to be our biggest selves and workplaces should be where we live on our growing edge and expand our capabilities to do our best work. This action research study, informed by these theories, explored how to create the conditions of learning to support midlevel managers in developing the capability and capacity to make meaning of the adaptive leadership complexities at Southern University.

Adaptive Leadership

Theories of leadership abound. Among them are theories of transactional, transformational, and adaptive leadership. James MacGregor Burns (1978) introduced transactional and transformational leadership. According to Burns, transactional leadership provides a framework in which the leader is the authority, paying attention to the day to day operations of the business and providing reward or punishment based on performance. Transformational leadership involves engaging followers, focusing on their intrinsic needs, and raising awareness of desired outcomes and new approaches to achieving those outcomes (Burns, 1978).

Realizing that not all challenges facing midlevel leaders in the context of SU require individual, departmental, or organizational transformation, an examination of the literature on transformational leadership led, in turn, to a review of the theory of adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, 2009). According to Heifetz, in *Leadership without Easy Answers*, while leadership is not based on authority, it is also “radically different from doing your job really, really well” (p. 23). Heifetz’s theory of adaptive leadership provides a framework through which leaders must learn to identify the nature of problems as either technical or adaptive in order to lead through complexity (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, 2009). Technical problems are those which can be solved with information that is already known. Adaptive challenges are those for which there are no known solutions and which require the collective capacities of leaders and those they lead to generate solutions. Heifetz explains that, to move beyond operational (technical) management to strategic (adaptive) leadership, one must “get on the balcony” so to speak in order view complex (adaptive) challenges from an organizational (system) mindset. Further, Heifetz explains that adaptive leaders must engage and empower the people with the problem (a leader’s direct reports, stakeholders across the system, internal and external clients) in finding solutions to the problem in order to address the adaptive challenges we face in this complex world. Petrie (2014) explains:

To borrow a word from the military, the world we are living in is increasingly VUCA—volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. In a VUCA world, everything is interconnected and no one can predict what big changes are coming next. Leaders who are equal to the task are those who can deal with constant ambiguity, notice the key

patterns amongst the noise, and look at the world through multiple stakeholder perspectives. (p. 7)

To navigate the ambiguity of this VUCA world, leaders must have the complexity of mind necessary to lead organizations in addressing adaptive challenges.

In *Leadership on the Line* (2002), Heifetz and Linsky support leaders with strategies to help them step up to challenge the status quo and deal with the inevitable conflict of leading through adaptive challenges. The seven-step strategy is summarized in *A Survival Guide for Leaders* (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Step one suggests the leader “operate above the fray” looking beyond day to day operations and taking a system view, a broad perspective of all factors contributing to an organization’s challenges. Secondly, the leader is advised to “court the uncommitted.” In other words, to recruit partners for change initiatives among those who initially resist or oppose the initiative. Neutralizing the opposition reduces the leader’s vulnerability and engages broader organizational support. Third, leaders are advised to “cook the conflict,” which is to say manage people’s passionate differences in a way that diminishes their destructive potential and constructively harnesses their energy. Fourth, leaders should “place the work where it belongs” by giving the work back to the people because, by trying to solve an adaptive challenge for people, at best the leader will reconfigure it as yet another technical problem and create only short term relief. By getting the people with the problem involved in solving the problem, the collective efforts of the whole have greater power to generate solutions to complex challenges. Fifth, leaders must beware of the “the dangers within” as leading individuals, teams, and organizations through adaptive challenges takes a toll. Leaders need to regularly look inside and assess the intellectual, physical, and emotional challenges of leadership and take care to get the support they need for resilience and personal

sustainment. Sixth, leaders must recognize that an inflated sense of self purpose, reliance on their individual expertise, and the extent to which they have a personal need for control can ultimately keep the leader stuck in aiming for order and structure rather than adaptable and open to emerging solutions. Seventh, and last, to survive the perils of adaptive leadership, leaders are advised to “anchor” by establishing a safe harbor for daily reflection, healing, restoration, and connection with personal values. In addition to this sanctuary, a leader must find a trusted confidant with whom they can talk openly without fear of judgement or betrayal. According to Heifetz and Linsky (2002), attending to this advice can support those who chose to take on the challenges of leadership in order to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Heifetz and Laurie (1997) state that the most important task for leaders in the face of adaptive challenges is the mobilization of people throughout their organizations to do adaptive work.

In *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, Heifetz (2009) provides practical application tools to build the leadership skills necessary for adaptive work. First, leaders must carefully diagnose the system and identify the action needed in order to support the system through change. Leaders must also learn to diagnose self by reflecting on their individual identities, prioritizing loyalties, recognizing emotional triggers, discovering their tolerances, understanding their leadership role, and articulating their ultimate life’s purpose. Through this approach to self-awareness, the leader can intentionally stay connected to their purpose, lead courageously, and inspire others by speaking from the heart.

Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky (2009) state that individual leaders do not have the personal capacity to sense and make meaning of all of the change swirling around them. They need to distribute leadership responsibility, replacing hierarchy and formal authority with organizational bandwidth, which draws on collective intelligence. By sharing the leadership burden with

people operating in diverse locations throughout the organization, and pushing adaptive work down into the organization, the leader creates space to reflect, think, and look strategically over the horizon to the next challenge.

According to Nicolaides (2008), while adult learning theories address how to prepare adults with knowledge and skills for effective leadership, without attention to developmental capacity, adult learning alone is insufficient as a means of developing the competencies necessary for learning through the complexity of modern life and work. To make the connection between adaptive leadership and complexity of mind, the next section presents a review of the literature on constructive developmental theory.

Constructive Developmental Theory

Kegan's (1982, 1994) constructive developmental theory builds on the work of John Piaget (1954). While Piaget's work contributed to our understanding of child and adolescent development, Kegan's work extends developmental psychology into the world of adult meaning making and the possibilities for growth and development over the adult human life span. Others have contributed to this literature including Kohlberg (1969), Loevinger (1966), Cook-Greuter (1999, 2003, 2004), and Rooke and Torbert (2005), and Torbert and Associates (2004). Several frameworks (and corresponding measurements) are used by researchers to describe cognitive development levels. Table 1 presents Kegan's levels of development (1982, 1994) and maps them to the ego development framework of Cook-Greuter (2004) and the leadership action logics of William Torbert (Torbert & Associates, 2004).

In *The Evolving Self* (1982) Kegan extends Piaget's theory of human development to explain the journey of an adult's effort to make meaning of the world and to make sense of the

demands of one's life. Later, in *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life* (Kegan, 1994) constructive developmental theory is presented through the perspective of

Table 1

Summary of Constructive Developmental Theory Frameworks

Adult Development Levels Kegan	Ego Development Stages Cook-Greuter	Leadership Action Logics Torbert
Self-Transforming	Unitive	Ironist
	Construct Aware	Alchemist
	Autonomist	Transforming
Self-Authoring	Individualist	Redefining
	Conscientious	Achiever
Socialized	Self-Conscientious	Expert
	Conformist	Diplomat
Impulsive	Impulsive	Opportunist

Note. Table 1 presents comparison of three models of adult developmental theory from Kegan, Cook-Greuter, and Torbert.

adolescence, parenting and partnering, and work. Kegan explains development as the gradual process by which what was “subject” in a person’s frame of reference becomes “object” so that we “have it” rather than “being had by it.” That which we can make object we are able to view in a more complex and expansive way, increasing our capacity to understand and know (Kegan, 1994). Over time, adults may move from one developmental stage to another in response to life events or situations to which our current operating level is not sufficient to allow us to understand and make meaning. Kegan explains that many adults experience stress in modern life due to living and working in circumstances which make demands that are beyond our current developmental stage.

Cook-Greuter (2004) explains that most growth in adults is horizontal expansion as people learn new skills, methods, facts, and new ways of organizing knowledge, while our current action logic or meaning making framework remains the same. Kegan (1982, 1994) explains that our consciousness only need evolve so far as to meet the demands of our work and life. It is at points in our lives when our meaning making is not sufficient to the complexity of the demands we face that our consciousness must evolve or we stay stuck and in over our heads (Kegan, 1982, 1994). Constructive developmental theory tells us that mental models evolve over time and each new level contains the previous levels as a subset of one's current mental model or center of gravity. Cook-Greuter (2004) states:

Much freedom is gained when people realize the essential inter-connectedness of all phenomena and the constructed aspects of boundaries, objects, our self-identities and our stories about life and nature. Much suffering is alleviated when the automatic habits of mind and heart are unlearned and uncoupled from memory (what was) and desires (what ought to be) and replaced by mindful, non-evaluative attention to what is – now. (p. 34)

Kegan's later work incorporates the principles of constructive developmental theory to provide tools for understanding how our inner thoughts can prevent us from accomplishing what we wish and how to challenge this inner language using an immunity map (Kegan & Lahey, 2001, 2009). In *How We Talk Can Change the Way We Work* (2001), Kegan and Lahey present the immunity map – an approach used to help identify the big assumptions to which we are subject. In *Immunity to Change* (2009), Kegan and Lahey further use the immunity map to move beyond diagnosing immunities to change to providing strategies by which to overcome them.

Kegan's framework has been used to make meaning of stages of leadership. Those operating in the socialized leadership stage derive their sense of authority and knowledge from

outside sources, to which they look to measure success. This stage is known as the socialized mind. A leader in the socialized mindset may be effective in roles that involve relying on established knowledge and procedures to determine the best course of action (Helsing & Howell, 2013). Leaders at this stage, according to Kegan, may struggle with situations involving decision making which include opposing external authorities and with navigating organizational ambiguity. Those operating with a self-authoring mindset have an internal source for creating their values and are not dependent on the validation of others. These leaders have the capacity to problem solve effectively in the face of opposing views, arriving at defensible conclusions based on their own values and information relevant to the situation, taking responsibility for positive results as well as for when things do not go according to plan. Lastly, and less common, is the self-transforming mindset. Leaders operating from the self-transforming mind are committed to mediating among multiple ideologies, individual identities, and organizational possibilities, thus increasing their capacity for broader and more complex ways of knowing (Helsing & Howell, 2013).

Rooke and Torbert (2005) extend Kegan's orders of adult development to explain the characteristics, or action logics, of leaders. According to Rooke and Torbert (2005):

Most developmental psychologists agree that what differentiates leaders is not so much their philosophy of leadership, their personality, or their style of management. Rather, it's their internal "action logic"—how they interpret their surroundings and react when their power or safety is challenged. (p. 41)

The Diplomat, Expert, and Achiever action logics follow a progression through what is identified as the conventional action logics. These action logics take social norms and power structures for granted. Leaders operating from these action logics, or centers of gravity, can operate effectively

as technical experts executing on individual goals and tasks assigned. Studies suggest that most adults operate from these conventional action logics. A much smaller percentage of adults operate from post conventional action logics, which include the Individualist (later renamed as Redefining), Strategist (later renamed as Transforming), and Alchemist stages. Leaders operating from these post-conventional action logics, or centers of gravity, have a disproportionate effect on our collective capacity to transform ourselves and our institutions toward greater efficacy, mutuality, and integrity (Torbert & Associates, 2004).

Rooke and Torbert (2005) explain that a leader's personal growth and development can transform their leadership capabilities. Their research presents the seven action logics (see Table 1) and indicates that, as leaders meaning making increases in complexity, they can transform from one action logic to the next. This journey of development can take place through experience as well as through structured developmental interventions. Rooke and Torbert suggest that today's competency based leadership development programs are successful at supporting the transformation of leaders from Experts to Achievers. However, this transition remains one of the most painful bottlenecks in today's organization. The authors report that development opportunities targeted to the specific needs of the leader based on their action logic can help them make the shift necessary to increase their leadership capacity as they transition to the next action logic (Rooke & Torbert, 2005).

In *Action Inquiry: The Secret of Timely and Transforming Leadership* (2004), Torbert and Associates present "action inquiry," a moment to moment way of living by which we attune ourselves through inquiry to acting in an increasingly timely and wise manner. Action inquiry is the process of transformational learning that individuals and organizations can practice to assess the present, act in a timely and intentional way, and bring about lasting change (Torbert &

Associates, 2004). Action inquiry is an intentional process that provides a leader with strategies to enhance their capability to navigate the ambiguities and complexities of organizations in which they work and lead. The practice of action inquiry can provide the scaffolding needed to transform individuals, teams, and organizations from one action logic to the next.

Learning Theory

Chris Argyris developed individual and organizational learning theories, which include theories of action, double loop learning, and organizational learning (1977, 1991). According to Argyris (1991) solving problems, which is the primary focus of most leaders, is important. Problem solving is an example of what Argyris calls “single loop” learning. He further explains that, if learning is to persist, managers and employees must look inward and critically reflect on their own behavior, identify the ways they often inadvertently contribute to the organization’s problems, and then change how they act. They must learn how the very way they go about defining and solving problems can be a source of problems. Argyris (1977) refers to this deeper reflective approach as double loop learning. Torbert extends Argyris’ notion of double loop learning to add the concept of triple loop learning (Torbert & Associates, 2004). Single loop learning allows for new actions to achieve someone else’s goals while double loop learning allows for new strategies and new goals. Triple loop learning cultivates a “super-vision” which provides the quality of awareness needed for transformations to occur with attention, intention, and vision (Torbert & Associates, 2004).

In preparing midlevel leaders for the demands of leadership at the next level, it is important to address how they learn. Providing them with information about leadership and the competencies that make up an effective leader is only part of the equation. Teaching leaders to critically reflect on the problems facing the organization and on their role in those problems is a

step toward supporting development of the capacity for double loop learning and triple loop awareness and growth.

Action Research

Action research is a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in everyday life (Stringer, 2014). Further, action research happens through cycles of investigation designed to reveal solutions to problems experienced in specific situations, within the context of systems, providing a way for those involved to create effectiveness and efficiency in their work. Action research is different than other types of research as the aim is not to seek generalizable explanations related to specific variables, but rather looks to investigate and solve complex dynamics within certain contexts (Stringer, 2014). The point is that action research uses a scientific approach to study the resolution of significant social and organizational issues together with those who experience these issues directly. Action research involves four cycles: constructing, planning action, taking action, and evaluating the action, which can lead to beginning the cycles all over again (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014). There are many approaches of action research. Collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI) was the method of action research used for this study.

Collaborative Developmental Action Inquiry

To support and challenge Southern University's midlevel leaders' movement from operationally focused management to adaptive leadership, each needed to learn to navigate the ambiguities of today's complex leadership landscape. As such, this action research inquiry called for a methodology up to the challenge of generating timely and effective leadership among the action research inquirers as well. According to Nicolaides (2008):

The complexity generated by life in our contemporary conditions demands a new, more dynamic form of inquiry that will help us learn our way through the ambiguity of our times in order to transcend anxiety and our fear of the unknown in order to discover hidden and unforeseen potential. (p. 5)

Collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI) (Torbert, 1976, 1991; Torbert & Associates, 2004; Torbert & Livne-Tarandach, 2009) is both a theory and methodological approach to research through which each member of the action research team is a co-subject in the experience and thus participates in activities being researched, and a co-researcher in the reflection phases by participating in generating ideas, designing interventions, and evaluating the overall experience (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014). Torbert (2004) stated:

Action inquiry is a way of simultaneously conducting action and inquiry as a disciplined leadership practice that increases the wider effectiveness of our actions to help individuals, teams, and organizations become capable of transformation, more creative, aware, and just, and more sustainable. (p. 13)

CDAI treats attention and self-awareness as core skills that need to be developed through the research process. “This rigorous focus on attention and personal development is one of the central contributions of CDAI to the broader field of action research” (Foster, 2014, p. 2).

In the *Sage Handbook of Action Research* (2015) Ergon and Torbert explain that the fundamental claim of CDAI is that increased moment to moment awareness of the interconnectedness between action and inquiry can gradually develop the capacity of researchers to generate timely action with others in the context of complex environments. As such, CDAI calls for the practitioner to bring awareness to the four territories of experience. The first territory of experience includes outside events (results, assessments, behavioral

consequences, and environmental effects). The second territory of experience involves one's own sensed performance (behavior, skills, pattern of activity, deeds, as sensed in the process of enactment). The third territory of experience brings in action logics (strategies, schemas, ploys, game plans, typical methods of reflecting on experience based on one's internal meaning making framework). The fourth territory of experience is intentional attention (presencing awareness, vision, institution, aims) (Torbert & Associates, 2004). CDAI calls for co-inquirers to attend to these four territories of experience in order to take timely and effective action in life and work.

In addition to the meta-awareness called for through the four territories of experience, CDAI also calls for collaborative inquiry using the four parts of speech 1) framing; 2) advocating; 3) illustrating; and 4) inquiring and listening (Torbert & Associates, 2004). By engaging these four parts of speech, co-inquirers can balance collaboration and come to action inquiry through mutuality. To come to mutuality, leaders must be able to effectively exercise four types of leadership which correspond to four types of power. Timely response to emergencies or opportunities in the present calls for unilateral, authoritative power.

Accomplishing routine, operational tasks and goals calls for referent power. Referent power is a reciprocal type of power that recognizes that if you ask colleagues for help (rather than tell them) they are more likely to do so, as long as you reciprocate. Defining and implementing strategic initiatives calls for logistical power. Logistical power reasons systematically within a given structure to create a new way of accomplishing a desired outcome. Clarifying organizational mission and encouraging alignment between mission, strategy, operations, and outcomes calls for the juggling of logistical, referent, and unilateral power simultaneously which enables visioning power. Finally, visioning or re-visioning a compelling organizational mission and integrating alignment among mission, strategy, operations, and outcomes requires the

interweaving of all of these types of power to in turn create transforming power (Torbert & Associates, 2004).

Awareness in the four territories of experience, enacting the four parts of speech, interweaving the types of leadership with the four types of power can unlock the potential for personal, team, and organizational transformation through single, double, and triple loop learning. Torbert (2013) stated:

CDAI seeks to triangulate among the subjective aspects of action and inquiry (within the first-person), the intersubjective interactional aspects of action and inquiry (between second-persons engaged with one another), and the objective aspects of action and inquiry (among a collective of third-persons-and-things at-a-distance-from and often anonymous-to one another). (p. 265)

CDAI, when effectively applied as a methodology, claims that transformational learning can occur for individuals, teams, and organizations. Chandler and Torbert (2016) state that as a first-person practice, action research aims toward greater congruity between the values one espouses and the values one enacts and, as a second-person practice, CDAI aims toward conditions of greater trust and mutuality among co-participants. As such, action research studies that include a greater portion of the various methods are likely to account for higher portions of the total variance in situations. Collaborative developmental action inquiry as a theory and method aims to enable co-inquirers to pay attention to the subjective first-person, inter-subjective second-person, and objective third-person dimensions of the inquiry to take timely and effective action toward mutuality and transformation.

This section provided a review of the literature on adaptive leadership, single, double loop learning theory, constructive developmental theory, and collaborative developmental action

inquiry. In the next section, recent, empirical studies with relevance to this study are presented and discussed.

Empirical Research

This section presents empirical studies related to this action research study. Included are studies conducted to understand the competencies needed for effective leadership in higher education. One study represents the story of a leadership development program and the learning journey of the participants as they studied authentic leadership. Additional studies explore various aspects of learning, leadership, and stage development through the lens of constructive developmental theory. The empirical research in this section is represented in Table 2, then explained in the paragraphs that follow.

Table 2

Empirical Studies

Author(s) and Date	Title	Purpose	Method(s) and Sample	Results	Conclusions	Implications
Spendlove, M. 2007	Competencies for Effective Leadership in Higher Education	The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Rector, or Principal of a university, and the competencies needed for effective leadership in higher education.	Semi-structured interviews for quantitative and qualitative data. Pro-vice-chancellors at 10 UK universities representative of the sector	Most perceived academic credibility and university experience were crucial for effective leadership in higher education. People skills, communication, negotiation were also important. Most universities had no formal approach to leadership development	University leadership is different from leadership in other contexts and demands additional competencies. Adds to debates about whether leaders in higher education should be academics or professional business administrators	This study highlights the need for a more proactive approach to identifying leadership competencies and developing leadership through universities.
Pomeda J. R. & Casani, F. 2013	Higher Officials' Training Needs on Managerial Competencies in Spanish Universities: Preliminary Findings	The purpose of this study was to identify the competencies needed for higher education leaders.	Survey with 80 valid responses. Response rate was 20%. Sample of 400 university higher officials representing all 50 Spanish public universities was randomly selected.	Leader competencies demonstrated by successful higher educational leaders include: • Organization transformation • Strategic management • Leadership Theoretical reflection	Successful higher education leaders demonstrate themes of leadership including change management, financial acumen, general management, and strategic planning, are achievement oriented and assertive.	The research adds to the literature identifying competencies needed for successful performance in the leadership of higher education.

Author(s) and Date	Title	Purpose	Method(s) and Sample	Results	Conclusions	Implications
Baron, L. & Parent, E. 2015	Developing Authentic Leadership within a Training Context: Three Phenomena Supporting the Individual Development Process	This study examined the process of developing authentic leadership in a training context.	Semi-structured interviews with 24 mid-level managers (11 women, 13 men) (ages 36-53) (private and for profit, various industries)	The results revealed a process beginning with an exploration phase (increased self-awareness of leadership issues, identified desired behaviors, tested new behaviors). This was followed by an integration phase – reflection on the beneficial effects of new behaviors.	Development of authentic leadership is influenced by the degree to which facilitators are able to simulate activities representing organizational context. Informal learning among participants is also important.	Adds to the research assisting practitioners in designing new authentic leadership development programs or improving existing ones.
Harris, L. & Kuhnert, K. 2007	Look Through the Lens of Leadership: A Constructive Developmental Approach	The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between leadership development level (LDL) and leadership effectiveness.	Quantitative analysis of Subject/Object interviews & 360 feedback scores. 21 CEOs from various industries	LDL Predicted leadership effectiveness using the 360-feedback measure across a number of sources. Individuals that lead from higher LDL are more effective in a number of leadership competencies.	There is a correlation between leadership effectiveness and leadership development level.	This study is one of the first to empirically demonstrate the link between LDL and leadership effectiveness using the constructive developmental framework.
Nicolaides, A. 2008	Learning their way through ambiguity: Explorations of how nine developmentally mature adults make sense of ambiguity	The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of ambiguity through the lived experience of nine developmentally mature adults.	9 developmentally mature adults as measured by the SCTi (the developmental assessment tool used determine the meaning making capacity of each participant)	The study showed the connections between participants' action logics and their relationship with ambiguity.	An adult's developmental maturity contributes to their capability to effectively navigate the complexities of ambiguity.	This study contributes to the fields of adult learning, adult development, and leadership development.
Strang, S. E. & Kuhnert, K. 2009	Personality and Leadership Development Levels as Predictors of Leader Performance	This study investigated constructive developmental theory as a framework for understanding leadership and as a predictor of 360- degree leader performance ratings.	LDL determined by semi-structured interviews. Personality and Leadership Profile (PLP) 360-degree Feedback	LDL predicted performance ratings from all rater sources. LDL accounted for a unique component of the variance in leader performance even above that which can be accounted for by personality.	This study showed a correlation between LDL and leadership performance and effectiveness.	The results of this study have implications for use of LDL for predicting leadership success.
Brown, B. C. 2011	An Empirical Study of Sustainability Leaders Who Hold Post Conventional Consciousness	The purpose of this study was to document how leaders and change agents with highly developed meaning making systems design and engage in sustainability initiatives.	Assess action logic using a variation of the WUSC test. Semi-structured interviews 32 sustainability leaders, 13 of whom measured in the three rarest and most complex action logics	These leaders appear to: - Design from a deep inner foundation - Access non-rational ways of knowing and use systems, complexity, and integral theories	Findings represent competencies and developmental stage distinctions that are largely new to the leadership literature. The results provide the most granular view to date of how individuals with complex	This study is an initial exploration of what leader development programs may need to focus on to cultivate leadership with the capacity to address very complex social, economic, and environmental challenges.

Author(s) and Date	Title	Purpose	Method(s) and Sample	Results	Conclusions	Implications
				Adaptively manage through “dialogue” with the system	meaning-making may think and behave with respect to complex change.	
Silverstein, C. 2012	Contemplative Practices and Orders of Consciousness: A Constructive-Developmental Approach	This qualitative study explored the correspondence between contemplative practices and orders of consciousness from a constructive-developmental perspective.	Subject/Object interviews Contemplative Practice Questionnaire Semi-structured interviews to understand contemplative practice	Participants at the self-authoring order of consciousness tend to engage in contemplative practices that quiet the mind, are self-directed and eclectic in their approach, and have consistent and longer sessions of contemplative practice than participants at the socialized mind order of consciousness.	The study showed a correlation between mind quieting practices and higher developmental stages. The study did not show that mind quieting practices lead to higher developmental stages.	The results of this study are not generalizable due to the explorative nature and small sample size. The findings are significant for the direction of future research.
Helsing, D. & Howell, A. 2013	Understanding Leadership from the Inside Out: Assessing Leadership Potential Using Constructive-Developmental Theory	This purpose of this qualitative and quantitative study was to evaluate the leadership development level at the beginning and end of a three-year leadership development program.	Method/Sample Subject/Object interviews 32 members of a cohort of the Global Leadership Fellows program during year 1 then 11 remaining participants at the end of the program in year 3.	The results showed a connection between one’s LDL and organizational perception of their leadership potential.	This study showed the effectiveness of using the SOI as an instrument to measure LDL and suggests the value of sharing LDL in individual leadership coaching.	This study offers implications for how organizations regard the strengths and shortcomings of their leaders, as well as for the types of development they provide.
Banerjee, A., 2013	Leadership Development Among Scientists Learning through Adaptive Challenges	The purpose of this study was to grow leadership among a group of scientists by using learning approaches that support and challenge the development of capabilities for skillful and timely action.	Seven early-career scientists and their nine supervisors and mentors, engaged in monthly action inquiry sessions over a two-year period	CDAI was found to be an effective methodology that supported study scientists to grow their adaptive leadership capabilities	CDAI methods generated a space for connection and belonging allowing leadership creativity to emerge.	This study provides implications for organizations wishing to develop capabilities to meet adaptive challenges include creating a micro-culture for learning and leadership with the potential to shift sub-cultures within large, hierarchical organizations
Spano, S. 2015	Constructive-Developmental Theory and the Integrated Domains of Wisdom: Are Post-Conventional Leaders Really Wiser?	The purpose of this study was to elicit the wisdom experience of conventional and post-conventional executive leaders and to determine whether and how this experience	The administration of the SCTi-MAP Semi-structured interviews Ages of participants ranged from 44-70 representing	Key findings suggest that wisdom can be experienced and expressed in both the single and integrated domains of wisdom. Participants from every level of development	Wisdom can be experienced at both the conventional and post-conventional levels of development and within one or more of the multidimensional domains of the	This study was an exploration into the interrelationship between how a leader thinks and the possible underlying source of that meaning-making system.

Author(s) and Date	Title	Purpose	Method(s) and Sample	Results	Conclusions	Implications
		related to the leaders' stage of development.	various religious/non-religious affiliation, industries, and education levels.	expressed responses that correspond to one or more domains.	cognitive, reflective, and affective aspects of personality.	
Smith, S., 2016	Growing Together: the Evolution of Consciousness using Collaborative Developmental Action Inquiry	The purpose of this action research case study was to explore the experience and facilitation of the evolution of consciousness in adults using the methodology of collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI).	Seven women met virtually for 12 months to explore evolution of consciousness.	This study found that intentional community is necessary for development; vertical development should not be privileged over horizontal development; and individuals have different "center of gravity" action logics from which they act, in different situations and contexts, as an involuntary default.	Furthermore, CDAI serves as a useful liberating method for evolution of consciousness; and intentional facilitation and friendship are crucial for enacting CDAI in communities of inquiry and practice.	This inquiry serves as a useful illustration of CDAI in a non-organizational context and offers important suggestions for the development and facilitation of intentional communities of inquiry and practice seeking to support adult development.
Cox, A., 2016	Growing Together: Adult Learning in Online Educative Spaces: A Constructive-Developmental Perspective	The purpose of this study was to understand how developmental capacities influence adults' online learning experiences and their understandings of the alone/together paradox	Qualitative interviews and polarity maps with seven graduate students spanning socialized and self-authored ways of knowing as measured by the Subject Object Interview.	This study shows how the online environment acts as a holding environment for adults at the socialized and self-authored stages of development and adds to our understanding of how adults construct meaning, develop, and grow within the context of an online, structured, educative space.	The findings of this study describe how developmental capacities influence adults' online learning experiences and their understandings of the alone/together paradox.	This study also discusses growing edges for socialized and self-authored knowers in the online environment and suggests developmentally diverse online practices to engage adults in the complexity of the alone/together paradox.

Leadership Competencies in Higher Education

Given that Southern University's existing leadership development programs were based on a competency development approach, initial review of the literature involved a look at empirical studies that involve identifying the competencies for effective leadership specifically within higher education. Marion Spendlove (2007) reports the results of a study conducted to investigate the role of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Rector, or Principal of a university and the competencies that are needed for effective leadership in higher education. Interviews were conducted with Pro-Vice-Chancellors at ten UK universities representative of this sector.

Results showed that academic credibility and university experience were crucial for higher education leaders. Additionally, people skills, including the ability to communicate and negotiate, were also important. Most universities in the study had no approach for identifying or developing these leadership skills (Spendlove, 2007).

Pomeda and Casani (2013) report the results of their study to analyze the main competencies needed in the professional behavior of higher officials at Spanish universities. The competencies of paramount relevance in this study were organizational transformation (command of change management, total quality management, and higher education finance models); strategic management (strategic planning, general and team management); leadership (self-confidence, impact and influence on others); theoretical reflection previous to action (command of achievement orientation, conceptual thinking, information seeking, and directness/assertiveness) (Pomeda & Casani, 2013).

Developing Leadership in a Training Context

In 2015, Baron and Parent conducted a study on developing authentic leadership within a training context. Baron and Parent found that providing activities set within the participant's realistic organizational context is crucial and that facilitators must also provide opportunities for informal learning among participants in order for successful learning to take place.

Leadership and Constructive Developmental Theory

The next group of studies represented is based on leadership development through the constructive developmental framework. Harris and Kuhnert (2007) examined the relationships between leadership development stage and leadership effectiveness utilizing 360-degree feedback scores. The approach is quantitative, involving data gathered from subject-object interviews and 360-degree feedback scores from participants in an executive leadership

development program. The findings reveal that the leader's developmental stage predicted leadership effectiveness using the 360-degree feedback measure across sources that included supervisors, direct reports, and peers. Additionally, the research revealed that individuals that lead from later stages of development were more effective in various leadership competencies such as leading change, managing performance, and creating vision. This research demonstrates that one's leader and peers more successfully predict leadership effectiveness than their direct reports or the individuals themselves. The authors emphasize the importance of thinking of leader development not only from an individual perspective, but also from an organizational perspective. The authors explain that the key to making this process valuable; however, is not simply assigning individuals a leadership development level, but making them aware of how they see the world (Harris & Kuhnert, 2007). They suggest that researchers are not exactly sure what "triggers" the move from one level to the next, but further studies may help us to understand whether individual awareness of one's leadership level helps to accelerate development.

In 2008, Nicolaides conducted a study to arrive at a better understanding of the nature of ambiguity by investigating the lived experience of nine developmentally mature adults' experience with and relationship to ambiguity. The study showed the connections between participants' action logics and their relationship with ambiguity. This study contributes to the fields of adult learning, adult development, and leadership development.

In 2009, Kuhnert and Strang conducted a study to investigate constructive developmental theory as a theoretical framework for understanding leadership and as a predictor of 360-degree feedback assessment performance ratings. Sixty-seven executives, who were participating in a leadership development program, representing various role levels,

took part in this study. A combination of semi-structured interviews, personality and leadership profile assessment, and a 360-degree feedback assessment were used. This study showed a correlation between leadership development stage and leadership performance and effectiveness.

In 2011, Brown conducted a study to understand how leaders measuring at a post-conventional level of consciousness engage in sustainability initiatives. The study suggests that these leaders work from a deep inner foundation and ground their work in personal meaning. Additionally, they access non-rational ways of knowing, use systems, complexity, and integral theories; and adaptively manage through “dialogue” with the system. This study provides insight into the meaning making and thinking of leaders of large scale change. This study also adds to the literature on considerations for leadership development initiatives.

In 2012, Silverstein conducted a study to understand the correspondence of contemplative practices and level of consciousness among a group of highly educated professionals. This study concluded that, while those measuring at higher levels of consciousness are more likely to regularly engage in some type of contemplative practice, such practice may not necessarily lead to higher levels of consciousness.

Helsing and Howell (2013) explored the value for organizations in assessing leaders’ mental complexity using a measure of developmental stage known as the Subject-Object Interview. Helsing and Howell focused primarily on Kegan’s theory of adult development as they applied this theory to participants in a leadership development fellowship at the World Economic Forum. The study began with the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix, 1988) at the beginning of a cohort of thirty-two fellows in the Global Leadership Fellows program. A second SOI was conducted with the Fellows who

remained in the program after three years, totally eleven Fellows at the time of the second interview (Helsing & Howell, 2013). The authors share three case studies from among these interviews which draw correlations between the leader's development stage and their leadership performance.

Banerjee (2013) conducted an action research study for the purpose of developing leadership among a group of early career scientists. In this study, CDAI was used as both a theory and methodology by which to provide learning approaches to support and challenge the development of leadership capabilities for skillful and timely action. Banerjee found that CDAI was an effective methodology that supported study scientists to grow their adaptive leadership capabilities.

In 2015, Spano conducted a study to elicit the wisdom experience of conventional and post-conventional executive leaders and to determine whether and how this experience related to the leaders' stage of development. Findings suggest that wisdom can be experienced at both conventional and post-conventional stages of development. This study adds to our understanding of the underlying source of the participants' wisdom/meaning making system.

CDAI and Evolution of Consciousness

Smith (2016) conducted a study to explore the experience and facilitation of the evolution of consciousness in adults using the methodology of collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI). Smith found that community is necessary for development, that vertical development should not be privileged over horizontal development, and that people involuntarily operate from different action logics (meaning making frameworks) in different situations. Smith found that CDAI was a useful method for evolution of consciousness. This study adds to our understanding of intentional development of consciousness through the CDAI methodology.

Constructive Developmental Theory in Adult Learning

Cox (2016) conducted a study using data from in-depth, qualitative interviews and polarity maps with seven graduate students spanning socialized and self-authored ways of knowing. The findings of this study describe how developmental capacities influence adults' online learning experiences. The findings also describe how the online environment acts as a holding environment for adults at the socialized and self-authored stages of development and adds to our understanding of how adults construct meaning, develop, and grow within the context of an online, structured, educative space. This study also discusses growing edges for socialized and self-authored knowers in the online environment and suggests developmentally diverse online practices to engage adults in the complexity learning online.

This chapter presents a review of the literature of constructive developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Cook-Greuter, 1999, 2003, 2004; Torbert & Associates, 2004; Rooke & Torbert, 2005), single/double loop learning theory (Argyris, 1977, 1991), and adaptive leadership theory (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, 2009). Additionally, this chapter reviewed constructive developmental action inquiry (Torbert, 1976, 1991; Torbert & Associates, 2004; Torbert & Livne-Tarandach, 2009), as both a theory of action inquiry and a methodology by which to generate a holding environment for the development of individuals, teams, and systems. Chapter 3 addresses the research methodology and design of this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.

Lao Tzu

The purpose of this action research study was to understand how to create the learning conditions for midlevel leaders to develop the skillset and mindset necessary to transition from operational management to adaptive leadership. The research questions that guided this study were:

- 1) How does a developmentally informed program impact midlevel leaders' mindset for adaptive leadership?
- 2) What are the conditions under which program participants and the action research (AR) team are able to engage adaptive leadership development?
- 3) What happens when collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI) is used as a methodology for designing and implementing a leadership program?

This chapter presents the research design and methodology used to answer the research questions which guided this study. Included are the research approaches, demographic information for the nine member action research team as well as demographic information for the cohort of 20 program participants. Also included in this chapter is information regarding the validity and reliability of components that comprised the developmentally informed leadership program design. This chapter also includes a presentation of the data collected throughout the course of the study and addresses trustworthiness and rigor of the study by providing the details of the processes used for data collection and analysis.

Research Approaches and Design

This action research study used collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI) as the method by which to develop midlevel leaders in the transition from operational management to adaptive leadership. This section presents an overview of action research and describes CDAI as a method of inquiry.

Action Research

Coghlan and Brannick (2014) define action research as a group of related approaches that integrate theory and action with a goal of addressing important organizational, community and social issues together with those who experience them. One member of the action research family is known as cooperative inquiry (Reason, 1988, 1999; Heron, 1996; Heron and Reason, 2008). Coghlan and Brannick (2014) explain:

The generative insight for understanding cooperative inquiry is how each person is a co-subject in the experience phases by participating in the activities being researched, and a co-researcher in the reflection phases by participating in generating ideas, designing and managing the project and drawing conclusions. (p. 58)

Action research is an iterative process involving the enactment of multiple cycles of constructing, planning action, taking action, and evaluating action (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014). “A good design, one in which the components work harmoniously together, promotes efficient and successful function: a flawed design leads to poor operation or failure (Maxwell, 2013, p. 3). This chapter presents this study’s methodology and design.

Collaborative Developmental Action Inquiry

Collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI) (Torbert, 1976, 1991; Torbert & Associates, 2004; Torbert & Livne-Tarandach, 2009) is both a theory and a methodology (see also Chapter 2) which integrates the concept of cooperative inquiry with constructive

developmental theory. According to Torbert (2013), CDAI methodology integrates first person, second person, and third person paradigms. The first-person paradigm involves adult spiritual inquiry and consciousness development in the emerging present, while second person involves transformational, mutuality-seeking political action inquiry for the future, and the third person paradigm involves objectivity-seeking social scientific inquiry about the past (Torbert, 2013).

Torbert and Associates (2004) explain that CDAI has three primary goals. First, on a subjective, personal level, action inquiry seeks to generate effectiveness and integrity, which comes from continuous inquiry into the gaps in ourselves, which appear between the results we hoped for and the results we achieved. In our relationships with others, the goal of action inquiry is to generate mutuality. Mutuality comes through an increasingly open inquiry into the power dynamics between ourselves and others, while mutuality is the goal (Torbert & Associates, 2004). The third goal of CDAI, on the objective, systemic level, is to generate sustainability in systems. This sustainability comes from a system or organizations' encouragement of effectiveness, integrity, and mutuality. Torbert and Associates (2004) states:

Action inquiry represents an approach to powerful action that is fundamentally different from modern political/organizational action because it treats mutually transforming power – a kind of power that few people today recognize or exercise as more powerful than unilateral power. Traditional forms of power, such as force, diplomacy, expertise, or positional authority, that are commonly used unilaterally to influence external behavior may generate immediate acquiescence, conformity, dependence, or resistance. But, by themselves, no matter in what combination, they will not generate transformation. (p. 8)

The promise of action inquiry is a mutually transforming power which comes from our willingness to be vulnerable to transformation. Action inquiry seeks to interweave our first person, subjective experience, with second person, intersubjective relatedness, and third person, objective awareness of what has been produced in the past. The power of action inquiry comes from a combination of our intent, alertness to gaps in our vision and that of others, and our willingness to lead transformations, including a willingness to engage for transformation of ourselves (Torbert & Associates, 2004). Action inquiry does several things at once - it listens to the developing situation, accomplishes whatever appears to have priority, invites re-visioning of the task, and, eventually, discovers what action is timely (Torbert & Associates, 2004).

Foster (2013) explained that CDAI incorporates the methods of action science with constructive developmental theory (CDT) (Kegan, 1982, 1994) and incorporates second person communication practices and parts of speech with a goal to achieve single, double, and even triple loop learning (Argyris, 1977, 1991; Torbert & Associates, 2004). CDAI is a prescriptive theory that shares the goal of helping people move from technical problem solving to collaborative inquiry, developing shared goals and involving mutual uses of power (Foster, 2014).

In constructive developmental theory, Kegan (1982, 1994) refers to orders of consciousness or complexities of mind from which one makes meaning of their world and through which one progresses in response to the demands of one's life and work. Cook Greuter (2004) explains that developmental theories provide a way of understanding how we tend to interpret events which, in turn, relates to how we may respond to situations. Although we incorporate many perspectives, we tend to most often respond with the most complex

meaning making system, or mental model, that we have mastered. Cook Greuter (2004) refers to this 'go to' perspective as our center of gravity in meaning making. Torbert and Associates (2004) refers to these mental models as action logics, which can challenge and support one's ability to enact the timely action and inquiry at the heart of CDAI.

Torbert and Associates (2004) refer to the earlier action logics, which namely and in sequential order are Opportunist (self-interest is paramount), Diplomat (social norms are paramount), Expert (own logic is paramount), and Achiever (goal/task accomplishment as identified by others is paramount) as conventional action logics. According to Torbert and Rooke (2005), most managers operate from the Expert/Achiever action logics. In the later conventional action logics (Expert/Achiever), leaders are aware of their assigned goals and tasks and can be effective in operational management. Those operating from the Expert/Achiever action logic are able to receive and integrate single loop feedback for improved performance, yet do not yet encourage double loop feedback for development to later action logics. The later action logics, referred to as post conventional action logics, are Redefining (earlier called Individualist), Transforming (earlier called Strategist), and Alchemist. According to Torbert and Associates (2004) only seven percent of leaders operate from these post conventional action logics. The benefit of developing to a later stage action logic is that, as one progresses through post conventional development, a leader's increasing awareness brings with it the ability to fully engage with others for relevant and timely action that can lead to transformation of self, with others, and for organizations.

CDAI calls for a developmentally focused approach to action science (Chandler & Torbert, 2016) which calls for increasing awareness through attention to four territories of experience (Torbert, 1973, 1991). According to Torbert and Associates (2004), the four

territories of experiences are as follows: 1) Attention to outside events (results, assessments, observed behavioral consequences, environmental effects); 2) Attention to one's own sensed performance (behavior, skills, pattern of activity, deeds); 3) Awareness of one's action logic (meaning making, complexity of mind, strategies); 4) Intentional attention (presencing awareness, vision, intention). Our ability to pay attention to and incorporate all four territories of experience into our moment to moment awareness increases as we progress along the stages of development/action logics (Torbert & Associates, 2004). Therefore, CDAI is a complex methodology which requires attention to the development of complexity of mind.

As this study's purpose was to understand how to develop Southern University's leaders in their transition from operational (technical) management to adaptive leadership, CDAI was chosen as the method of inquiry. Due to CDAI's focus on collaboration, development, and action inquiry this study was designed with the intent for the action research team to learn to attend to our own development while we sought to learn how to develop the midlevel leaders engaged in this study. As such, our aim was to engage CDAI as a means to increase our awareness so that we could more effectively grow adaptive leadership among ourselves, our program participants, and for the organization.

Case Study Design

The action research (AR) team enacted the cycles of action inquiry by framing the problem practically within the system (Cycle 1), by planning actions in the form of interventions for the AR team and for program participants (Cycle 2), implementing these interventions as actions within the AR team and the leadership program and evaluating interventions along the way (Cycle 3), then finally, evaluating the overall experience (Cycle 4). This study employed the CDAI methodology to integrate the first-person paradigm (my subjective experience as

researcher), second person paradigm (the AR team's integration with the program participants and the AR team's work with each other) and third person paradigm (the story and key learnings shared in this document). This section presents the demographics of the sample used in this study, specifically, the 9 members of the action research team and the 20 participants who made up the cohort for the developmentally informed leadership program.

Co-Inquirers

In action research, both the creators and recipients of the interventions are subjects of the research (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). In this study, the co-inquirers were the nine members of the action research team (including the researcher) and the 20 midlevel leaders who were selected to participate in the developmentally informed leadership program, which took place between August 2015 and April 2016.

Action Research Team

During Cycle 1, the original team included members from within the Human Resources division and, specifically, from within the Learning and Organizational Development (LOD) department. Along the way, I realized that limiting the action research (AR) team to a group of experts in the field kept us stuck in relying on our preunderstanding (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014) of program design. In time, I came to see that my expert AR team was taking a single loop approach (Argyris, 1977, 1991) to program development (see Chapter 4 for the full story). In order to get the people with the problem involved in addressing the problem (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, 2009) we needed to include leaders from across the system to bring a broader perspective to the work of the team. As a result, upon completing the problem framing phase of our work, I invited new members to join the AR team. The four new action research team members included two deans, a director, and a manager, all from various schools and departments across Southern University. These members joined the original

action research team in July 2015. Table 3 shows demographic information for the full action research team and identifies the original team members and those who joined later in the study. To ensure privacy, pseudonyms were used for all members of the action research team with the exception of the researcher.

Table 3

AR Team Member Demographics

Pseudonyms	Position in the Organization	Division	Gender Identity
Original AR Team (September 2014 to April 2016)			
Smith	Associate Vice President Learning and Development	Human Resources	Male
Grace	Senior Director Learning and Development	Human Resources	Female
Fox	Director Learning and Organizational Development (for the System)	Human Resources	Male
Jones	Associate Director Learning and Development	Human Resources	Female
Debbie (Researcher)	Director of Learning and Development (for 1 Division)	Human Resources	Female
Expanded AR Team - added 4 members (June 2015 to April 2016)			
Chakra	Associate Dean	College	Female
Flowers	Assistant Dean	School	Female
Sparks	Director	Administration	Female
*Blake	Manager	Administration	Female

Note. *Blake was both a member of the action research team and one of the 20 program participants.

To enact CDAI through second person perspective, this study was designed so that AR team members interacted with program participants through facilitation of courses, individual development planning, leadership coaching, and mentoring. Grace, Fox, Jones, and I each facilitated instructional sessions. Fox, Jones, and I provided individual coaching and development planning for the 20 program participants. Chakra, Flowers, and Sparks served as mentors, each assigned to a program participant (mentee) throughout the course of the program.

Cohort of Program Participants

Southern University is a large institution with faculty and staff population approaching 12,000. As such, senior leaders needed a structured selection process to glean the midlevel leaders most appropriate for the twenty seats in the program. At the time of this study, conversations across the university system pointed to the need for a more robust approach to identifying and developing talent. Specifically, LOD professionals needed a way to consult with university leaders to identify and select participants that had solid performance in their current roles and high potential for developing to the next level position (see Chapter 4 for details of the program participant selection process). The developmental leadership program designed through this study was the first at Southern University to apply a specific selection process to identify program participants and was made up of 20 participants, all of whom consented to participate in this study. The cohort included ten female participants and ten male participants representing varying amounts of experience in their fields, length of employment at Southern University, educational backgrounds, age, and cultural diversity. See Table 4 for program participant demographics. Pseudonyms were used for all study participants.

Table 4

Demographics of Participants in the Developmentally Informed Leadership Program

Program Participant Pseudonym	System Position Title	Gender Identity
Peter	Supervisor	Male
Anthony	Manager	Male
*Blake	Manager	Female
Charles	Manager	Male
Tom	Senior Manager	Male
Linda	Assistant Director	Female
Bernie	Associate Director	Male
Emily	Associate Director	Female
Esther	Associate Director	Female
Joseph	Associate Director	Male

Program Participant Pseudonym	System Position Title	Gender Identity
Liz	Associate Director	Female
Margaret	Associate Director	Female
Stacy	Associate Director	Female
Tim	Associate Director	Male
Barbara	Director	Female
Bart	Director	Male
Caroline	Director	Female
Faith	Director	Female
Miles	Director	Male
Wilson	Director	Male

Note. The cohort of 20 participants in the developmentally informed leadership program that was designed and implemented though this study included 1 supervisor, 4 managers, and 15 directors.

Informed Consent

Program participants were informed of the study during the program orientation sessions which took place in September 2015. All 20 program participants agreed to participate in this study and signed informed consent. All action research team members signed informed consent as did the program sponsor. The process for informed consent was carefully aligned with protocols for the University of Georgia (see Appendix A for Action Research Team Member Consent Form and Appendix B for Program Participant Consent Form).

Methods

Argyris' (1977, 1991) single and double loop learning theory involves teaching people to shift from technical problem solving (single loop) into more effective approaches to problem solving that include reflection (double loop). "Effective double-loop learning is not simply a function of how people feel. It is a reflection of how they think—that is, the cognitive rules or reasoning they use to design and implement their actions" (Argyris, 1991, p. 4). CDAI is a prescriptive theory that shares the goal of helping people move from technical problem solving to collaborative inquiry, developing shared goals and involving mutual uses of power (Foster,

2014). Action inquiry does several things at once - it listens to the developing situation, accomplishes whatever appears to have priority, invites re-visioning of the task, and eventually, discovers what action is timely (Torbert & Associates, 2004). This section presents the methods used for enacting developmental theory within the context of the leadership program design and for the AR team's enactment of CDAI methodology.

As constructive developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Cook-Greuter, 1999, 2003, 2004; Torbert & Associates, 2004; Rooke & Torbert, 2005) provided a conceptual framework to undergird this study, the action research team determined that the methods used should include a developmental assessment. The power of a vertical stage assessment is that it can help leaders understand their developmental stage (center of gravity) (Torbert & Associates, 2004), the strengths and limitations of this stage of development, their previous and emerging stages, and provide insight into why people with whom they work hold differing world views (Petrie, 2015). This study made use of three assessments, the Global Leadership Profile (Torbert & Associates, 2004), a 360-degree feedback survey (DDI, 2014), and the Birkman Method (Birkman & Capparell, 2014). The following sections present information obtained regarding the reliability and validity for each.

The Developmental Assessment (Global Leadership Profile)

There are several variations of the sentence completion test that measure the stages of adult development. Susan Cook-Greuter's Maturity Assessment Profile (MAP) (2004), which was developed based on another sentence completion measure, the Washington University Science Completion Test (WUSCT), created by Jane Loevinger in the early 1980's (Torbert, 2014). For this study, the Global Leadership Profile (GLP) (Torbert & Associates, 2004) was used as an instrument to measure stage development for both the action research team and the

developmental leadership program participants. The MAP and the GLP contain about eighty percent of the same sentence completion stems and have satisfied reliability, internal –validity, and external-validity criteria (Torbert, 2014). Scoring validity for both assessments has been evaluated through the conduction of reliability testing on the scoring of each measure and by having a second scorer review the first. “The result showed a .96 Pearson correlation between the two scorers, with perfect agreement in 72% of the cases, with a 1/3 action-logic disagreement in 22% of the cases, and with only one case of a disagreement larger than one full action-logic” (Torbert & Associates, 2014, p.7). This indicates that both instruments are statistically reliable; however, while scorers undergo rigorous training, there is a slight variance in results among scorers. The GLP was chosen because it is available as an online assessment making it easily distributable to program participants. Additionally, the GLP is written to reflect the language of a business environment and provides a customized report for each individual assessee with a full explanation of the seven action logics and the strengths and weaknesses of each. The GLP measured the leadership development stage (action logic) for each action research team member and participant and enabled the evaluation of the stages of the groups.

The Leadership Assessments

In addition to the GLP, the action research team chose to include two leadership assessments in the developmentally informed leadership program. Specifically, a 360-degree feedback survey, a behavioral assessment, and the Birkman (Birkman & Caparell, 2014) personality assessment, were selected and administered to each of the 20 program participants.

360 feedback survey. A 360-degree feedback survey is a method of systematically collecting opinions about an individual's performance from a wide range of coworkers (usually peers, direct reports, the boss, and the boss’s peers— along with customers outside the

organization). The benefit of collecting data of this kind is that the person gets to see a panorama of perceptions rather than just self-perception, which affords a more complete picture (Center for Creative Leadership, 2015). The instrument chosen for this study was purchased through Development Dimensions International (DDI) and called Leadership Mirror. DDI, Inc. (2014) provided the following information regarding validity and reliability of this instrument:

Through using key items from the performance areas as the basis for the survey and recommending that a comprehensive communication process be employed, DDI takes the steps required to ensure that both the survey and the supporting process create the strongest possible context for validity and reliability. (p. 3)

All 20 program participants completed the 360-degree feedback survey. A group feedback session provided the participants with information about how to read the resulting individual reports, which were later used during individual coaching sessions to assist program participants in development planning.

Birkman method. The Birkman Method (Birkman & Capparell, 2014) is a personality assessment that is familiar to and frequently used in leadership development at Southern University. In reference to reliability and validity of the instrument, Birkman and Capparell (2014) state:

The Birkman Method is a scientifically developed, multi-dimensional assessment designed to help one identify and optimize individual potential by teaching a healthy self-awareness and a greater understanding of how you fit into the bigger picture of society. The Birkman has been used by thousands of organizations, thousands of professional consultants, and millions of people worldwide. The assessment integrates behavioral, motivational and occupational data to predict behavior and work satisfaction. (p. 225)

Participants received individual Birkman reports and participated in a group feedback session to ensure understanding of their reports. These reports were also used during individual coaching sessions to assist participants in development planning. The action research team also used data from the Birkman (2014) to place participants in peer coaching (Thorn, McLeod, & Goldsmith, 2007) groups to ensure diversity of personality within the teams.

Qualitative Approach

According to Reason (2001), action research has a long history, going back to social scientists' attempts to help solve practical problems in wartime situations in Europe and America. Additionally, action research has been influenced through the liberationist movements among underprivileged people of the South where approaches to research, evaluation, and education have been used to generate social change (Reason, 2001). Action research is participatory and, as such, it aims to produce knowledge directly useful to a group of people while also empowering people through the process of constructing and using their own knowledge (Reason, 2001). The quality of action research comes from the knowledge that emerges, which has the capacity to be actionable at the service of both the researcher and practitioner communities (Coghlan, 2007). Use of action research shares the exploratory, inductive nature of many qualitative research approaches—no matter the type of data collected—because the type of research problems studied are set in complex, dynamic, rapidly changing contexts and because action research is undertaken to support social and organizational change that requires involving people affected by the research problem in the study and development of interventions to address the problem (Watkins, K., Nicolaides, A., & Marsick, V., 2016).

According to Reason (2001), first person action research addresses the ability of the researcher to foster an inquiring approach to his or her own life, to act with awareness, and to

assess effects of the outside world all the while. Second person action research practice addresses our abilities to inquire with others into issues of mutual concern. Third person action research seeks to create broad communities of inquiry involving those who cannot be known to each other such as in organizations and complex systems (Reason, 2001). The integration of first, second, and third person research is what gives action research its integrity. Studies which integrate first, second, and third person research practice produce qualitative data from multiple sources, which is then integrated to provide researchers with deep insights specific to the particular issue that is the subject of study (Coghlan, 2007). CDAI, in particular, aims to integrate first, second, and third person research through the development of increasing levels of awareness within and among co-inquirers in order to facilitate timely and effective action (Torbert & Associates, 2004).

“Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups who ascribe to a social or human problem,” (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). Further, the process of qualitative research involves emerging questions with data typically collected in the participant’s setting, data analysis inductively building from details to more general themes and patterns, and the researcher making interpretations from the data (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative data are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions of human processes through which we can preserve chronological flow, see which consequences are the results of which events, and come to fruitful explanations (Miles, M., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J., 2014). This qualitative action research case study generated data from multiple sources within the system, which was collected through the emergent process of the action research cycles, which then informed the actions taken in the next cycles throughout the study.

During the course of this study, the action research team gathered both quantitative and qualitative data to frame the problem. Quantitative data came from internal documents (Southern University, 2012-2014), a survey of high performing directors, the Global Leadership Development Profile (GLP) (Torbert & Associates, 2004), and the program participant midpoint survey. Qualitative data from interviews with senior leaders, the focus group with recently promoted directors, researcher notes from observation of the course sessions and various activities of program participants, AR team meeting agendas, recordings and transcripts, videos of the program participant's post program key learning presentations, the transcript from the after-action review session with the AR team, and researcher memos from reflexive journaling throughout the study. These multiple sources of data provided rich insights that led to key learnings presented in Chapter 5 and implications presented in Chapter 6.

Data Collection

This study took place over the course of two years (September 2014 through August 2016) with nine action research team members and 20 program participants and was informed by the input of senior leaders and key stakeholders across the system. Data was collected from sources within the system, from the activities of the action research team, from the activities of the participants in the program, and from the researcher's notes, observations, and reflexive memos throughout the study.

Various data collection methods were used in this study as appropriate for each intervention. Internal system documents provided insight about the frequency of internal promotions for leadership positions. Notes from interviews with senior leaders, a focus group with recently promoted directors, and a survey with high performing directors informed the structure of the developmentally informed leadership program. Data was collected from the

activities of the action research team in the form of agendas, meeting recordings and transcripts, and email communications. Data was collected from program activity in the form of course content, researcher observation notes, a midpoint survey with program participants, and post course evaluations from the 12 days of instructional sessions. Data was collected from the program participants in the form of presentations, development plans, and the videos and transcripts from the 19 post program key learning presentations.

“Practices that establish reflexivity in the research process are an important part in the role of researchers. So, too, is establishing relationships that provide for sense-making and integrating rigor and relevance” (Yorks & Nicolaides, 2007, p. 105). According to Saldana (2016), analytic memos can become substantive think pieces that allow the researcher to “think out loud” and can become suitable for integration into the final report of a study. Throughout the study, I kept observation notes and practiced reflexive journaling. I recorded and transcribed the post program reflection presentations of 19 program participants (one participant was not able to complete the assignment. At the end of the study, I interviewed six program participants and conducted an after action review session with the action research team to establish reflexivity and gain insight into the study participants’ experience. According to Ivankova (2015), a semi-structured interview is guided by a protocol that consists of open-ended questions with probing or stimulating questions. I used this approach to collect data from the experience of six program participants representing varying action logics as identified by their GLP results (Torbert & Associates, 2004). I also facilitated an after action review session with the AR team, which generated data from the collective experience of the AR team. Table 5 provides a list of the data collected throughout the course of this study.

The information gathered from approaches presented in this section was evaluated to answer the research questions (see Chapter 5 for key learnings resulting from data analysis) and to inform the conclusions (see Chapter 6).

Table 5

Study Data Collected, Sample Used, and Analysis Approach

Data Collected	Sample	Analysis
Internal system documents	9 Action Research team members ranging in age from early 30's to late 50's, 2 males and 7 females, representing various role levels in the organization	Used an inductive approach to conduct a thematic analysis throughout each cycle, which informed the activities of the next cycle, throughout the course of the study.
Notes from interviews with senior leaders, a focus group with recently promoted directors, and a survey with high performing directors		
Observation notes from classes, coaching sessions, and the program graduation	20 Program Participants – 10 males, 10 females selected by the university through talent planning discussions with senior leadership	At the end of the study, used an inductive approach to conduct a thematic analysis with data collected throughout the study.
Post course evaluations from 20 participants from 12 days of instruction		
Program design and course material from 6, 2 day instructional course sessions		
Assessment results from program participants (GLP, 360, and Birkman) and GLP results from the AR team		
Individual development plans from the 20 program participants		
Midpoint survey of 20 program participants		
AR team meeting agendas, recordings, and transcripts		
19 PowerPoint presentations, videos, and transcripts from program participants' reflection presentations		
Post program interviews with 6 program participants		

Data Collected	Sample	Analysis
Recording and transcript of the after action review session with the 9 member AR team		
Email communications with the action research team		
Researcher reflexive journal memos		

Data Analysis

Throughout the four cycles of action research, data collected was reviewed and analyzed and served to inform the next activities of the action research team (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014). The process for analysis began with cleaning, preparing, and organizing the data. To ensure validity and reliability of recorded data, AR team meeting recordings, videos from the 19 post program reflection presentations, and individual post program interviews were transcribed by a professional transcription service. Audio recordings of these data sources were reviewed and used for editing the transcripts to correct transcription errors.

Data analysis tool. ATLAS.ti (Version 7) [Computer software]. (2017) was a data analysis tool during this study. The tool provided a structured environment in which to organize, manage, and prepare the data for analysis. The tool also provided a structured approach for coding the data and categorizing themes and patterns.

Analysis procedures. Due to the ongoing nature of data gathering throughout this study; rather than a linear progression, analysis was an ongoing, iterative process within each research cycle as each step informed the activities of the action research team and actions taken in the next cycle. Saldana (2016) states, “Coding requires that you wear your researcher’s analytic lens but how you perceive and interpret what is happening in the data depends on what type of filter covers that lens and from which angle you view the phenomenon” (p. 8). For the purposes of

this study, analysis included cleaning and organizing the data, coding, grouping, categorizing, and identifying themes during each cycle. Member checks help to verify or extend interpretations and conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Throughout the study, as data was analyzed, action research team members and participants were consulted to validate insights and ensure my understanding of the data. The majority of qualitative researchers code data both during and after collection as an analytic tactic, for coding *is* analysis (Saldana, 2016). Coding is a cyclical act and very rarely is the first cycle of coding data perfectly attempted. Subsequent cycles of recoding further manages, filters, highlights, and focuses the features of the qualitative data collected and helps to generate categories, themes and concepts, and supports meaning making and theory building (Saldana, 2016). Coding fluidity is necessary to prioritize insightful qualitative analytic discovery (Saldana, 2016). At the end of the study this process was followed all over again to consider the entirety of data collected throughout the study. Thorough immersion in the data and the iterative process of analysis described in this section led to the emergence of the key learnings presented in Chapter 5 and the conclusions and implications presented in Chapter 6.

Trustworthiness and Rigor

According to Reason (2006), good action research does not arrive fully fledged in a clear research design but evolves over time as co-inquirers develop within a community of practice. Action research is an emergent process of engagement with worth-while practice purposes, many ways of knowing, and in participative and democratic relationships. According to Coghlan and Brannick (2014), a good action research study contains three main elements: a good story, rigorous reflection on that story, and an extrapolation of usable knowledge or theory from the reflection on the story. In the end, there are no clear foundational grounds and the best we can do is to offer our choices to our own scrutiny, to the mutual scrutiny of our co-inquirers, and to

the wider community of scholars and practitioners (Reason, 2006). Figure 2 conveys my conception of the back and forth, iterative approach used to analyze the data collected during the course of this study.

An indication of the quality of action research is trustworthiness and rigor, which calls for a rigorous, participatory action research process (Herr and Anderson, 2005). While all

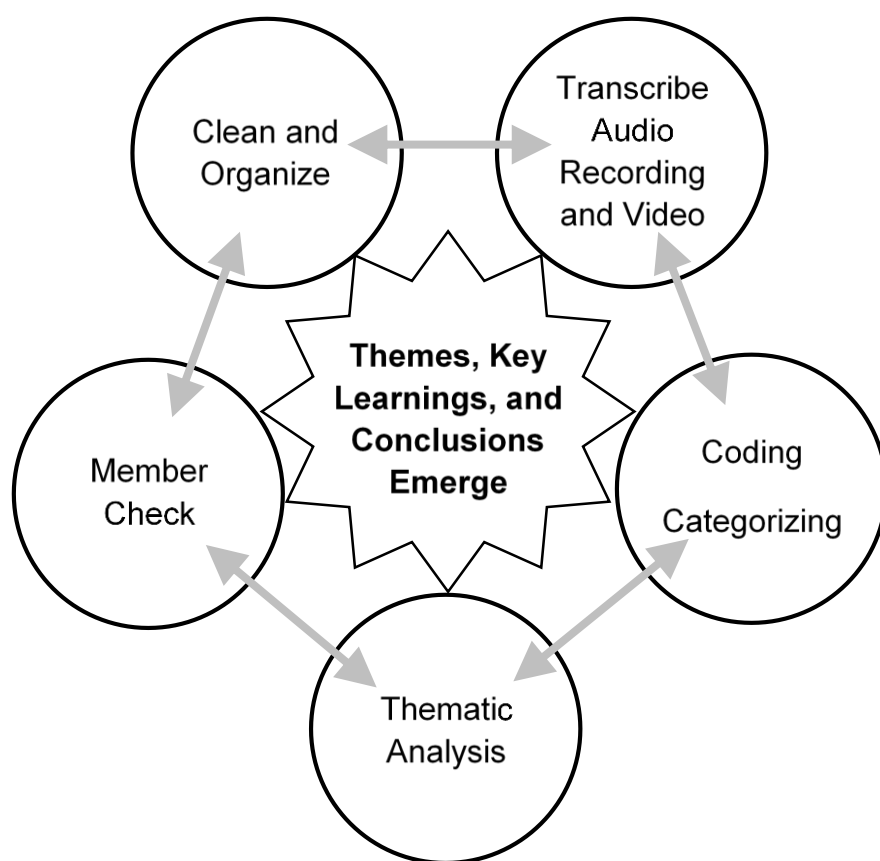


Figure 2. Iterative data analysis process used for this study.

research calls for ethical practice, doing action research in your own organization calls for political awareness and particular attention to the ethics involved in engaging co-inquirers and reporting the activities and outcomes of the research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014). This section addresses the methods used to ensure the trustworthiness and rigor of this study.

Data was gathered, saved, organized, cleaned, and prepared according to the process outlined in this chapter. Additionally, data generated and collected during the course of this study was thoroughly analyzed, then presented for validation from members of the study. Specifically, interview transcripts were shared with interviewees for review and validation of the contents. I asked questions of the interviewees to ensure my understanding of the data. Permission was requested from interviewees to include the transcript contents for data analysis. Interviewees did not ask for any of the transcript data to be removed so that permission was granted to include full transcript contents for data analysis. In August 2016, initial findings were shared with the action research team for discussion, input, and validation. Finally, outcomes of the study were shared with the program sponsor. To ensure trustworthiness, this chapter offers a transparent view into the research design, data gathering, and data analysis procedures used in this action research study.

Limitations

This study had several methodological limitations that call for addressing and explanation. First, development takes time. According to Torbert (1987), if it occurs, stage development typically takes at least two years. York and Nicolaides (2012) explain:

It is unrealistic to expect a significant shift in mindset over the course of a workshop or a retreat. However, our experience shows that introducing a developmental action inquiry experience prior to use of the strategic learning tools raises awareness of participants' regarding how their mindset is shaping their use of the tools and, by extension, influencing the range of insights they develop. (p. 199)

As such, the course of this study was not long enough to realize significant impact to stage development for members of the action research team or for program participants. Therefore, the

decision was made not to repeat the GLP (Torbert & Associates, 2004) at the end of the program for either the participant group or members of the AR team.

In addition to the limitations stated, as a novice researcher my newness to the process of action research, my emerging understanding of CDAI as a theory and methodology as I began this study surely limited the effectiveness of its enactment. As shown in Chapter 5 and explained in Chapter 6, the boundaries of my own center of gravity at times got in the way of my ability to facilitate and manage the action research group. Knowing now at the end of this study what I did not know then (at the beginning of this study), these limitations would not be the same if I were to go back to the beginning and start anew. However, these specific limitations lend contribution to the story presented in Chapter 4, add to the key learnings shared in Chapter 5, and support the conclusions set out in Chapter 6.

Subjectivity Statement

As I learned my way through the cycles of action research, I learned about myself, how I make sense of the world, and how my meaning making impacted my effectiveness as I engaged with others to enact CDAI. Prior to the study, I had taken graduate courses on various topics related to leading change, had been certified to teach leadership courses about organizational change, and read volumes about the nature of change and how to go about leading it. However, I was unprepared for the depth of complexity, ambiguity, and challenge that taking on this study through collaborative developmental action inquiry entailed. The journey was new, exciting, scary, frustrating, exhilarating. Development is messy and I learned that not everyone is up for or interested in indulging in the mess. Throughout the study, I dug deep to attend to my own self-awareness, to be aware of my individual leadership capacity, my openness to change, my willingness to be disturbed. The act of bringing together a team, engaging with the system, and

rigorously and thoroughly working through the cycles of action research, showed me how the small changes influenced through this work can open the door to the bigger changes we were working toward. Garvey-Berger (2014) stated “Development isn’t just about this theory or these forms of mind; it is the journey of our lives, the way we come to see and re-see the world around us,” (p. 174). Approaching change through action research challenged me to look inside and outside myself for the answers. The more I looked, the more I realized that I did not know and there was freedom in the not knowing. Not knowing was the fullest part of the journey because it required that I stretch my thinking and shift from enacting leadership as my individual responsibility to embrace a collective approach to leadership that involved reaching for mutuality with those involved with or impacted by this work. Reflecting on my own leadership journey, I saw how the stages of my thinking unfolded over time and continue to unfold. Leading this CDAI study challenged me to step outside of my own head and look at the dynamics of the system through a developmental lens, the various perspectives represented in our action research team, and look at leadership from new angles and vantage points. “Paying attention to someone’s particular form of mind is not going to change the world. Paying attention to the sense-making of yourself and others; however, might change the course of your life,” (Garvey-Berger, 2014).

This chapter presented this action research case study’s methodology and approach, the research design, the data collected, and the process by which data was analyzed. The next chapter tells the story of the action research team’s experience of enacting the methodology and research design described in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY

All the variety, all the charm, all the beauty of life is made up of light and shadow.

Leo Tolstoy

As the landscape of higher education evolves, Southern University (SU) needs leaders with the insight and ability to navigate this complex environment. In the fall of 2014, I contracted with SU to address this issue through action research (see Appendix C). The action research team collaborated to frame the problem and design a leadership program to address the developmental needs identified, supported by the research on constructive developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994), adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, 2009), and double loop learning (Argyris, 1977, 1991). The purpose of this action research study was to understand how to create the learning conditions for midlevel leaders to develop the skillset and mindset necessary to transition from operational management to adaptive leadership. The research questions that guided this study were: 1) How does a developmentally informed program impact midlevel leaders' mindset for adaptive leadership? 2) What are the conditions under which program participants and the action research (AR) team are able to engage adaptive leadership development? 3) What happens when collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI) is used as a methodology for designing and implementing a leadership program?

Context for the Case Study

Southern University is a four year, private research institution located in the southeastern United States, with a total student enrollment of just over 14,000. At the time of this study, SU

invested in leadership development with programs for new managers and executive leaders. There was a gap in development opportunities for those leaders holding midlevel positions, between the new manager and executive director roles. The journey took place through four cycles of action research as we designed and implemented a developmentally informed leadership program as an intervention to grow adaptive leaders at Southern University. The journey ended the same way it began, with hope for a new season to grow leaders, new leaders grown for a future that wants to emerge.

The word leadership implies power. Like it or not, power dynamics can make and break change initiatives. Well, I do *not* like it, which is why I chose a project in my own organization, working under a leader who is also my friend. At the time of this study, Grace was the senior leader of SU's professional development department and my direct manager. Grace and I first met when she gave me my first opportunity in the field of leadership development many years before at a different organization. Through the years, I considered Grace my mentor. When the opportunity became available, she invited me to join her team at SU. Grace supported my desire to pursue this doctoral program, and agreed to sponsor my action research study. At the time, neither of us knew what we were getting ourselves into.

In the fall of 2014, Grace shared that she had recent conversations with senior leaders who were concerned about developing their midlevel leaders in preparation for the next level role. These senior leaders felt that SU's midlevel leaders needed an opportunity to develop the capability and capacity to move from midlevel to more senior positions within the organization. Early in 2014, Grace and the senior human resources leaders secured funding for a leadership development program aimed at the development of SU's midlevel leaders. In the fall of 2014, I contracted with SU to address the leadership development of midlevel leaders through action

research. The university expected the midlevel leadership development program to be delivered in the fall of 2015. As a result, all of the funding had to be allocated, spent, and accounted for within the university's fiscal year, which began in September 2014 and ended on August 31, 2015. Once I contracted with SU to begin, our action research journey began and the clock started ticking. Table 6 presents the four cycles of the action research team throughout the study and the activities conducted within each cycle.

Table 6

Study Key Milestones and Timeline

Cycle 1 September 2014-January 2015	Cycle 2 January 2015-June 2015	Cycle 3 June 2015-April 2016	Cycle 4 April 2016-August 2016
Constructing Formation of the original AR team (all from the Learning and Organizational Development (LOD) department	Planning Action Analyzed findings from actions in cycle 1 Determined competencies for effective leadership in the system	Taking Action Expanded the research team to include members from across the system Finalized developmental program design	Evaluating Action Program participants presented reflection presentations of key learnings resulting from program experience
Review of internal documents	Reviewed the literature	AR team completed the developmental assessment (GLP)	AR team participated in an after action review session
Review of system documents from recent interviews with senior leaders	Designed overall program with a focus on horizontal and vertical leadership development	Implemented the developmental program during which program participants completed leadership and developmental assessments, attended 6, 2 day instructional sessions, participated in peer coaching, mentoring, and reflective journaling activities.	AR team member check with initial findings
Focus group with recently promoted directors Survey with high performing directors			

In the sections that follow, the story of the activities of the action research team and the implementation of the developmentally informed leadership program is presented one cycle at a time. I have taken care to tell the most salient parts of the story, based on my own perceptions

and meaning making, consciously and purposefully leaving out some details out of gratitude, care, and concern for all involved.

Cycle 1

As a leader within the Learning and Organizational Development (LOD) department, I had access to a team of experts in the LOD field. The original action research team consisted of five members. Smith, the most senior ranking team member was a long tenured leader in the Human Resources division. The rest of the team worked with me in the LOD department. Grace is subordinate to Smith. Fox, Jones, and I all reported to Grace. Table 7 represents the team.

Table 7

Original Action Research Team

Name	Position	Identity
Smith	Associate Vice President	Male
Grace	Senior Director	Female
Fox	Director	Male
Jones	Associate Director	Female
Longo (me)	Director/Researcher	Female

Note. Pseudonyms are used for all members of the action research team with the exception of the researcher.

The team met bi-weekly from September 2014 through June 2015. As a first step, the team reviewed internal documents, which revealed that Southern University tended to hire from outside the organization for senior positions (director level and above). Table 8 shows the data collected from this report and reveals that between 2012 and 2014, out of a total of 77 available director level positions, 10% were placed through lateral transfers, 23% percent through internal

promotion, and 57% were hired from outside of the system. This data showed a strong tendency to go outside of Southern University to find the talent needed to lead at the director level.

Table 8

Southern University directors placed in role between 2012 and 2014

Action	Description	#	Percent
Lateral Transfer	Employee transferred from a position of equal grade level	8	10%
New Hire	Employee was hired from outside of Southern University	44	57%
Promotion	Employee was promoted to a director level role from a previous position at a lower level	17	23%
Rehire	Employee was previously in a director level role and rehired into the same level role	8	10%

Note. Table 8 shows data from Southern University's Internal Promotions/External Hires Report for the two years prior to the start of this study (2012-2014) validating that the majority of directors were hired from outside the system.

This data validated the theme from Grace's anecdotal conversations with senior leaders – that SU's senior leaders regarded their midlevel leaders as not ready for promotion to the more adaptive demands of higher level roles. To further frame the problem during Cycle 1, action research team members met with vice presidents and deans, conducted a focus group of recently promoted directors, and surveyed a group identified as high performing, successful directors. These activities provided insight into the skillset and mindset necessary for adaptive leadership at SU. Table 9 represents an analysis of the data gathered from across these stakeholder groups and shows that these groups were in alignment as to the leadership behaviors and expectations necessary for success at Southern University. The data shows that leaders at all levels were in alignment on the competencies required for effective leadership at Southern University. Only the recently promoted directors mentioned the need for development in the area of managing diversity.

During Cycle 1, I became immersed in the literature on constructive developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994), leadership action logics (Torbert & Associates, 2004), adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, 2009) and double loop learning (Argyris, 1977; Torbert & Associates, 2004, Rooke & Torbert, 2005).

Table 9

Leadership Competency Alignment by Stakeholder Group

Leadership Competency Expectations Identified as Necessary for Success at Southern University	Vice Presidents and Deans	Directors Promoted between 2012 and 2014	Graduates of SU's Executive Development Program
Decision Making	x	x	X
Communication	x	x	X
Building Relationships	x	x	X
Strategic Thinking	x	x	X
Emotional Intelligence	x	x	X
Coaching	x	x	X
Delegating	x	x	X
Managing Diversity		x	
Resilience	x	x	X

These concepts aligned with the themes we were hearing from senior leaders, that midlevel leaders needed help to develop the capability to move from operational management to adaptive leadership. I was excited to share these theories with my action research team. I quickly learned; however, that my researcher's excitement over trends in the literature did not translate as well among our team of experts in the LOD field. We were already super stars at developing leaders as evidenced by existing programs that were highly regarded at SU and recognized many times over by award granting institutions in the field. Additionally, the reality was that scheduling and conducting vice president and dean interviews, conducting the focus group, administering the survey, and analyzing all of the results had taken up a great deal of time. The system's budget cycle was driving our action research timeline. Fall 2014 quickly moved into

spring 2015, which meant we needed to begin the process of choosing participants for the program. It also meant we needed to design the details of the program to address the specific leadership skillset and mindset necessary for adaptive leadership at SU. The clock was ticking and there was no time to stay stuck.

Based on the literature on constructive developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994), leadership action logics (Torbert & Associates, 2004), and adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994), I felt strongly that we needed to address midlevel leadership development through the intentional application of developmental theory. In particular, Petrie's (2014, 2014) writing on horizontal and vertical leadership development influenced my conviction that SU's midlevel leaders needed both competency and capacity development in order to move from operationally focused management to adaptive leadership. Fox's background included exposure to developmental theory, and he became an early advocate of including a developmental approach to the program's design. However, bringing the rest of the team along took more effort. Although I brought resources from the literature such as Kegan and Lahey (2001, 2009), leadership action logics (Rooke & Torbert, 2005) and Petrie's (2014, 2015) articles on vertical and horizontal leadership development to the team to show how we could incorporate a developmental lens in the program, the team came to the meetings without having read the articles, and we became trapped in planning the logistical details of securing space, selecting content vendors, and purchasing materials. I recognized that our team of expert LOD professionals was going about putting together a leadership development program that looked very much like those that already existed in the system. The team's collective expertise was getting in the way of our willingness to innovate and of our openness to read and consider adding a developmental lens to address the specific needs of the system's midlevel leaders.

In June 2015, as we approached the end of Cycle 1, I asked the team to reflect on the journey. I began:

So one of the things that I have become really aware of is what a great job we do with leadership development. Not just for our team, but I'm talking about, there's the faculty program, there's stuff that the business school does. It happens all over this university. And when we did benchmarking at the beginning [of this study], I guess I thought, well that is how it is in universities. But then when we did the benchmarking, I realized that we already do such a great job at it, that when we are trying to do a new program for mid-level leaders... I think, what I've really tried to focus on in our research then, is not that we've got to do things new or different or better, but more how can we meet the needs of this specific group (Debbie, AR Team Meeting Transcript, June 2015).

Fox added:

And I do like the approach we are taking with at least trying to find a way to integrate vertical development because there is clearly a need at this level, that we are talking about, these mid-level managers. It's a matter of finding a way to integrate that in a way that's still practical for lack of a better word (Fox, AR Team Meeting Transcript, June 2015).

Grace said:

And that works with our culture...(Grace, AR Team Meeting Transcript, June 2015).

Fox continued:

...Works with our culture too. Because vertical development and measurement of someone's current level in vertical development framework is very, very different. And

everything we've done for them pretty much has been a real challenge (Fox, AR Team Meeting Transcript, June 2015).

I added:

...And then one of the reasons we really need to focus on it [vertical development], which ... not just in [SU] because we frame that really well with all the data we've gathered. But, just in reading HBR, business and leadership articles, the level of complexity that is asked of our mid-level leaders has increased so much. That's why this whole vertical development thing is sort of bubbling up now across industries because the complexity for mid-level leaders is much more intense than it had been in the past. For lots of different reasons (Debbie, AR Team Meeting Transcript, June 2015).

Fox said:

I think society in general. Life in general has become so much more complex. You said one time Debbie, that vertical development is changing the shape of the glass. Horizontal development is filling the glass higher and higher. That's horizontal. Vertical is changing the shape of the glass so that you can pour more in it. So, I definitely see that as a real need, just because the work... I just think it's so much more complex, the requirements for managing and leading other people, and getting work done with constant changes in technology, processes, just the nature ... the rapid pace of change in itself (Fox, AR Team Meeting Transcript, June 2015).

Grace added:

The only other thing ... in all honesty, the only downside is to me, it's gotten more frustrating because of the length of time that it's taken to ... that's why I'm blue. I was real

blue the first six months. I'm in red. I'm red and my stress behaviors are starting to show, I think. Because my red has kicked in (Grace, AR Team Meeting Transcript, June 2015). Grace was concerned about impending deadlines related to program design and implementation. Grace's comments were in reference to her Birkman (Birkman & Capparell, 2014) assessment results, and language very familiar to the team. "Blue" referred to her usual behavioral style when not under stress and "red" referred to her stress behavior style. We all agreed that, moving into the next cycle, program logistics would be dealt with separately from the action research team meetings and that, moving forward, action research team meetings would be focused on our efforts to incorporate vertical development for ourselves and for our program participants. After the meeting I resolved to meet with Grace to discuss her concerns and ensure we were on the same page moving forward.

Cycle 2

In the late spring of 2015, I met with Grace to discuss vertical development and make recommendations of how we could incorporate it into the design of the midlevel leader program. Grace committed to review the articles on developmental theory (Petrie, 2014, 2015) prior to our discussion. Grace explained during this discussion that she felt the leadership programs at SU already included vertical development. I explained that I felt we definitely included horizontal (skillset) development, but that the midlevel leaders would benefit from a more intentional focus on vertical (mindset) development. We discussed the approaches mentioned in the literature, including adding a developmental assessment, which would mean additional cost. This was the first time in our lengthy working relationship that I had ever felt it necessary to assert my professional opinion on Grace. In the context of our relationship (Grace as boss and mentor), she had the positional authority to choose how we moved forward with the design of the program. In

an effort to balance the tension in our discussion I told Grace, “I don’t want what we don’t want” (Debbie, Researcher Memo, May 2015). She agreed to review the literature further and I agreed to investigate and bring forth options for the developmental assessment.

As I investigated options for a developmental assessment, I realized that the action research team of LOD professionals may stay stuck in executing a leadership development program design the way it had always been done at SU. This kept the team in danger of taking only a single loop (Argyris, 1977), technical approach to addressing the adaptive problem (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, 2009) at hand, just as we wanted to teach our midlevel leaders not to do. The reporting relationships on our AR team naturally led to power dynamics that potentially could keep us stuck in relying on our expert way of knowing and enacting leadership development. I realized this approach did not align with the theory and methodology of collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI), the methodological approach chosen to guide this study. We needed a broader perspective for our program design that included leaders from across the system.

When next we met, I told Grace that, in order to take a systemic approach to developing SU’s midlevel leaders, we needed to expand the AR team to include leaders from across the system and outside of our LOD expertise. Grace shared her concern that the program was not yet developed and she was not comfortable bringing in people from outside our area until the design was complete. I shared that was why we needed to add them, to bring a system perspective to our collectively expert team. In the end, we brought in new team members that would not only serve on the action research team with us, but who also each eventually played a part in the leadership program. Table 10 represents the expanded team.

Although the system contracted with me to address the development of its midlevel leaders, polarities of support and resistance created tensions, especially in the beginning regarding recording AR team meetings and obtaining informed consent. Grace did not think recording AR team meetings would be appropriate and said that Smith would have to approve.

Table 10

Expanded Action Research Team

Name	System Role	Program Role	Identity
Blake	Business Manager	Participant	Female
Spark	IT Director	Mentor	Female
Chakra	Associate Dean	Mentor	Female
Flowers	Assistant Dean	Mentor	Female
Smith	HR Associate Vice President	Mentor	Male
Grace	LOD Senior Director	Facilitator	Female
Fox	LOD Director	Facilitator/Coach	Male
Jones	LOD Associate Director	Facilitator/Coach	Female
Debbie (Me)	LOD Director/Researcher	Facilitator/Coach	Female

Note. Pseudonyms are used for all team members with the exception of the researcher.

She also told me that, while asking the action research team to sign an informed consent was acceptable, she felt Smith would not permit my asking program participants to sign. While determined to move forward with the study, I felt a sense of disappointment in Grace's hesitance to record meetings and request informed consent. I had expected Grace and the rest of the system to share my enthusiasm for the study. Additionally, because this study was outside the scope of my full-time position at SU, Grace advised me to keep my work on the team quiet so that my assigned internal clients would not perceive that I was taking time away from the work I did for them. Naïve to the politics of the environment, I did not expect this request and it cast a shadow on my enthusiasm. In the end, Smith approved the recording of AR team meetings. He also came to the participant kick off session in August 2015, introduced my research to the cohort, and supported my request for all to sign informed consent. Also, Smith approved the

additional funding needed for the developmental assessment (for both the AR team and the program participants). Smith's support meant a great deal to me personally and professionally and I began to feel hopeful about next steps.

In July 2015, prior to meeting with the newly expanded AR team, I met with each team member separately to explain this study and the action research methodology that we would use, collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI). I set the expectation that joining the AR team and study meant we would each commit to developing our own leadership as we worked to develop SU's midlevel leaders. Each member of the team agreed to this approach. As I met with Grace, she asked me to make it clear to the new team members that we would not be adding to the budget or making a lot of changes to the content. I mentioned inviting the new team members to participate in some of the program sessions. Grace said we would not be able to do that because of the cost and because participants may be uncomfortable with outsiders attending the sessions. Prior to the meeting, Grace asked what we would be doing in the first expanded AR team meeting. I shared the agenda with her to ensure that we were on the same page about next steps. I felt the weight of Grace's concerns as we moved close to the first expanded AR team meeting.

During the meeting, I shared the details of the team's work together in Cycle 1. Next, Grace explained the design of the program. During this discussion, Sparks asked about incorporating relevant examples as case studies in the program's exercises. I told her we could check with our vendors to see if some of the exercises could be customized. Grace responded, "When you're talking about vendor content, the word customize can be very costly" (Grace, Action Research Team Meeting Notes, July, 2015). Grace explained to the group that vendor customizations meant added cost, which was not within scope of what we could do. This led to a

group discussion about how each AR team member would add value to the group's work together by providing real time input and feedback from the various roles we each would play with the program participants during Cycle 3 and that this feedback would provide rich insights to help us develop leaders as well as understand how, if at all, the various developmental approaches incorporated into the program design impacted leader development among our team and the participant group. This discussion provided an opportunity to set expectations with the new team as a whole that of the intent to take up collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI) methodology to develop our individual leadership mindset as we worked to develop the leadership mindset of our program participants. The next step was to complete the Global Leadership Profile (GLP) (Torbert & Associates, 2004).

Cycle 3

By the time Cycle 3 began, the design of the developmentally informed leadership program was nearly complete. The team embraced the focus on horizontal (skillset) development by selecting subject matter expert vendors and guest speakers to address each of the behavioral competencies identified during the problem framing work of Cycle 1. The team embraced the focus on vertical (mindset) development by adding the developmental assessment (GLP) and providing both a group feedback session and an individual coaching session, exposing participants to system thinking by inviting senior leaders to facilitate lunch and learn discussions, providing each participant with a mentor from within the system, providing participants with journals and incorporating reflective assignments, and by establishing peer coaching groups within the cohort. Table 11 presents an overview of the developmentally designed leadership program.

In July 2015, it was time to select participants for the inaugural cohort of the midlevel leader program. Program participant selection took place during a meeting of the program sponsors, which consisted of senior leaders from the Human Resources division. Nominations came pouring in from senior leaders across the university.

Table 11

Developmentally Informed Leadership Program Components

Instructional	Relational	Reflective
6, 2 day sessions with content informed by leadership expectations identified through data gathering during Cycle 1.	Cohort experience	Leadership assessments
	Individual coaching	Developmental assessment
	Peer coaching	Reflection journal activities
	Mentoring	Post program key learning presentations
	Senior leader discussions	

Note. The leadership program design included instructional, relational, and reflective components designed to provide supports and challenges to generate development.

Nominees were required to hold a midlevel leader position within the system. Consideration was given to performance and potential for promotion (or based on a recent promotion) as defined by the nominator. Participants selected were required to commit to all scheduled program dates, which would take place between August 2015 and April 2016. Those unable to commit were removed in favor of the next name on the wait list. The final cohort consisted of a diverse group of twenty participants, each representing a different department at SU, with varying lengths of tenure and ranging in age from late twenties to fifties. Table 12 shows the demographic representation of the 20-participant cohort (see Chapter 3, Table 3 for a list of participant pseudonyms).

The AR team was excited by the large number of nominations for the program. There were over 60 nominations for 20 seats. In the July 2015 AR meeting the team discussed that the

Table 12

System Position Demographics for the 20 Participant Cohort

System Position	Number of Program Participants in the Position
Supervisor	1
Manager	4
Senior Manager	2
Assistant Director	4
Associate Director	2
Director	7

Note. Senior leaders were involved in the selection of program participants.

number of nominations were validation of the need to provide leadership development at the midlevel, of senior leader support for developing midlevel leaders, and the ripeness of the system for the team's intervention. However, although the system was ripe for the program, our expert LOD team was not necessarily ready to expose the creative messiness that ensued as we strained under the weight of the system's expectations. The new program was under a bright spotlight, and Grace wanted to present a polished product. In order to embrace CDAI, I wanted to bring the mess of program design to the expanded AR team, to discuss and gain collective insight. With a background in instructional design, I felt comfortable with the mess. My willingness to express vulnerability with the team made Grace uncomfortable. Grace explained that, when I told the AR team that I was learning action research while doing it, my vulnerability came across as an "overused strength". Grace's experience taught her that those who came to us for leadership development expected us to be expert leaders. As a novice researcher, I was driven to apply the CDAI methodology and see where it took us. I felt a collaborative approach to program design would bring broader insights to our work. Our next step, in September 2015, was to have the AR team and the 20 program participants complete the GLP.

As a researcher, I was thrilled we were trying an innovative approach to leadership development in administering a developmental assessment, which was different and new for SU.

As I sent out the GLP questionnaire to the AR team; however, I felt a sense of trepidation. I had perceived that each new program component we had chosen in the design of the program brought tension among the LOD action research team members. I began to wonder how AR team members would react to the results of their GLP assessment and whether they would reject the assessment if the results were not what they expected.

The GLP assessment results were sent from the assessment vendor to Aliko Nicolaides, my major professor, and also our feedback coach. Individual results came in the form of a report which revealed each individual's center of gravity, fall back, and emerging action logics (Torbert & Associates, 2004; Rooke & Torbert, 2005), and included recommendations on action steps to strengthen one's center of gravity (Torbert & Associates, 2004) and to progress stage development. Dr. Nicolaides sent individual reports to each program participant and to each action research team member. In September 2015, on the second day of the first program session, Dr. Nicolaides facilitated a session with the cohort, presenting the concepts of action logics, horizontal and vertical development, and the relevance to adaptive leadership mindset. Again, as a researcher and employee, I was both excited and anxious. Thrilled we were applying an innovative approach to developing our leaders yet anxious about my leadership's perception of the new approach we were trying. Based on our discussions, I knew that Grace, Smith, and Jones were anxious about the upcoming session because we were trying something new.

After the GLP feedback session, the majority of participants stated that they got a great deal out of the session and found the concept of development fascinating. Two of the 20 participants wrote in their evaluation that they were uncomfortable discussing race during an activity used to illustrate diversity in perspective taking and meaning making. Grace and I discussed that we were used to only receiving positive feedback yet realized that developmental

topics can cause disturbances in people and that we needed to intentionally set up future sessions by preparing participants for the emotional triggers that can happen in response to development and growth. This insight became useful later in the program as we set up the sessions on managing diversity, emotional intelligence, and Immunity to Change (Kegan & Lahey, 2009) as a few participants had emotional responses in those sessions as well (an example of which is discussed later in this section and in the data presented in Chapter 5).

The following week, Dr. Nicolaides returned to provide the GLP feedback session for the action research team. At our next action research team meeting in October 2015, we discussed our experience with the GLP and the feedback sessions. Chakra shared that she loved the GLP and developmental theory. She explained that, with her counseling background, she appreciated the staged approach and that, while other assessments label the assessee with a fixed style, the GLP revealed the opportunity for growth and development from one action logic to the next. Sparks agreed with Chakra's assessment of the experience and wondered how she might use the concepts in developing her team. Flowers said that she found the experience fascinating. I noted that the new members of the action research team from outside of the LOD department reacted positively to their experience with the assessment and feedback session while the LOD team members expressed concern. Fox told the team that he was familiar with developmental theory and that he valued vertical leadership development, especially for our midlevel group yet he expressed his concern we were not experts on the GLP and that we had been "given a Cadillac we didn't know how to drive" (Fox, Researcher Memo, September 2015). Jones explained that she did not understand the theory or how to use the assessment. Jones stated she "was over it" because, after sitting through the participant feedback session and then through the action research team session, if she did not understand it by then, our program participants never would.

It seemed at the time that our trepidation with a tool we were not experts in administering, cast a shadow on our first developmental application, at least among the AR members from our Learning and Development department. Years of experience made us experts with the other assessment tools chosen for this program. Then Grace added, “Well, let’s not throw the baby out with the bathwater! (Grace, AR Team Meeting Transcript, October, 2015). The team began to discuss how we could incorporate the GLP into individual coaching sessions with participants and how we would use our individual reports as a guide for our own development. Fox and I committed to schedule a separate meeting with the coaches to further review and explain the GLP and how to incorporate the assessment into the individual coaching sessions with participants using additional resources that Dr. Nicolaides had provided. Chakra, Flowers, and Sparks, the mentors in the group, then discussed how to engage their mentee’s GLP results along with the various developmental elements throughout the program. Last, I asked the group to consider how we were going to engage our own leadership development. The discussion died down as everyone considered. I invited volunteers to join me in a peer coaching group. Grace responded that she and Fox already participated in a peer coaching group outside of SU. Chakra, Sparks, and Flowers volunteered to join me and I committed to schedule our sessions to continue through the remainder of the study.

Upon reflection, I found it interesting that the new AR team members seemed to be open to the developmental assessment while the LOD expert team members reacted with apprehension. I also noted that the new AR team members were quick to volunteer to try out peer coaching for our own development, while the LOD expert team members did not sign up. I recognized that our LOD team members were used to being assessment experts and felt that the efforts we put in place to further understand and incorporate the GLP into coaching sessions

would alleviate some of their concerns. In hindsight, I wish I had openly brought my observations to the attention of the group, but at the time, the weight of my desire to create a collaborative atmosphere and avoid confronting my colleagues in front of the new team members kept me stuck.

From September 2015 through April 2016, the midlevel leader program was in full swing. I had the opportunity to facilitate during the very first session on the first day of the cohort on the topic of leadership styles. I spoke on the concepts of technical and adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994), and the importance of reflection in growing leadership mindset. To emphasize the importance of reflection, participants had been given journals prior to the first session and asked to write about what leadership meant to them. Grace facilitated a discussion about the characteristics of an effective leader and participants discussed their first journal entries. This particular journal assignment turned out to be highly significant during Cycle 4 as the basis of the participants' post program reflection (key learning) presentations.

The AR team continued to meet monthly while the program continued. In November 2015, in keeping with the CDAI methodology, I recommended we reach out to the program participants to get feedback about their experience thus far. This would enable us to take timely action to make adjustments to program components if necessary. I shared data from the survey at the December 2015 AR team meeting. While feedback about the courses, class content, and speakers was overall positive, participants particularly noted that they were enjoying peer coaching sessions and mentoring relationships. Each participant had the benefit of an individual coaching and development planning session, and many requested more such sessions in the survey. When we discussed this at the December 2015 AR team meeting, Grace explained that,

while she agreed more individual coaching would be helpful, we did not have the resources to provide it.

Most of the December 2015 AR meeting was taken up by discussion of the program, the participants, and our individual experiences interacting with the cohort. At the end of the December 2015 meeting, I reminded the group of our commitment to engage CDAI to develop our leadership while we worked to develop the midlevel leaders. I shared some insights learned from working within the peer coaching subgroup with Chakra and Flowers (Sparks did not join us). I then asked the group which developmental activities each had engaged since the last AR meeting. No one spoke up. As a result, I reminded the team that the GLP report had suggestions for developmental approaches and encouraged everyone to refer back to the report and to make an attempt to take up individual leadership mindset development as each of us worked in our various capacities with the program and cohort participants through facilitating workshops, coaching and engaging with mentees, and participating in peer coaching subgroups. I asked the team to come to the January 2016 AR meeting with their GLP report in hand, prepared to share our leadership challenges, the implications of our action logics, and discuss what we were each doing for professional development.

Cycle 3 continued, the workshops carried on, and program participants appeared to thrive in their new relationships with each other. Every monthly session was like a reunion for the group, and I noticed peer coaching groups started making an effort to sit together during class sessions and lunch. Participants showed their engagement by attending classes, completing pre-work requirements, and following through on journaling assignments. Guest speakers commented to Grace, Jones, and me on the cohort's engagement. Throughout the study, the AR team readily engaged in discussions about the program and the cohort participants. However,

this engagement did not carry through when I turned the spotlight back on the individual leadership development of the AR team.

At this point in the story, it is important to mention how my career unexpectedly came to be hanging in the balance shortly after this study began. My full-time job at SU was actually a project funded position and I directed the learning and development for a large scale change that SU rolled out across the university. Upon accepting the position in 2013, I was assured that the job would roll into the university's permanent, full time budget in 2015. I was thrilled to have the opportunity to work at SU and loved working with Grace and the rest of the LOD team. Shortly after accepting the position at SU, I decided to pursue my doctoral education, a lifelong dream. Grace supported my academic pursuit. All was well until fall of 2015, shortly after this study began, when my position did not make the cut for the university's fiscal year budget. I was devastated. Smith and Grace assured me that it would all work out and I know they tried. However, in January 2016, just about an hour before the next AR team meeting, Grace called me into her office to explain that my position and that of my one employee would end at the close of the fiscal year in August 2016. While I understood that business decisions had to be made, this came as a devastating blow. Just at the time I felt the most fulfilled in my career, my work with developing SU's leaders, the impact I could see we were making through the program, it felt as though my life was suddenly hanging in the balance. In that state of mind, I went upstairs to facilitate the January AR team meeting.

Grace did not come to the January 2016 team meeting. Fox, Sparks, Jones, Blake, Flowers and I were there. I put the news about my job aside in my mind to focus on leading a developmental discussion with the group. Although I sent a reminder, Sparks was the only member besides me who brought their GLP report. I began the meeting by telling the team about

how Chakra, Flowers, and I had recently used my GLP report to help me work through an issue that I had shared with them during our coaching session.

I began:

Okay...I've got my GLP report and...in this report there are the pages where it has your current action logic. Mine was Early Redefining...on page 12 and 13, is your current action logic. Then somewhere later, page 24 and 25, is my prior action logic, the one just before where I am now. I took those two pages, and I laid them out in front of me when we [Chakra and Flowers] were peer coaching. These two pages are explanations, an overview of what those two action logics look like. It talks about what is your focus of awareness, what is your relationship to power, what is your interpersonal style, what are your concerns and your personal insights (Debbie, AR Team Meeting Transcript, January 2016).

Fox asked:

Where are they? Are they at the same level as you, or higher than you? (Fox, AR Team Meeting Transcript, January 2016).

I responded:

We didn't talk about that, we...(Debbie, AR Team Meeting Transcript, January 2016).

Fox continued:

I was just wondering because theoretically speaking some might argue that unless you're at that stage where you're above it, it would be hard for you to articulate strategies. You know what I'm saying? (Fox, AR Team Meeting Transcript, January 2016).

I responded:

I do know what you're saying. What was nice about having something like this, a tool like this, is that even if you're ... This is where I think it can help us grow our mind, because even if you're not ... Like the next one above mine, beyond Redefining, would be Transforming. Well, obviously, I'm not thinking like a Transforming person, but if I have those bullets next to me and I'm struggling with this scenario, and I'm saying "You know what? When I talk about this, I'm talking about it from an Achiever perspective. What would it look like if I was thinking about it from a Transforming perspective?" Then you're reading through and it's giving you bullets about how that might look different. Does that make sense? (Debbie, AR Team Meeting Transcript, January 2016).

Fox said:

You're saying it gives you the information and walks you through it? (Fox, AR Team Meeting Transcript, January 2016).

Flowers added:

I think that was just sort of the ... I thought we had a major ah-ha moment, when like "Oh, my God, I've been stuck thinking of it this way," and then once we were all able to talk about it, we realized that ... I'm at the Achiever level, but I think by all of us talking together, I don't know, kind of a group coaching situation, we were able to think at a higher level (Flowers, AR Team Meeting Transcript, January 2016).

I said:

Yeah, that makes sense. Like the collective awareness of the three of us. We put our brains together, and we were like "Oh, wow, I haven't even thought about it like that" (Debbie, AR Team Meeting Transcript, January 2016).

Sparks continued the conversation by sharing that she tended to think and work operationally rather than strategically and that her GLP results validated this insight. She shared an article with the team that provided strategic questions all leaders should ask, which she found particularly helpful. Fox joined the discussion by sharing how he recently found solace from the demands of his job by mindfully thinking of his work as a flowing river, encountering a balance of raging as well as calm waters (Researcher Memo, January 2016).

After the meeting, I felt worried that Fox's language about "higher" action logic might have offended some members of the team. At the same time, I experienced a sense of relief that the team was taking initial steps in openly discussing our own individual development even though only a few members joined in the conversation. I considered the change. Perhaps the team began to feel more comfortable over the time we worked together. Maybe the developmental discussion took place because Grace's absence allowed for a balance in positional authority and, thus, the power dynamic of the group that day. At the time, my own leadership capability and capacity was clouded by the deep sense of loss I experienced about my job. I felt in over my head (Kegan, 1982, 1994), stuck in the limits of my own center of gravity (Cook-Greuter, 2002, 2004; Torbert & Associates, 2004), and I did not ask.

In February 2016, Fox became certified in Kegan and Lahey's Immunity to Change (2009). As a developmental instrument, Immunity to Change (Kegan & Lahey, 2009) was added to the program and intentionally placed as the final session so that program participants could consider their full experience with developing leadership mindset as they worked through the process. As a fan of Dr. Kegan's work, Fox was thrilled to have the opportunity to become certified in this process. I previously attended an Immunity to Change session as a part of my

doctoral program and was excited to have the session as a part of our program and eager to see the response from the participants and the AR team.

Grace, Jones, and I attended the Immunity to Change (Kegan & Lahey, 2009) session with the cohort. Grace observed the session while Jones and I participated along with the cohort by partnering and coaching each other using the Immunity Map (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). At the first break during the Immunity to Change session, one participant approached Fox and asked what the remainder of the session would entail. When Fox explained the next steps in the session, the participant expressed his displeasure and abruptly left the session. I was unaware that this had taken place, but overheard Grace talking about it with another team member. When I asked what happened Grace expressed frustration with the participant's actions. It was obvious Grace was upset and I felt my own frustration at her response to the participant's departure. We both went back to our seats as the break came to a close.

While the conversation we had during the break was a tense moment for Grace and me, it led to a meaningful discussion. When the session ended, Grace, Fox and I met up to talk about the incident with the participant exiting the session. I told Fox and Grace that I felt concern for the participant because something had obviously triggered an emotional response that made him want to leave and I wondered what he had going on personally that may have prompted his actions. Fox said that he wondered if he had done enough to prepare the group for possible emotional responses to the developmental content. Grace wondered how the participant's developmental stage may have influenced his response. The incident provided an opportunity for Grace, Fox, and me to openly discuss the various assessments we used in the program, what each measured, and the role stress plays in a person's mindset and behavior. It felt like a discussion that moved us forward by enabling each to come to the topic of vertical development

finally knowing enough about the language to discuss our understanding of stage development, while drawing from our individual professional experience and viewpoints. We discussed what may have contributed to the participant's decision to leave the session and how we might set the session up for better effect next time. It was months in the making, through the push of our project timeline, the pull of our individual expertise, the push of our desire to innovate, the pull of our immunity to change. It was months in the making, but that conversation moved us forward.

In Cycle 3 the AR team interacted with each other and with the 20 participant cohort through facilitation, coaching, mentoring; and the midpoint survey. The AR team met monthly to inquire and discuss what was working, what we needed to address, and where to go next. As a team, we opened ourselves up to the experience of the GLP. I worked to keep us focused on our own leadership development. As described in this account; time, competing commitments, power dynamics, and the team's expert bias, and the limits of my ability to facilitate CDAI effectively sometimes got in the way.

Cycle 4

Throughout the program, the midlevel leader cohort participants demonstrated their engagement through participation in class activities, lively discussions with our presenters and with each other. Those reflection journals appeared at the end of every session as participants were instructed to take the last few moments of each class to journal key insights. Those reflection activities became the basis for the final assignment. Participants came together in April 2016 to deliver individual key learning presentations to include how, if at all, they grew their leadership skillset and mindset through the experience of the program (see Appendix D) and to share next steps in their developmental leadership journey. On presentation day, in

addition to the cohort participants, their leaders, mentors, and the action research team members gathered. We asked and they told us - our participants explained their developmental journeys through the lens of their own experiences. I was taken aback at the depth of their willingness to be vulnerable with each other in a room filled with their peers, bosses, and mentors. Many shared their views of leadership before the program and how their mindset had changed as a result of this learning experience. Many openly shared assessment feedback results, their Immunities to Change (Kegan & Lahey, 2009), and insights gained throughout the journey to grow and develop as leaders. At the first break, Grace and I hugged each other and proclaimed the day to be “the best day at work in a long time” (Researcher Memo, April, 2016). At the time, it struck me that our participants were willing to be vulnerable with each other; whereas our AR team had struggled so in the face of vulnerability. Later, upon reflection, I was able to see how the differences in the conditions of the holding environment of the program and that of the AR team impacted each group’s ability to engage leadership development (see Chapter 5 for results).

While the portfolio project presentation day was a joy, the April 2016 cohort graduation was equally delightful. Over a lovely catered lunch, one of SU’s most senior executive leaders spoke to the group, challenged all to continue our leadership journey, and congratulated each individual program graduate as he passed out individually engraved program completion plaques. As each graduate received their plaque, they were asked to say a few words to the assembly. I was excited to hear the overwhelming theme of how building new relationships with their peers throughout the program made a significant impact in the leadership mindset of all, and how they hoped to continue these new peer relationships as they each took the next step in their developmental journey.

Later, in April 2016, I called the action research team together to discuss our journey through an after-action review session (see Chapter 5 for findings). I opened the after-action review, “I just want to tell you all, Grace and I both agreed that the portfolio project presentation day was the best day at work we’ve had in a long time” (Debbie, After Action Review Transcript, April 2016). Grace agreed, then the team discussed the portfolio presentations and expressed our joy in hearing the participants share their stories. We were all excited about the return of the participant who had abruptly left the Immunity to Change (Kegan & Lahey, 2009) session and touched by the key learnings he shared as a result of his experience in the program. Grace said,

One of things I know we [will change is to] say, "We're really talking about this coaching and the emotional intelligence, and there's a reason we're putting this first because there's likely to be some triggers. There's likely to be some times when you feel vulnerable. There's likely to be some things that are going to disturb you, and that's part of leading and growing." Even as sort of setting it up to say you may feel really uncomfortable talking about some of the topics, and that's actually part of what we're doing here is to feel uncomfortable here so that you can grow (Grace, After Action Review Session, April 2016).

Grace’s comments were validation of her recognition that developmental leadership growth can create disturbances for which we as Learning and Organizational Development professionals must be prepared. We must learn to be comfortable with the mess of development in order to help ourselves and our participants grow and learn.

The team went on to discuss our journey as an action research team, our successes and challenges. Inquiry into our process and the experience of the journey provided an opportunity

for reflection on our subjective, intersubjective, and object experience (see Chapter 5 for findings) and brought the journey full circle.

Lastly, after spending some time with the data, I brought the AR team together one last time in September 2016, to share initial findings and gather member feedback. The entire team attended and we reviewed composite GLP data, compared the action research team's GLP composite with those of the participant cohort (see Chapter 5) and discussed implications (see Chapter 6). We reviewed tables that showed participants' mentions of various program components and the impact each had on their development. Finally, we reviewed themes with supporting quotes from various data sources related to our participants' growth and development. Fox was particularly excited about the evidence of developmental growth. Sparks asked when the next cohort would begin and whether she could nominate one of her employees. At the end of the session, as Chakra, Flowers, and I were gathering our belongings to head out to celebrate the end of our work together, Grace said, "I was beginning to like vertical development, but now I'm starting to love it" (Grace, AR Team Meeting Notes, August, 2016).

The journey ended the same way it began, with hope for a new season to grow leaders, new leaders grown for a future that wants to emerge.

Epilogue

As mentioned, my full-time position at Southern University ended in August 2016. I returned in September 2016 to share initial findings from this study with my action research team. I am grateful for and humbled by the opportunity to contribute to the development of SU's leaders, to collaborate with a dedicated team of professionals through action research, and to grow my leadership skillset and mindset by having led this research at SU. Grace took me to lunch the last day to celebrate our work together. Grace is my mentor and friend. As I collected

the last of the personal items left in my office, Grace said she would like to share some things that occurred to her that she did not share during the after-action review session with the full team. I asked if she minded if I recorded our conversation. Grace agreed and later gave me her consent to share this full transcript. Although portions of this transcript appear in Chapter 5, it still feels appropriate to share here as I bring this case study to a close. The transcript of our conversation (Debbie and Grace, Conversation Transcript, August 2016) is below entitled, “We Emerged!”

We Emerged!

Grace began:

The thing I think this program has done for me, and the experience of this [CDAI], is pushing me to be open to new and different ideas.

I acknowledged:

Oh, well, that's good!

Grace said:

It is good, because it's really easy to take one or two people, and we think we know what we're doing, and we've talked to everybody so we know what they need and we can define what they need ...but involving more ... which I know, the more people you involve, the better...having the folks [AR team] to talk to, having the [research] to look at, but also being pushed to consider doing it [program design] a different way.

Grace continued:

Which I don't ... It's not that I'm not open, it's just that there's things that I don't ... Maybe that's part of the stress thing is going back to the Experts [action logic] thing, and it's true, we got to get this thing [the program] going, we got to get it out. ..not that I minded, but

...I'm not too keen on ... “We don't know what this [program] is going to look like. With a new [expanded AR team], new cohort, it needs to, in my brain, to look polished and ready, but it didn't...

I added:

... I can see that now. When you were in your stress mode, trying to get this program done, and you're in your Expert mindset, which serves you well in that space, that's what you've got to be. Then I'm going back to my Diplomat, which makes me bring in more research, because I'm thinking that you're not approving the suggestion that I'm making.

Grace said:

Yeah! “Let me double down and keep showing and showing and showing, so that we're all okay with it, but really what we ... We're already on the same page, let's just make it happen.

Grace and I laughed then Grace added:

That's helped me, actually... just to be open to thinking differently about how to get something accomplished. I'm emerging.

I agreed:

We are emerging!

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

Live the questions...

Rainer Maria Rilke

This action research study began in response to Southern University's need to prepare leaders at the midlevel for the complex demands encountered at more strategic levels in the system. Through four cycles of action research, the team embarked on a journey to fully understand the problem, to provide interventions, to grow from the experience of learning, and to share the experience so that others may learn. The purpose of this action research study was to understand how to create the learning conditions for midlevel leaders to develop the skillset and mindset necessary to transition from operational management to adaptive leadership. The research questions that guided this study were:

- 1) How does a developmentally informed program impact midlevel leaders' mindset for adaptive leadership?
- 2) What are the conditions under which program participants and the action research (AR) team are able to engage adaptive leadership development?
- 3) What happens when collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI) is used as a methodology for designing and implementing a leadership program?

Key learnings emerged in response to each of the research questions. In response to question one, midlevel leaders experienced shifts in leadership mindset as a result of the enhanced self-awareness gained through participation in the developmentally designed program. This self-awareness came through the intentional combination of program components that interweaved to

facilitate shifts in participants' ways of knowing and enacting leadership. In response to question two, the action research team took up a developmental approach (CDAI) (Torbert, 1976, 1991; Torbert & Associates, 2004; Torbert & Livne-Tarandach, 2009) for the program participants, yet was not able to fully enact CDAI as a method to develop the AR team. The conditions intentionally set up for the participant group led to participants engaging leadership development, while the conditions on the AR team did not. In response to question 3, the AR team's experience with CDAI brought about key learnings which include 1) On the AR team, individuals recognized room for growth yet resisted growing together. 2) Developmental activities designed to enhance and stimulate growth in complexity of mind generated emotional responses which needed facilitation and management; 3) Relationships built through mentoring, peer coaching, and AR team participation increased AR team members' sense of self and their engagement in the system among. These key learnings are presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Summary of Research Questions and Key Learnings

Research Questions	Finding	Key Learnings
1) How does a developmentally informed program impact midlevel leaders' mindset for adaptive leadership?	The developmentally informed program design cultivated a space for learning and growth that led to shifts in participants' leadership mindset.	1. Participants' ways of knowing in leadership shifted and expanded from "me" thinking to "we" thinking. 2. The intentional combination of assessment, instructional, relational, and reflective program components provided a holding environment with the appropriate supports and challenges that led participants to shifts in leadership mindset.
2) What are the conditions under	The conditions within the cohort created a	1. Readiness for growth matters. Developmentally, the action research

Research Questions	Finding	Key Learnings
which program participants and the AR team are able to engage adaptive leadership development?	holding environment which led to shifts in leadership mindset while the conditions on the AR team did not.	team and the cohort of program participants were reflections of one another. 2. The holding environment matters. Holding up a mirror to compare the AR team and the cohort, the conditions that impacted development in both groups were: Quality of facilitation Power dynamics Amount of time Willingness to be vulnerable Engagement in reflection System expectations
3) What happens when CDAI is used as a methodology for designing and implementing a leadership program?	The AR team's experience with CDAI led to key learnings at the individual, team, and system levels.	1. Individual - (1st person, Subjective) On the AR team, individuals recognized room for growth, yet resisted growing together. 2. Team - (2nd person, Intersubjective) Developmental activities generated emotional responses which needed skillful facilitation and management. 3. Organization – (3rd person, Objective) Among the AR team, relationships built through mentoring, peer coaching, and AR team participation increased leaders' sense of self and their engagement in the system.

This chapter presents key learnings which result from thematic analysis of data gathered throughout the study. The data analyzed included 19 program participants' post program reflection presentations, individual interviews with six program participants, Global Leadership Profile (GLP) assessment results for AR team members and program participants, and action

research team meeting notes, communications, recordings, and transcripts. The data also include my reflexive journaling as the research unfolded throughout the course of the study. This chapter consists of three sections, one for each research question, and includes key learnings for each.

Research Question One: How Does a Developmentally Informed Program Impact

Midlevel Leaders' Mindset for Adaptive Leadership?

Midlevel leaders were identified and nominated by senior leaders for participation in the pilot for a developmentally informed leadership program designed through this study. Senior leaders nominated midlevel leader participants based on their readiness to take up the next level role and solid performance in their current position. Senior leaders noted that each program nominee, while high performing in operationally focused management, needed support and development for the adaptive focus required at the next leadership level. The action research team designed a program intervention for horizontal (skillset) and vertical (mindset) development (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Cook-Greuter, 1999, 2002, 2004; Torbert & Associates 2004) in order to support midlevel leaders in the shift from operational (technical) to strategic (adaptive) leadership (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, 2009). Program participants completed a developmental assessment, the Global Leadership Profile (GLP) (Torbert & Associates, 2004), which revealed that individually and collectively this selected group of leaders was showing an emerging capacity for adaptive leadership. The intentional developmentally informed design which integrated a combination of developmental and leadership assessments, developmentally informed instructional approaches, relational attention to collaborative learning, and sustained reflective practice enabled program participants to grow more complex ways of knowing that filled out their adaptive leadership capacity. As a result of the developmental elements included in the program, participants reported an expanded

self-awareness, which guided shifts in their ways of knowing leadership. This study showed that participants from the range of action logics¹ represented in the group (from Early Achiever to Redefining) expanded their views of leadership from a focus on individual performance to adaptive leadership capacity. Participants reported a shift in their leadership mindset from “me” thinking (managing their tasks and goals) to “we” thinking (growing more strategic in working with their teams to accomplish more adaptive organizational challenges). The developmentally informed program design cultivated a space for learning and growth that led to shifts in participants’ leadership mindset.

Key Learning 1: Participants’ Ways of Knowing Leadership Shifted and Expanded from “Me” Thinking to “We” Thinking

At the launch of the program, participants were given a journal assignment to reflect and write about what leadership meant to them. At the end of the program, participants were asked to look back at that original journal assignment and share key learnings about leadership mindset at the end of the program. As a result, participants described shifts in leadership mindset from “me” thinking (e.g., lead by example, positional authority demands respect, leader as problem solver) to “we” thinking (e.g., enable, empower, and engage others) as depicted in Figure 3.

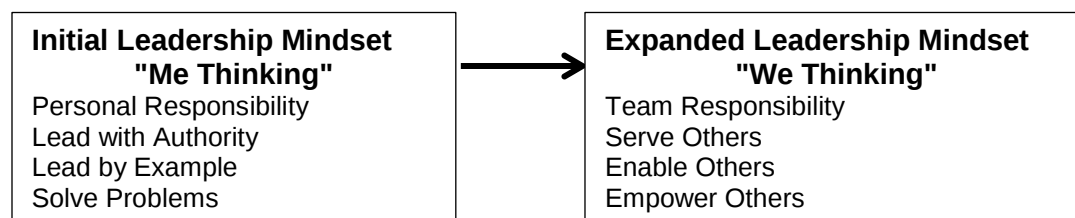


Figure 3. This figure illustrates themes indicating a shift from “me” thinking to “we” thinking from the way participants explained their leadership mindset at the beginning of the program to the end.

¹ Action Logics (Opportunist, Diplomat, Expert, Redefining, Transforming, Alchemist) are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

The quotes in Table 14 were taken from transcripts of the end of program key learning presentations. Participant action logics shown are based on GLP results at the beginning of the program.

Table 14

Quotes from Transcripts of Post Program Key Learning Presentations

Name	Action Logic	Initial Leadership View	Emerging Leadership View	Shift in Mindset
Peter	Early Achiever	“Positional leadership is that leadership that says [because of] my position, I’m going to act because you are my superior.”	“That leadership has its place, but I feel that, especially where I am, I feel that my ability to influence my guys to work or to do or to act or to follow will give them a sense of empowerment.”	Positional authority (me) to empowering others (we).
Anthony	Achiever	“I look back at one of my first journal entries, and I simply define leadership as the ability to lead by example.”	“My definition evolved during this program over time to include the ability to positively influence and inspire others”	Lead by example (me) to influence and inspire others (we).
Charles	Early Redefining	“Thinking about my style and [how I thought of] leadership was more about ownership and responsibility.”	“I think from the responsibility of ownership, viewpoint of what a leader is, [my view] changed to more as empowering, enabling; and that’s what a leader is supposed to do. Leading is less about dictating and top down, and more about trying to enable people on how to really do what they need to do.”	Ownership and responsibility (me) to empowering others (we).
Caroline	Redefining	“I viewed a leader as my grandfather did, leaders controlled and kept things in order...they are going to command and demand respect.”	“That’s not the reality and they don’t owe me any respect. They [my team] has just as much to offer.	Positional authority (me) to including others (we).
Margaret	Redefining	“There was an idea I had that a leader is someone who gets things done and, in fact, is the person who gets things done. A leader is someone who solves problems.”	“...[This program] has led to some subtle shifts in my own mindset and definitely has kind of helped clarify for me [that] the type of leader I want to be is an adaptive leader. To me, that means one who is mindful of the way I think about myself as a leader, who is mindful about how I show up, how I engage with others, how I encourage the engagement of others.”	Problem solver (me) to engaging others (we).

During post program reflection presentations, participants explained leadership views at the beginning of the program and how, if at all, leadership mindset was impacted through the experience of the program. A theme emerged across the full range of action logics that participants experienced a shift from thinking of leadership as an individual responsibility (me thinking) to knowing leadership as a collective activity (we thinking). Participants described their initial ways of knowing leadership as an individual responsibility to lead by example, solve problems, and get things done. Participants each described shifts in their leadership mindset from a view of leadership as their individual responsibility to an expanded view of leadership by describing nuances in their meaning making about empowering others, engaging teams, and building relationships across the university. Next are stories taken from the transcripts of participants' post program reflection presentations as each explained the shift in leadership mindset.

Peter (Early Achiever) explained that he came to the program viewing leadership as his personal responsibility through positional authority (me thinking). He followed his superior's lead and expected the same from his team. Peter explained that as a result of his experience in the program, his view of leadership shifted from a focus on his individual responsibility through positional authority (me thinking) to thinking about how he can influence and empower his team (we thinking). He explained his shifting view of leadership this way:

That leadership [positional authority] has its place, but I feel that, especially where I am, I feel that my ability to influence my guys to work or to do or to act or to follow will give them a sense of empowerment. They will begin to feel empowered by the things that they do, by the things that they are trying to accomplish ... (Peter, Post Program Presentation Transcript, April 2016).

Anthony (Achiever) shared that he joined the military at the age of nineteen. He learned about leadership by watching his commanding officer, who Anthony described as setting a good example and never asking the team to do anything that he would not do. Within three months of joining the military, Anthony was given the responsibility of leading a team of three people. He then spent much of his career moving up through the ranks of the military. Anthony modeled his view of leadership after what he learned from his commanding officer. He saw leadership as his personal responsibility to lead by example. Anthony explained:

I look back at one of my first journal entries, and I simply defined leadership as the ability to lead by example. This was instilled in me in the military, and I still follow that philosophy today (Anthony, Individual Interview Transcript, May 2016).

While Anthony continues to value his ‘lead by example’ view, he described the expanded shift in his leadership mindset this way:

My definition evolved during this program over time to include the ability to positively influence and inspire others, and to do it consistently...The military is so different, you’re just telling them. You’re giving them orders (Anthony, Individual Interview Transcript, May 2016).

Anthony explained how his thinking shifted from a focus on ‘getting things done’ (me thinking) to a desire to understand his team and see issues from all perspectives (we thinking). He explained the experience of his shift in thinking this way:

[The program] opened your mind up, there’s so many new ways to approach conversations. I think it’s really helped me be, I guess...it’s calming to me, for my team when we get into conversations. It doesn’t really escalate. When you’re focused on getting things done you just want to get them done. When someone has a problem or

something, now I'm more focused on...I know they have a problem and I want to help them, but it helps me dig a little deeper to get more to the root of the problem. Then listening to their side of the story, trying to look at it from their eyes because before, I'd be like, "Let's just get it done," but now I really want to listen and communicate better with people (Anthony, Individual Interview Transcript, May 2016).

Anthony explained that, through the experience of the program, he not only realized the need to understand and to be more inclusive with his team, but he also began to realize the importance of "seeing the big picture" and building strategic relationships across the university in order to accomplish his goals. He explained that seeing the big picture helped him shift his thinking of leadership as his ability to get things done (me thinking) to realizing the value of working with others to accomplish common goals (we thinking). Anthony explained:

I was so focused to get things done here...that I pushed my peers to the side...now I'm like, I need to talk to this person this quarter, this person next quarter or I just need to do weekly check-ins with so and so. That really helped me out a lot (Anthony, Individual Interview Transcript, May 2016).

Charles (Early Redefining) explained his early leadership mindset this way:

Thinking about my style and [how I thought of] leadership was more about ownership and responsibility. You, as a leader, you own the vision, you're responsible for getting it done; and it ends up much more complex than that, but that's how I've boiled it down as to what I thought leadership was (Charles, Post Program Presentation Transcript, April 2016).

Charles described the shift in his leadership mindset from a unilateral view of power (me thinking) to a more mutual view of power (we thinking):

I think from the responsibility of ownership, viewpoint of what a leader is, I think it changed to more as empowering, enabling; and that's what a leader is supposed to do. I've got a lot of feedback in how leading is less about dictating and top down, and more about trying to enable people on how to really do what they need to do (Charles, Post Program Presentation Transcript, April 2016).

Margaret (Redefining) explained that she began the program viewing leadership as her individual responsibility (me thinking) to solve problems. She put it this way:

To say a little bit more about where I was starting from in terms of my mindset, skills, and style There was an idea I had that a leader is someone who gets things done and, in fact, is the person who gets things done. A leader is someone who solves problems (Margaret, Post Program Presentation Transcript, April 2016).

Margaret's view of leadership expanded from an individual focus on her ability to solve problems (me thinking) to mindfully intending to engage her team and the organization (we thinking). Margaret explained her shift in leadership mindset this way:

Slowly capacity in those areas has led to ... shifts in my own mindset and definitely has kind of helped clarify for me the type of leader I want to be is an adaptive leader. To me, that means one who is mindful of the way I think about myself as a leader, who is mindful about how I show up, how I engage with others, how I encourage the engagement of others. Also as a part of that, my intention is to want to help my team and organization to be adaptive as well (Margaret, Post Program Presentation, Transcript April 2016).

The examples provided in response to research question one reveal how the intentional combination of instructional, relational, and reflective components deepened participants' self-

awareness. This expanded sense of self enabled these leaders to see their leadership capability from a broader perspective and stimulated shifts in leadership mindset from enacting leadership focused on individual responsibility to solve problems to a collective empowerment of their teams. In response to research question one, Southern University's midlevel leaders who participated in the developmentally designed program experienced shifts in leadership mindset from "me" thinking to "we" thinking.

Key Learning 2: The Intentional Combination of Instructional, Relational, and Reflective Program Components Provided a Holding Environment with Supports and Challenges that Led Participants to Shifts in Leadership Mindset

As a reminder, the midlevel leadership development program was designed to take place in a cohort format over an eight month period coinciding with the academic school year at Southern University from August 2015 to April 2016. The program included interactive instructional experiences through six, two-day sessions on topics selected based on feedback gathered from senior leaders, experienced directors, and recently promoted directors. To embrace a developmental design aimed at growing both leadership skillset and mindset, the program included individual assessments and coaching, mentors selected from within the system, peer coaching groups within the cohort, and a series of discussions during class lunch breaks with the system's most senior leaders. The program also included a particular focus on self-reflection. Each participant was provided with a journal, reflection assignments were given after each two-day session, and participants were required to reflect and share key learning with an audience of peers and leaders at the end of the program (see Chapter 4 for program design).

Upon completion of the program, I approached data analysis with the purpose to understand which program components worked and how each worked towards developing

leadership mindset. Using qualitative data analysis software, (QDAS) ATLAS.ti (version 7 (2017), I reviewed the transcripts of the 19 post program reflection presentations, noting which components of the program were mentioned and what participants stated about each. This analysis revealed that participants mentioned every component of the program multiple times and that what worked for one person was not mentioned by another so that every person was impacted by some of the components and overall all of the program components were impactful. Particularly noted was that the relational program components (the cohort experience, individual coaching, peer coaching, mentoring, and senior leader discussions) were mentioned by every program participant and had the highest number of mentions overall. Table 15 represents the results of this analysis.

Table 15

Program Components Mentioned by Participants as Developmentally Impactful

Instructional	# of Mentions	Relational	# of Mentions	Reflective	# of Mentions
Course Content	20	Cohort Experience	4	Birkman	8
		Individual Coaching	5	360 Feedback	5
		Peer Coaching	8	GLP	4
		Mentoring	7	Journal Activities	3
		Senior Leader Discussions	4	Key Learning Presentation	3
	20		28		23

Note. Table 15 shows the number of mentions each program component received from participants during their post program presentations as having impact on their development.

A next level analysis of the transcripts from post program reflection presentations revealed that it was not one specific program component or another that impacted participants' development, but rather a combination of the instructional (course content), relational (individual coaching, cohort discussions, peer coaching, mentoring, and senior leader discussions), and reflective (leadership assessments and the developmental assessment, reflective journaling

assignments, and post program key learning presentations), leadership development program components that led to participants to the experience of shifts in their leadership mindset as seen in Figure 4.

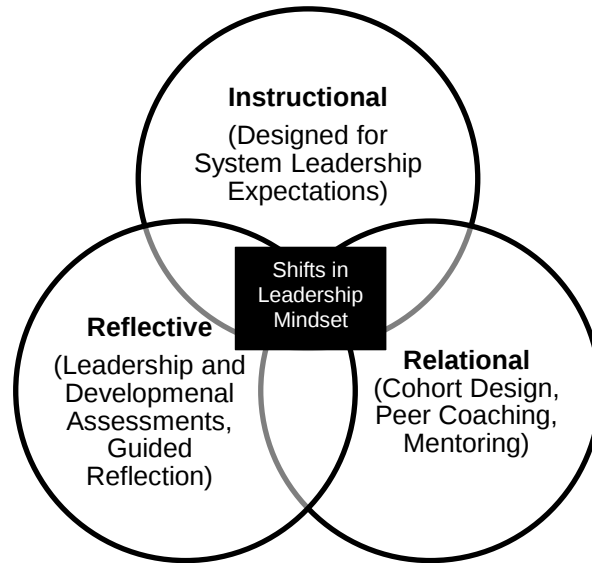


Figure 4. Components in the developmentally designed leadership program. This figure illustrates that the intentional combination of instructional (developmentally designed course content), relational (attention to collaborative learning), and reflective (sustained reflective practice) components led to shifts in leadership mindset among program participants.

Next, to illustrate this finding, quotes from the transcribed post program presentations are presented.

During his post program reflection presentation, Bernie (Achiever) explained how the combination of program components (course content, cohort design, peer coaching group, and mentor) became a laboratory, a holding environment, that provided space for his leadership mindset development. He explained it this way:

One of the things that was interesting about this program is there was so much change going on professionally for me, that at many times I really felt like I was sort of learning these lessons in real time. I would come in [to a program session] and I would find that

some of the things that we were studying or learning about, I was really going through. At times, it felt like a bit of a laboratory and this was kind of a place where I was able to come talk about a current situation or problem, run it by my cohort or my mentor or my peer group and really kind of get challenged to look at things in a little bit different way (Bernie, Post Program Presentation Transcript, April 2016).

Bernie reflected on his program experience and shared how his development was enhanced by the combination of instructional (course content) and relational (peer coaching, mentor) components, which became a laboratory for learning, broadening Bernie's perspective. This quote illustrates that the relational components helped Bernie consider new, alternate perspectives.

During her post program reflection presentation, Linda (Achiever) shared an example of how the combination of reflecting on her 360-degree feedback and GLP assessment results along with individual coaching contributed to her self-awareness, which led to a shift in her understanding about how she comes across to her team and expanded her openness to applying an inquiring leadership mindset. Linda explained:

At this program, they talked about mindset development, and it's one of the great things that I learned. In my 360, one of my lowest ratings...was reading the environment. Pretty much, that meant... knowing where I was going and not really focusing on what was going on around me. As a result of the GLP, [Global Leadership Profile] a part of the areas of growth in that ... is that I can be blind to my own shadow... I went into my coaching session with [Fox]...and I was like "...help me understand myself ..." [Fox] said when you're someone who likes to achieve, you have your eye on the prize, you're going for it, you can be blind to ... how you're affecting others around you... that can

have a negative impact ...One of the suggestions that he made was to develop an anchoring mindset. That means slow down, pause and ask more questions... and it really helped me expand the number of questions that I could ask to continually develop my anchoring mindset (Linda, Post Program Presentation Transcript, April 2016).

Linda's comments explained how the combination of program components (assessments, individual coaching) expanded her self-awareness and led to her desire to engage her attention and bring focus to how she affects others around her, or, as Fox explained it, a more anchoring mindset.

Charles (Early Redefining), who led a team in a staff (non-student) area of SU, explained how his experience with the instructional session on the topic of diversity combined with a peer conversation with Bart, another member of the cohort who worked with students, resulted in a shift in his leadership mindset:

A great insight came from [Bart] just because he works with students a lot, and this actually changed a little bit of my views on working through diversity issues in the leadership role... I'll be honest with you; I think this is really a function like demographic, my age, my race, and my gender. The way I look at diversity is treat everybody equally, right? Kind of ignore past evils and just really work to have a very inclusive, fair environment...what [Bart] found out was from the other side of that discussion...there are a lot of folks who see my behavior probably as denial that there have been issues in diversity before, right? I think his point was to get past that you have to acknowledge it, and then move forward. That was just a fundamental difference in how I saw dealing with people in a diverse environment (Charles, Post Program Presentation Transcript, 2016).

Tim (Redefining) explained how the combination of discussions with his mentor, application of course content, and reflection, provided the support and challenge for him to approach leadership mindfully:

Knowing when to pause, knowing when to take time for myself and reflect. This was big when it came to my mentor ... she was amazing when it came to me being able to use her as a sounding board and her being able to help me apply what ...I was learning in these courses back to my position (Tim, Post Program Presentation Transcript, April 2016).

In addition to reviewing transcripts from the post program presentations, I interviewed five program participants to dive deeper into their lived experiences of leader development during the course of the study. In speaking with Caroline (Redefining), I asked her which program components impacted her development. She responded this way:

The program definitely helped sort of open my mind a little more. At what point, I would say I can't pinpoint exactly when but I would say ... I'm reading and taking my time to read through each of the books, but the EQ [emotional intelligence] stuff, and then afterwards reading the books and then really digesting what we did. Reflecting on it, and digesting the book. Thinking about the other person's perspective, hearing my peer group, all of those things together helped me see; also the feedback, like the 360, and then really studying my Birkman with my mentor. It helped me step out of myself and look at myself, which is a very different way to view you (Caroline, Individual Interview Transcript, May 2016).

During her post program presentation, Margaret (Redefining) described her early leadership mindset as that of an 'accidental leader.' During our interview, she explained that her leadership mindset shifted over the course of the program. Margaret put it this way:

In terms of this program and my experience here, there have been several key areas that come together for me combining mindsets, skillsets, style, all of it that have been really impactful, kind of in the three areas in there. It's really been around awareness, inquiry, and reframing. I think some of the specific program elements that have shaped my experience in those areas are definitely the self-assessments...definitely gave just a lot of data and information, a way to kind of understand more about myself. That in combination with more reflective exercises, the journal and the discussions with peer groups helped kind of integrate that information in a way that was really meaningful (Margaret, Individual Interview Transcript, May 2016).

These examples provide insight into participants' lived experience of the program and demonstrate how the intentional design and integration of developmental and leadership assessments, developmentally informed instructional sessions, the relational components with attention to collaborative learning, and sustained reflective practice expanded participant's self-awareness and provided a holding environment with the appropriate supports and challenges that led participants to shifts in leadership mindset.

Thematic analysis of the data from participants' post program presentations and Individual Interview Transcripts showed that participants gained self-awareness through the leadership and developmental assessments, interactions with members of the cohort, peer coaching discussions, individual development planning with their coaches, and through time spent with their mentors. The experience of the program enhanced participants' sense of self and guided shifts in the way they perceived their leadership.

During our post program interview, Caroline explained that her early view of leadership came from her grandfather. His authority meant that he should be followed without question.

As a result of her program experience (e.g., 360 feedback, conversations with her peers and mentor) Caroline gained the self-awareness to think of leadership in a new way. She explained:

Self-awareness is critical and awareness of others and how they feel and how they think about what I'm saying, what message I might leave with them and that we all bring our own experiences and biases with us, including me and including the person that I'm talking to. How I think I communicate is not how I'm heard. Let me reintroduce [Caroline]. Primarily I learned that the world doesn't see things through my eyes. I know that sounds very simple, but I had not thought about that. The world doesn't see that just because I'm [the Director], they should defer to my opinion (Caroline, Post Program Presentation Transcript, April, 2016).

Linda (Achiever) gained self-awareness about how her preference to demonstrate expertise did not translate well with her team:

I have a little confession to make. I enjoy being a know-it-all. I like being a person who has all the answers and I like to see when you don't know the answer, that I can nudge you to give you the right answer. I thought that was my little secret, right? In my experiences, especially through my 360, I realized that, "No, it wasn't a secret, everybody realizes and not everybody appreciated it" (Linda, Post Program Presentation Transcript, April 2016).

Tim (Redefining) explained:

Some key takeaways for me. What you don't know can hurt you. Again, that self-awareness for me, being able to understand some of those things that I didn't think about, some of those areas that were uncovered through this program. Again, how am I being perceived? How is my team motivated? How can I improve and be better? That was one.

And, the answer is always going to be, “No,” if you don't ask the question. My boss tells me that all the time, too. Again, I need to be not afraid to ask those questions, those deep thought provoking questions, those strategic questions, and all kinds of good can come from that option (Tim, Post Program Presentation Transcript, April, 2016).

These statements from Caroline, Linda, and Tim provide insight into how the lived experience of the developmentally designed leadership program led to self-awareness. As a result, the enhanced self-awareness each gained made object for them what was once subject; how their leadership came across to others. Self-awareness gained through the experience of the developmentally designed program enabled an expansion of these participants' awareness which empowered each to fill up their capacity by expanding their ways of knowing and enacting leadership. Bart, Liz, and Anthony, gained self-awareness about how the individual (me thinking) focus on getting the job done kept them stuck in an operational mindset. Each gained insight into how a focus on building relationships across the university (we thinking) could enable the shift from operational to adaptive thinking.

Bart (Redefining) shared how self-awareness of the tendency to keep to himself (me thinking) kept him from being able to accomplish his desire to positively impact systems of oppression and discrimination. Through the experience of building relationships with the cohort and within his peer group, Bart was able to reconcile how connecting with others (we thinking) can impact the larger system. He explained:

Building relationships is something else. For me, I have this phrase that I don't like people, I don't like being in crowds, I don't like being in groups, but I do value relationships and so reconciling that has been a challenge in some ways especially in professional settings. One thing this experience really allowed me to explore was how

can I do that in a more effective way, in a more strategic way and in a way that allowed me to both better do my job as well as help others do theirs. The relationships in our core [peer] group.... One of the big balancing acts within my work is how do you balance systems and individuals? I think you do that with relationships. You can't change larger systems of discrimination and oppression without working with the people themselves and the people are the ones who have to change the larger systems. You can't do that without the relationships (Bart, Post Program Presentation Transcript, April 2016).

Liz (Early Achiever) shared how the Immunity to Change (Kegan and Lahey, 2009) session impacted her self-awareness as a leader of change, uncovered her need to be an expert (me thinking) and how that thinking kept her stuck, and revealed how building relationships across the university (we thinking) would enable her to become a more adaptive leader. She explained:

One way I've thought about this Immunity to Change, my resistance to change is it's helped me to understand myself as a leader, and how important it is to be self-aware. Also in terms of leading others, the coaching is going to be needed as we go through this adaptive challenge. The adaptive challenge is a way of thinking of change in general, so I see it as a way of leading the business through change management. I just want to show you my outline thinking on Immunity to Change. One of the goals, and this is related to the data warehouse, one of the goals that I had when I started in terms of thinking about the data warehouse and the implications that might offer is that I need to go out there and build relationships across the university. My response to that; however, was to focus on relationships in my comfort zone. I can tell myself, I'm doing, I'm addressing that goal that I have, because I'm going out there, but I did it with people who were likely to do the

kinds of things that I do. I really didn't stretch myself in that attempt. The reason I didn't do it is that I didn't want to show that I wasn't an expert in all this. I want to be seen as an expert. By going out there and talking to people who don't do what I do, trying to understand what their needs are in terms of data reporting, I was having to go outside that comfort zone and show that I don't know it. The big assumption I made in doing that was if I don't demonstrate expertise, I'll be taken advantage of. People will see, well maybe we don't need [Liz] after all. We've got this central depository of information, we've got people to go in and get that information. She really doesn't understand what I need, maybe we don't need her. The fifth thing that we do as we sort of look at Immunity to Change as a tool, is we test our assumption. I went out there and actually talked to people who were outside of that comfort zone and found out that it was okay. It's okay if I don't know everything, that I have enough to offer, I have enough insight, I have the opportunity to learn from those people. I've done a little bit of testing, so far so good; I'm going to keep doing it (Liz, Post Program Presentation Transcript, April, 2016).

During our interview, Anthony (Achiever) shared how feedback from peers on his 360 assessment, followed later in the program by the Immunity to Change (Kegan & Lahey, 2009) session helped him gain self-awareness of how his operational mindset of “getting things done” (me thinking) kept him from building valuable relationships with others (we thinking), empowered him to discuss this with his supervisor, and cleared the way to a shift in his leadership mindset. Anthony explained:

I'm committed to getting things done here, but my involvement with my peers on the different committees I'm on and those different types of panels; I just pushed that to the side. When I worked through the exercise, I think I ... At the end, there's all these stages

and you write everything out and at the end I was like, "I think I was more afraid of not getting things done and the repercussions of that from my supervisor." Then we talked about real versus imagined fears. That was an imagined fear (Anthony, Individual Interview Transcript, May 2016).

These statements from Bart, Liz, and Anthony provide insight into how the lived experience of the developmentally designed leadership program led to self-awareness about how mindset impacted leadership capability. As a result, the enhanced self-awareness each gained made object what was once subject; how “me” thinking kept these participants stuck in an operational mindset. Self-awareness gained through the experience of the developmentally designed program enabled an expansion of awareness which empowered each to fill up their capacity. These participants’ explanations provided insight into the expanded mindset from “me” thinking to “we” thinking and how these program participants came to know leadership with a relationally, interconnected, collective, adaptive focus.

Research Question 2: What are the Conditions Under Which Program Participants and The AR Team are Able to Engage Adaptive Leadership Development?

This study took place because the senior leaders at Southern University needed help shifting high potential leaders from the operational focus at the midlevel to the adaptive focus required at the next level of leadership in the system. The conditions within the cohort created a holding environment which led to shifts in leadership mindset while the conditions on the AR team did not.

To answer this research question, I listened to recorded AR meetings, analyzed meeting transcripts, reviewed my reflexive journal entries, and reviewed notes from my observations of

the AR team and the cohort group. Table 16 represents action research team activities undertaken during the study to enact the CDAI methodology.

Table 16

Activities Engaged by the Action Research Team to Enact CDAI

CDAI Dimension	Timeline	Description
Collaborative	July 2015	Expanded the AR team outside of Learning and Organizational Development expertise by adding new members from across the system
		AR team members served roles in the developmental leadership program (3 as mentors, 3 as coaches, 4 as facilitators, 1 as a program participant) and engaged in real time feedback and discussion about the program and participants.
Developmental	September 2015 October 2015	AR team took the GLP and participated in a team feedback session 3 AR team members formed a peer coaching subgroup
	January 2016	AR team developmental discussion based on individual GLP reports
	February 2016	Fox completed Immunity to Change (Kegan and Lahey, 2009) certification
	March 2016	2 AR team members partnered to complete the Immunity to Change Workshop (Kegan and Lahey, 2009) along with program participants
Action	September 2014 to April 2016	Enacted 4 cycles of action research which led to the design, development, delivery, and evaluation of a developmental leadership program
Inquiry	November 2014 to April 2015	Inquired in the system to understand the developmental needs of midlevel (interviews, focus groups, survey)
	December 2015 January 2016	Midpoint survey with program participants Assessment for system awareness of vertical development
	April 2016	After Action Review session with AR team to reflect on the journey

Note. The AR team completed the activities in Table 16 to engage the CDAI methodology throughout the course of the study.

Action research was enacted by undergoing 4 cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting; however, the AR team was not able to fully engage CDAI for self-development. The holding environment mattered. Holding up a mirror between the AR team and the cohort revealed that the conditions that impacted development were quality of facilitation, power dynamics, amount of time, willingness to be vulnerable, engagement in reflection, and system

investment and expectations. My intent was to enact CDAI to facilitate adaptive leadership development for the system's midlevel leaders *and* the AR team. The AR team engaged the system to design and implement a developmental program with conditions that supported shifts in leadership mindset for program participants (see research question one). However, the AR team was not able to enact CDAI for itself or within its own functioning.

Key Learning 1: Readiness for Growth Matters

Both the action research team and the 20 program participants completed the developmentally focused assessment, the GLP (Torbert & Associates, 2004). The assessment results showed that the 20 program participants and the members of the action research team possessed a similar range of action logics.

The 20 program participants. In September 2015, at the beginning of the leadership program, participants completed the Global Leadership Profile (GLP) (Torbert & Associates, 2004). Table 17 shows the group's composite GLP results.

Table 17

Program Participant Action Logics as Measured by the Global Leadership Profile

Action Logic	Number of Program Participants Measured by Action Logic
Transforming	0
Late Redefining	0
Redefining	4
Late Achiever	1
Achiever	7
Early Achiever	2
Expert	0
Diplomat	0
Opportunist	0

The GLP composite scores in Table 17 show that the selection process described in Chapter 3 produced a group of participants in the later conventional and early post conventional² action logics. These results indicate that this study's participants came to the program with the capacity and readiness for adaptive leadership. Although they had this capacity, many worked in environments that did not help them develop or use this capacity. During our post program interview, one participant, Blake, explained how her management position had kept her focused on operational, task focused work without the opportunity for adaptive leadership. Blake explained it this way:

I was in a project-based world, which is fine, just ... you're kind of heads down for six to twelve weeks on some project, and then you move on to something else (Blake, Individual Interview Transcript, May, 2016).

During my interview with Liz, she explained that her midlevel position in the system required a focus on technical rather than adaptive leadership. Liz explained:

I certainly recognize some of the work that I do is very operational. But that's not necessarily my leadership side. It's not necessarily that I, myself, am task focused. The job requires that I be task focused. In order to get it done, I've got to be at my desk doing it right (Liz, Individual Interview Transcript, May 2016).

The program participant groups' GLP results indicate the developmental capacity for adaptive leadership. Yet senior leaders indicated nominees needed help developing these midlevel leaders for adaptive leadership. The system pulled for operational excellence at the

²Opportunist, Diplomat, Expert, and Achiever are known collectively as conventional action logics. Redefining, Transforming, and Alchemist are known collectively as post conventional action logics. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

midlevel, which did not offer midlevel leaders opportunity to demonstrate or fill out their full developmental capacity.

The action research team. The nine members of the AR team and the 20 program participants all completed the Global Leadership Profile (Torbert & Associates, 2004) assessment. An examination of GLP composite scores reveals that, developmentally, the groups were reflections of each other. The AR team and the participant cohort had a similar range and pattern of action logics. Table 18 compares the GLP composite scores of both groups.

Table 18

Study Participant Action Logics as Measured by the Global Leadership Profile

Action Logic	Participant Group	Action Research Team
Transforming	0	0
Late Redefining	0	1
Redefining	4	2
Early Redefining	0	1
Late Achiever	1	0
Achiever	7	3
Early Achiever	2	1
Late Expert	0	1
Expert	0	0
Diplomat	0	0
Opportunist	0	0

While the 20 cohort participants were midlevel leaders, eight members of the AR team held more advanced positions within the system. The two groups, developmentally, started from the same place yet this similarity of action logics with the cohort was a surprise to some members of the AR team. One AR team member (from Learning and Organizational Development) said:

Are you sure you calculated the data accurately? Wow, I find this fascinating...I

expected the midlevel group would be in earlier stages than our team (AR Team Meeting Notes, August, 2016).

Another team member pointed out:

We have to account for the fact that this group represents high potential midlevel leaders.” (Action Research Team Meeting Notes, August 2016).

The surprise expressed at the developmental similarity of action logics between the AR team and the cohort of program participants indicated that some members of the AR team expected to be more developmentally advanced than the midlevel leaders in the program. Both groups, the AR team and the cohort of program participants, began the study with similar action logics yet the cohort of program participants described shifts in their leadership mindset while the AR team did not. Figure 5 represents the range and patterns of action logics for the action research team and the program participants.

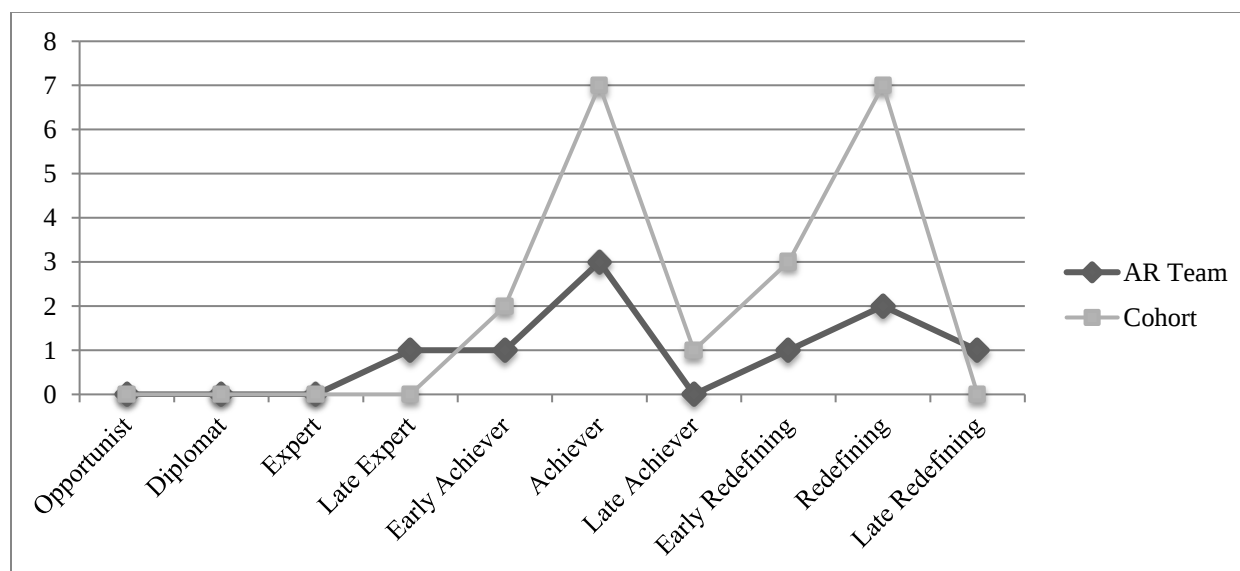


Figure 5. Mirror Images. This figure shows the similar pattern of action logics between the AR team and the cohort of program participants based on GLP composite scores.

Key Learning 2: The Holding Environment Matters

Given that the two groups were developmentally similar (based on GLP results), why were cohort participants able to engage leadership development while the AR team was not able

to do so? Holding up a mirror between the groups allows for examination of the conditions that impacted leadership development within each. Thematic analysis of data gathered from program participants (transcripts of post program presentations, individual interview transcripts) and AR team meeting data including meeting recordings and transcripts, researcher notes and reflection memos, and communications with the team allowed comparison of conditions between the groups that led cohort members to fully engage their leadership development while the AR team struggled to do so. This analysis revealed differences between the cohort group and the AR team in terms of quality of facilitation, power dynamics, amount of time spent together and on development, willingness to be vulnerable, engagement in reflection, as well as investment and expectations from the system. These themes are displayed in Table 19.

Table 19

Conditions that Impacted Leadership Development

Theme	Cohort	AR Team
Quality of Facilitation	The participant group experienced expert facilitation throughout the study in the form of knowledgeable instructors, coaches, and mentors.	The quality of my facilitation of CDAI impacted the group's ability to engage the methodology.
Power Dynamics	All 20 participants were peers in the university system.	Power relationships existed on the AR team: Grace reported to Smith Fox, Jones, and I reported to Grace
Amount of Time	Participants spent approximately 102 hours together throughout the course of the study.	The AR team spent approximately 34 hours together throughout the study.
Willingness to be Vulnerable	Participants demonstrated willingness to be vulnerable throughout the study by sharing assessment results, personal experiences during cohort discussions and peer coaching meetings, and speaking of individual developmental growth during post program presentations.	AR team members did not fully engage developmental activities Only three out of nine team members participated in developmental discussion (AR meeting, January 2016 and After Action Review session, April 2016)
Engagement in Reflection	Participants were required to reflect through journaling assignments and post program reflection presentations	Reflection was suggested yet not required among the team until the after action review session at the end of the study, which took place among the AR team.

Theme	Cohort	AR Team
	which they shared with peers, mentors, and leaders.	
System Investment and Expectation	Participants were expected to engage their mindset for transformation. Participants were required to share a return on the system's investment by presenting key learnings to a group of peers and bosses.	The system expected the team to produce a leadership program. Growing the team's leadership mindset was not a system expectation.

Note. Table 19 displays the differences in the conditions among the cohort group and the AR team that impacted development.

The holding environment mattered. This section compares the conditions (quality of facilitation, power dynamics, amount of time, willingness to be vulnerable, engagement in reflection, and system investment and expectations) within the holding environments of the cohort of program participants and the AR team which impacted leader development.

Quality of facilitation. Quality of facilitation was a key condition in the holding environment for the cohort of program participants and for the AR team.

The cohort. The participant group benefited from skillful facilitation throughout the study in the form of knowledgeable instructors, coaches, mentors, and the professional staff. The following comments came from program participants' post course evaluations of the developmentally designed and facilitated GLP feedback session. One participant wrote:

Very interesting and unique approach. The energy of Aliko was wonderful; the information was complex but approachable. It really allowed me to dig deep and open my lens and mind to other perspectives (Program Participant Post Class Evaluation, GLP Session, September 2015).

Another participant wrote:

[I appreciated the] explanation of the way current logic affects action. I loved [Alikí's] energy, enthusiasm and passion for the topic at hand (Program Participant Post Class Evaluation, GLP Session, September 2015).

Another participant wrote:

I appreciated the in-depth explanation of action logics and overview of how to utilize or think about utilizing. Dr. Nicolaides is a phenomenal teacher; her presentation was very engaging and I liked her candid reactions and stories (Program Participant Post Class Evaluation, GLP Session, September 2015).

Another participant wrote:

The aspect I liked the most was the picture reveal where we saw more advancement of the picture with each action logic. Excellent insight on my leadership style, how learning is a constant evolution; I'm overwhelmed with the rich information provided. In general, the presenter was very engaging and made the topic and discussion very interesting (Program Participant Post Class Evaluation, GLP Session, September 2015).

The following comments came from post course evaluations from the sessions related to managing the business of Southern University.

One participant wrote:

I found it very helpful to have speakers from within Southern University who have insight into Southern University's particular challenges (Program Participant Post Class Evaluation, Leading the Business Session, February 2016).

Another participant wrote:

I appreciated all of the practical examples and the Southern University focused discussion (Program Participant Post Class Evaluation, Leading the Business Session, February 2016).

Another participant wrote:

I appreciate the Southern University case studies to understand what specific challenges have we overcome? What strategic changes need to be made? (Program Participant Post Class Evaluation, Leading the Business Session, February 2016).

The following came from participant's post program evaluations on the Leading Others sessions.

One participant wrote:

I appreciate all of the great table discussions with my peers (Program Participant Post Class Evaluation, Leading the Others Session, December 2015).

Another participant wrote:

[I enjoyed] thinking about my [professional] network and thinking strategically about how to build it (Program Participant Post Class Evaluation, Leading the Others Session, December 2015).

Another participant wrote:

Thinking about how to expand and diversity my network (Program Participant Post Class Evaluation, Leading the Others Session, December 2015).

Another participant wrote:

[I appreciated] having a safe place to talk about my biases (Program Participant Post Class Evaluation, Leading the Others Session, December 2015).

Another participant wrote:

[I learned] about coaching my team on how to resolve issues rather than glossing them over. I'm not helping my team by doing that (Program Participant Post Class Evaluation, Leading the Others Session, December 2015).

Every participant post program presentation included multiple comments of appreciation for the facilitators, methods of presentation, activities, interactions with the cohort, and the content. The data presented here is a sample selected from all of the course evaluations collected and illustrates the depth with which expert facilitation impacted program participants' learning engagement and development.

The AR team. In contrast, the AR team was committed to designing the leadership program and developing participants, yet needed intentional management to engage CDAI for our own development. A review of AR team meeting transcripts revealed that, although I mentioned individual development to the group during every AR meeting, it was not until the December 2015 meeting - over a year into our work together— that I set out an intention to hold the group accountable for engaging our own leadership development. During the December 2015 meeting, after we spent most of the meeting discussing the program and participants, I turned the conversation to the team's efforts toward individual development by asking members to discuss how they had used the suggestions from the GLP report for individual development:

As we know, a main focus of our work together is to focus on our individual leadership development while we work to develop program participants. I am interested in discussing what each of us are working on in our own professional development and how, if at all, we are engaging the suggestions from our GLP reports (Debbie, AR Team Meeting Notes, December 2015).

The AR team:

Silence (AR Team, AR Team Meeting Notes, December 2015).

I filled the space:

I will share with you what I am working on. I tend to be more introverted and have always had trouble breaking the ice to build strategic relationships with my stakeholders. I've realized that I need to overcome this tendency because it keeps me stuck. I have been journaling my reflections throughout this study and find it helpful. Also working with my peer group with [Chakra] and [Flowers] has been helpful. Who will share what you are working on and what developmental activities you are engaging? (Debbie, AR Team Meeting Notes, December 2015).

The AR team:

Silence (AR Team, AR Team Meeting Notes, December 2015).

After a pause, Sparks said:

I know that I go into that operational thinking too much. I have been working on making time for more strategic planning but I have not had a chance to really use my GLP report yet (Sparks, AR Team Meeting Notes, December 2015).

At the close of the meeting, I asked the group to come to the January 2016 meeting with their GLP reports prepared to engage in a developmental discussion (Debbie, AR Team Meeting Notes, December 2015).

In advance of the January 2016 meeting, I sent the team the following email communication as a reminder to come prepared to engage in developmental discussion:

Hi Everyone,

I'm looking forward to our meeting this week. Here's the agenda as it stands right now:

- Global Leadership Profile – review and discuss how to use the report for your individual development goals (Please bring your GLP report)
- Discuss implications of vertical development in our culture at Southern University

An audit to see where we are in our culture with Vertical Development: (Please review – before our meeting. I will ask all to complete and return to me after our meeting this week.):

<http://www.ccl.org/leadership/pdf/landing/vertical-leadership-development-audit.pdf>

· Review Emerging Leaders midpoint participant survey results

Here's a little reading to help us stay focused on vertical development. Please review:

A reminder about why we care about Vertical Leadership Development:

<https://www.i-l-m.com/Insight/Inspire/2013/July/vertical-development>

The Top 5 Vertical Leadership Development Programs

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/top-5-vertical-leadership-development-programs-susanna-carman?forceNoSplash=true>

Immunity to Change Article

<https://hbr.org/2001/11/the-real-reason-people-wont-change>

Let me know if you have any questions!

Thanks,

Debbie

The style of my language in the December 2015 AR team meeting (as noted), and the suggesting tone of the January 2016 email demonstrate that I did not directly address the AR team's lack of engagement in CDAI. This is an illustration of how my developmental capacity, which at the time was influenced by the impending loss of my job at SU (see chapter 4), impacted the quality of my facilitation of the AR team.

I eventually facilitated a developmental discussion during the January 2016 AR team meeting, as presented in the vulnerability section. As the meeting ended, I was encouraged and discouraged; encouraged that the team finally held space to discuss our own leadership development, discouraged that more of the team did not participate. I felt frustration with my inability as facilitator to fully engage the team's leadership development. As a result, I made the following journal entry:

After the last meeting [December 2015], I was worried about asking everyone to talk about their individual development goals because when I explained the concept and used myself as an example, I gave others the opportunity to share examples of their individual development goals. No one volunteered to share. I thought maybe giving them time to reflect and come to this meeting with their GLP report would provide space for all to become comfortable with sharing in the group setting. I appreciated [Fox's] input and [Sparks] examples. I also worried that Fox's comment about how one's developmental stage could impact their understanding of vertical development and how to use the report might offend some members of the team. I am disappointed that only two of the AR members openly discussed their development (Debbie, Reflection Journal Entry, January 2016).

The cohort of program participants benefited from the skillful facilitation provided by instructors, coaches, and mentors throughout the study. Meanwhile, my facilitation of CDAI limited the AR team's ability to fully engage the methodology.

Power dynamics. Power dynamics were a key condition in the holding environment for the cohort and for the AR team.

The cohort. The 20 participants who made up the cohort held midlevel roles throughout the system (Supervisor, Manager, Assistant Director, and Director). No direct reporting relationships existed among the cohort members. All 20 participants were considered peers at SU. Likewise, although each participant was assigned a mentor, care was taken to ensure mentors did not work in the same department as the mentee. These neutral power dynamics created conditions for mutuality (Torbert & Associates, 2004) in the cohort and enabled participants to build relationships with each other, create an environment of trust, and engage in

developmental discussion. This mutuality was evident throughout the study in my observations of cohort discussions. As the study progressed, participants began to work out seating arrangements based on peer coaching assignments. During post program presentations, participants shared stories of key learnings from the relationships built among the cohort throughout the study (see Research Question 1). Finally, at the cohort graduation which took place at the end of the program in April 2016, participants were asked to share key takeaways. A review of my notes from the event reveals that every participant mentioned the value of relationships built during the course of the program.

The AR team. Smith and Grace's positional authority provided the power to approve or deny program components and the AR team's activities. Since the system contracted with me to address the development of SU's midlevel leaders through action research, I had influence, but not positional power. As a novice, I struggled with role duality as researcher, scholar-practitioner, and subordinate to Grace and Smith. In an effort to further engage the organization and neutralize power dynamics on the team, I recommended that we expand the team to include members from outside the Learning and Development organization with each team member interacting with program participants through facilitation, coaching, and mentoring, and providing real time feedback and discussion between the groups. In June 2015, during the final AR meeting with the original team, Grace and I reflected on the experience of CDAI thus far and next steps with the expanded team. This conversation is evidence of my struggle with role duality and Grace's concerns about how CDAI was threatening the timeline for completing program design.

In reference to my role with the expanded team, I began:

I'm a little nervous about [expanding the team] because it's a different role that I play when I'm leading this research group. So in this group, I have a certain role that I play in our regular team. But when I'm leading the research group, I don't really know exactly what that will be or how that will play out. But when we bring in people from other areas [the new AR team members]...I wonder how that might change and what that might look like. But I know that, moving forward, we will all need to be equals (Debbie, Action Research Team Meeting Transcript, June, 2015).

Grace responded:

I think to me, one of the big differences has been, these sessions [AR team meetings] are typically less working sessions and they are more thinking about it sessions....than the other ones [past program development], when we would come together, it was working sessions. They were actually ... they didn't seem to take this long (Grace, Action Research Team Meeting Transcript, June 2015).

I continued:

Yeah. Well this has definitely been ... [CDAI] takes time. It takes a lot of time (Debbie, Action Research Team Meeting Transcript, June 2015).

Grace went on to explain how program development in the past had involved fewer people and followed a straight forward process:

It was really me and a couple of other people. It was really very few people saying 'here are the objectives'... we met every other week or weekly. We said 'here are the objectives, the competencies, here are the goals of each session', and once we had them by the sessions we walked through all the stuff. And then we went out finding the right

people. But it wasn't this big of a group that had to get together and discuss it (Grace, Action Research Team Meeting Transcript, June 2015).

Grace explained how using the AR team and CDAI methodology was different:

Well I would say one of the things that is very different...about this is the whole having an additional AR team ...I think it is going to be a richer program by having gone through a lot of the research and doing some of the steps that you brought into this. I think it has the potential to be richer program than it would have been. I think it will be. The only other thing ... in all honesty, the only downside is to me, it's gotten more frustrating because of the length of time that it's taken (Grace, Action Research Team Meeting Transcript, June 2015).

I explained the purpose for separating the project work from the AR team:

I think that's a fair point because I feel it too. And one of the things I think, I'm hoping if we are talking about next steps. What I'm hoping with separating the AR team from the project team is that now it won't be an expectation when we meet with the extended AR team that they're going to help us with logistics...So ... having the opportunity in real time to hear their reflections...That's really the way I see the AR team moving forward...My vision [in] expanding this AR team is not in any way to hold us back from making progress on decisions. But just to get reactions and learn from them in real time as we kind of move through it. And then if a couple of them are mentors and they come to the AR team meeting and they say "you know what, this is working, but this isn't working" then we know, and we can talk about it as a group and maybe tweak it (Debbie, Action Research Team Meeting Transcript, June 2015).

Grace:

Well, and we've got to roll this out in two months and we don't have anything put together, so that's my level of frustration right now. We've got to put it together, we know the things we're bringing we just don't have it. So ...(Grace, Action Research Team Meeting Transcript, June 2015).

I stated:

The invites are on the calendar for the AR team to get together. So those are two dates in July and one date in August so far. But those dates don't have anything to do with what we need to do to get the [program] logistics moving. So be free to do that (Debbie, Action Research Team Meeting Transcript, June 2015).

These excerpts from the June 2015 AR team meeting show the tension between my role as researcher and CDAI facilitator and Grace's responsibility to the system to produce the leadership program. As the department leader, Grace was used to leading with positional authority in the design of SU's leadership programs. This illustration also shows the tension between reflection and Grace's preference for action even as she could acknowledge the benefit of the collaborative developmental approach.

Amount of time. Time was a key condition that impacted the holding environment for both the cohort and the AR team. As noted in the power dynamics section, the time it took to engage program development through CDAI methodology was a concern that created pressures for the team. In this section, I compared the amount of time the cohort and AR team each spent engaging leadership development to learn how time impacted development.

The cohort. Over the course of the study, the cohort came together for 12 days of instruction, and a minimum of 6 hours each for peer coaching and mentoring, which totaled

approximately 102 hours of time spent together. I observed evidence of the relationships built during the course of the program as participants spent time together.

Time spent together led to relationships among the participant group. During his post program reflection presentation, Wilson explained:

I love my [peer coaching] group, I truly, truly loved [it] and that's why I am the driving force in making sure that we stay bonded together. I will make sure that happens at the end of every meeting. Everyone has to pull out their calendars to make sure that we were ready for our next meeting (Wilson, Post Program Presentation Transcript, April 2016).

During her post program reflection presentation, Faith described the trusting relationship she felt with her peer coaching group:

My peer group has just also been a phenomenal group of very smart people who've really helped me to think through a lot of things... that sacred time of just being able to share and you're open and not have to worry about, you know, whether or not it's going to get repeated or whether or not somebody's going to start looking at me weird or responding to me oddly because I'm sharing something. I think it's just been really comforting and great (Faith, Post Program Presentation Transcript, April 2016).

During his post program reflection presentation, Charles added:

Of course, the most impactful takeaway....You know, [my department] is siloed, so we really don't get to meet too many folks outside ... One of the great things I like about this program is the breakout sessions. We spent a lot of time individually and in a group, and you all have taught me a lot, taking different new approaches, new insights and perspective on things, and I still learn a lot from you all (Charles, Post Program Presentation Transcript, April 2016).

The quotes from these participants reveal how time spent together in peer coaching groups and cohort activities led to relationships that supported leadership development among the program participants.

The AR team. The AR team met bi-weekly during Cycles 1 and 2 for an hour each meeting. During Cycles 3 and 4 the team met monthly. Additionally, the peer coaching group, which was a sub group of the AR team and did not include all members, met 4 times for an approximate total of 6 hours. In sum, the AR team spent approximately 34 hours together. Analysis of meeting agendas and AR team meeting transcripts showed that the majority of the time the AR team spent together was focused on discussion about the participant group and logistics for upcoming sessions rather than on developmental conversation for the AR team.

As mentioned previously in the power dynamics section, the team felt time pressure throughout the study. During the team's After Action Review session, Jones expressed tensions with using CDAI in a system with practical time and budget constraints:

I liked and then I didn't like, that [CDAI] was a little different from ...what we've done in the past. Typically, we design a program, we pick the content, and then we roll with it. We have little mini check-ins with maybe the facilitators or the program manager, and we do little tweaks at the end. What I do like is that we had this group [Action Research Team], and we were able to hear from your perspective as we went along in the program...It does help give us a different perspective...to actually go through this group and to hear things along the way was really good...That's a really good opportunity, and it would be nice if we could do this in the future, but nobody has time. It's a different way of designing a program which I thought was good (Jones, Action Research Team After Action Review Meeting Transcript, April 2016).

Time was a condition which impacted both program participants and the AR team. The time program participants were required to spend attending courses, engaging in group discussions, meeting with peers and mentors, resulted in a holding environment fertile for developmental growth. The limited time the AR team spent together along with system pressures to deliver a leadership program left the team unable to fully engage CDAI.

Willingness to be vulnerable. Holding up a mirror between the program participants and the AR team revealed vulnerability as a condition that impacted leadership development. Cohort participants displayed vulnerability throughout the program while AR team members shared limited vulnerability throughout the study.

The cohort. Participants displayed willingness to be vulnerable as it related to sharing the results of individual assessments, sharing personal stories among the group during cohort discussions and peer coaching meetings, and speaking of individual developmental growth during post program presentations. During our post program interview, I asked Liz (Early Achiever) about her willingness to be vulnerable with peers during the program and during the post program presentation in front of an audience of her peers and leaders. Liz explained:

I think that it made it okay to admit one's insecurities. To me, that's what it was all about. It was not being afraid to confront what you find difficult, and had guidelines about how to go about doing that. Yeah, you know, interesting, when I thought of the presentation, I didn't think of them [my peers]. I thought about the people I didn't know, because they'd [my peers] spent 9 months with me. So I actually didn't prepare this for them, I prepared it for the people who didn't know us. It just felt like it was safe. Not because of the people, but just because I wasn't really exposing myself. It didn't feel terribly vulnerable

to say that if I don't demonstrate expertise at all times, I'll be taken advantage of. I think we all feel that way (Liz, Individual Interview Transcript, May 2016).

Liz felt comfortable expressing vulnerability as it related to engaging her leadership development because she had spent 9 months focused on doing just that, because she had built relationships with the cohort members who were all focused on growing their own leadership, and because that was what was expected of her from the system.

The AR team. A review of AR team meeting transcripts revealed that it took time for the AR team to express vulnerability, and the vulnerability expressed was limited in comparison to that of the participant group. Every AR meeting included full participation from the team during discussions about the program and participants. Analysis of AR team meeting recordings and researcher notes shows members of the team did not fully engage developmental activities. Smith did not return to the team after the GLP feedback session in September 2015. Given the opportunity, members of the team resisted participation in peer coaching (AR Team Meeting Transcript, October 2015). Members resisted the vulnerability called for by CDAI by remaining silent during developmental discussion (AR Team Meeting Notes and Transcripts, December 2015, January 2016). Additionally, given the opportunity, members resisted participation in the Immunity to Change session (March 2016). Only three members of the nine member action research team engaged in developmental discussion during the January 2016 AR team meeting.

Program participants were working on growing leadership mindset through the instructional, relational, and reflective assignments designed into the program with an intentional focus on stage development. Meanwhile, it was not until deep in Cycle 3 that some of the AR team engaged in a group developmental discussion (AR Team Meeting Notes, January 2016). To model vulnerability called for in developmental discussion, I began:

So, I'll share with everyone what I'm working on in my professional development, then you all can share if you'd like...I'm in Early Redefining...one of the things I really identified with in that stage of development, I have a tendency to go rogue. I like to push boundaries. I feel better when I'm questioning the status quo. And I do it without even thinking about it. I don't do it to stir up issues. It's just how my brain works and I never recognized that about myself. Then when I got my feedback about that on this report I realized I need to work on channeling that in a meaningful way and not constantly on the shadow side where I'm pushing boundaries just to push boundaries, but doing it in a meaningful way and to know when to let go when to lean in (Debbie, Action Research Team Meeting Transcript, January 2016).

Fox and Jones both said they had recognized this behavior in me and we talked about how that behavior might show up on the Birkman (Birkman & Capparell, 2014) personality assessment, an assessment with which both Fox and Jones were experts. Next, Sparks shared:

So...one of the key takeaways for me would be stepping out from the process, because I'm very deliverable based. I'm all about, "gotta get it done, gotta be on time." It's all driving off of the next thing. So in my position, I need to be less operational, less tactical, more strategic. So, I've just been focusing on that so I've been asking what can I have in my mind that will make me think of better ways to do things and to really question things (Sparks, Action Research Team Meeting Transcript, January 2016).

Fox shared:

I just had a thought in relation to this discussion. Just in general, for many years I have been very task and deadline driven. That's the nature of my work and it still is very deadline driven. Lately I've been trying to use a metaphor as a new way to think about

my work as a constant flow. It's never going to change so I'm trying to redefine how I see my work instead of a race to the finish line but as a constant flow. Just using that metaphor really does help change your mindset about how you think of your work as a constant flow. Sometimes it's flowing faster and that's ok. I'm not drowning in the river! I'm floating along on top of it. That's how I'm trying to think about it now (Fox, Action Research Team Meeting Transcript, January 2016).

After Fox shared, I asked if the remaining attendees would like to share. All declined.

At the conclusion of our work together, Grace and I reflected on this study. Grace recognized her reluctance to the vulnerability in exposing the messy work required of program design to the expanded AR team:

I'm not too keen on the ... "We don't know what this is going to look like." New team, new cohort... It [the program] needs to, in my brain, to look polished and ready, but it didn't. I don't think they [the AR team] realized ... Well, they did some because you kept pointing it out to them (Grace, Conversation with Grace Transcript, August 2016).

I responded:

I think ... Well, in my opinion, it did look polished and ready, but you knew what was going on behind the scenes and it was different and messier than what you had been used to, and so for you, you felt like it was not polished enough (Debbie, Conversation with Grace Transcript, August 2016)."

Grace added:

That's helped me, actually... just to be open to thinking differently about how to get something accomplished. I'm emerging.

I agreed:

We are emerging!

The AR team collaborated to ensure an effective developmental leadership experience for our clients, the cohort of program participants. Given the opportunity, AR team members resisted the vulnerability called for by CDAI by not fully engaging developmental activities.

Engagement in reflection. Engagement in reflection was a key condition in the holding environment for the cohort and the AR team.

The cohort. During the program kick-off event, participants were told that reflection was necessary in order for development to take place. Each participant was provided with a reflection journal, reflective assignments after each instructional session, and finally required to present a reflection of key learnings at the end of the program to an audience of their peers, mentors, and leaders in April 2016.

The AR team. In contrast, the AR team spent meeting time discussing the program, what was working, what was not, and reflecting on the experience of program participants rather than on individual leadership development. The AR team came together in Cycle 4 (April 2016) to reflect on individual, team, and system learning, yet this after action review session was private among team members and did not include leaders or others in the system. A review of the After Action Review Transcript (April 2016) shows the action research team members from outside of the Learning and Organizational Development department each shared their key learnings with respect to the GLP. Grace said:

It [my GLP] did not impact me, but I'll be honest, that's probably more on me because I didn't spend a lot of time with the GLP. We had so many other things going on that I just didn't-I didn't give it the due that it was due (Grace, After Action Review Session Transcript, April 2016).

Below is Jones response when asked to share individual learning:

For me, it [the GLP] was a missed opportunity in the beginning. I was excited about it because it [the GLP] was a new assessment that I had never heard of, but I think what got me off track was early on in debrief. The way it was debriefed with the participants it didn't give me ... I didn't have a full understanding of it. Then we tried it again, and it was like, okay I still don't know what this is about. By the third time, meeting other people, you and Fox, I got it, but at that point I was over it ... I was. I was over it because at that point it was like, this is taking too long to understand, and I have other stuff to worry about, to do. Work life started to happen. For me, it was a missed opportunity because I didn't get it up front. If it takes three times for me to now understand how to apply this I'm over it, which is unfortunate because I think there is value in it, and at some point I did see the value in it, but at that point I had already moved on past it.

Below is Fox's response when asked to share individual learning:

Well, I wanted to ask a question before you go somewhere else if you don't mind. It sounds like a lot of the things that were cited as impactful had more to do with vertical development than horizontal development I would say. I wanted to know if you agreed with that, and if so, what things did you see, because I wasn't there like you were, in the presentations that suggested, perhaps vertical development had taken place? ...and what about the second part of that question? Did you see just anecdotally from the things they were saying in their presentations certain behaviors or phrases, you think, that suggested that vertical development had taken place?

These comments from Grace, Jones, and Fox are presented to illustrate the Action Research Team members with Learning and Organizational Development expertise resistance to engaging

in reflection by either not using the GLP for individual development (Grace), by not opening up to an assessment for which they were not an expert (Jones), or by redirecting the self-reflection question back to a discussion about the cohort of program participants.

System investment and expectation. The holding environment for the cohort and for the AR team were impacted by system's investment and expectations.

The cohort. The system made a significant financial investment per participant for the developmental leadership program. Participants were made aware of this investment during the program kickoff event in August 2015, which set up accountability at the system level.

Participants were nominated by the leaders to whom each reported, which set up accountability at the department level. Attendance at every session was a required commitment. Last, each was required to share a return on the investment by presenting key learnings to a group of peers and leaders at the end of the program in April 2016.

The AR team. In contrast, producing a viable leadership program for midlevel leaders was a system expectation for Grace's role and for the AR team as a whole. The team agreed to work on growing individual leadership mindset for this study; therefore, the accountability for developing leadership mindset was within the AR team but was not a system expectation for the team collectively or for individual members of the team personally.

Quality facilitation, neutral power dynamics, adequate time, participants' willingness to be vulnerable, and system investment and expectations generated a holding environment for the program participants that led to shifts in leadership mindset. The absence of these qualities within the AR team generated an environment that did not support development within the AR team. The holding environment mattered.

Research Question 3: What Happens when CDAI is Used as a Methodology for Designing and Implementing a Leadership Program?

Shortly after the end of the program, the action research team came together for an after action review session to share and discuss key learnings. In response to Research Question 3, data was analyzed to gain learning from individual (1st person, subjective), team (2nd person, inter-subjective), and system (3rd person, objective) experiences.

Key Learning: (Individual - 1st person, Subjective) On the Action Research Team, Individuals Recognized Room for Growth, Yet Resisted Growing Together

The conditions that led to participants' development were not reflected within the action research team (see Research Question 2, Key Learning 2). While the developmentally informed leadership program provided a safe environment for participants to express the vulnerability required for leadership growth, the absence of these conditions within the action research team impacted individual members' ability to participate in CDAI for individual development. Team members resisted the methodology by not participating in developmental activities, by not identifying individual development needs, and by not participating in developmental discussions.

Although the AR team did not report shifts in their leadership mindset, making individuals on the team aware of their developmental stage validated their sense of self and eventually (upon reflection during the after action review session) indicated motivation for growth. During the after action review session, when asked to reflect and share what each had learned individually, members of the AR team explained how awareness of their individual action logic impacted their development. In response, Grace explained that, although she did not engage the GLP for her own individual development, focusing on vertical development for program participants impacted her individual development:

I was just going to say the whole focus around a couple things, for me, was doing a program that was different. I think we knew we were going to start out and do some things that were different, but really focusing on the vertical development was vertically developing for me...I still do say, we've done things that were vertical development [in the past]. Our programs have vertical development pieces, but we've never necessarily consciously said, "How do we really focus on making that vertical?" The other piece, I think for me personally, was this was a very different dynamic and group demographics and all kinds of things than I'm used to dealing with in [the executive program]. This was a very different group and much younger. All of a sudden, I felt really old as one of the three people from the boomer generation in the group ... I used to, I always got, "Oh, I'm so much younger than everybody else." Now all of a sudden, I'm older than everybody else, so it's just kind of ... Just to look at and open my brain up to ... This is how it works, and this is how it's been done. Then there's lot of other ways to do things. That was a big learning for me [Grace, After Action Review Transcript, April 2016].

Sparks shared how awareness of her center of gravity validated her sense of self:

I would say [the GLP] added support to what I kind of already knew, that I tend to drop back down into operational too much. I'm still in that Achiever [action logic]...instead of moving up to the whole more strategic/visionary, next 2 [stages], I think it was more confirming something I knew (Sparks, Action Research Team After Action Review, April 2016).

Chakra and Blake liked knowing their development is not static but, rather, there is room to grow. Chakra explained:

I loved this vertical stuff, too. I thought the GLP ... I've taken a million assessments over the years, as a counselor. I've taken classes, assessments. While I like the Birkman, and I refer to it, the GLP was much more ... I don't know if it's easier for me to see, but I like being like 'I'm here and I'm going to go somewhere.' Versus the Birkman is like 'well this is just who you are. Here's who you are in distress, and there isn't anywhere to go. It's just this is who you are.' Especially for leadership and thinking about, oh, where's my team, and where would they be, and how do I talk to them, and are they ready for this?

That just got me thinking (Chakra, After Action Review Transcript, April 2016).

Fox felt the GLP validated his self-perception and the accompanying report made a complex concept more tangible:

To me, it was kind of reconfirming. I kind of suspected that was where I was, so it helped me see, okay I got a pretty accurate perception of myself. It also confirms definite room for growth, so that was good to see all that. Just stepping back from the assessment and knowledge of the stage, just having the assessment and the concepts of vertical and horizontal development, I just really like that. I think it adds a level of depth that is unique to a lot of programs out there. Having that assessment enhance that sense of depth, it's a lot with everything else already in the program, so I get that too. I just really think it helps further clarify, or make what is kind of fuzzy out there a little more tangible because vertical development is very hard to wrap your arms around, and it gives you something to hold on to (Fox, Action Research Team After Action Review Transcript, April 2016).

Sparks shared how the concept of action logics allowed her to mentally assess her team:

I liked having the ... We have our 360s, and we have our Birkman, which is still kind of horizontal; it's how you work in a team. I did like having the vertical assessment and almost just having that range of where you are as you progress, to use with my team for succession planning and sort of thinking about where they are and how to bring them up to the next ... to sort of just having that information, having those tiers of vertical development to see where they are (Sparks, After Action Review Transcript, April 2016).

Designing, developing, and delivering a system wide developmentally informed leadership program was a complex undertaking. Meeting the system's time and budget expectations, selecting the right program components, choreographing program logistics, all while fulfilling the expectations of senior leaders and program participants was daunting and resulted in stress for Grace and for me. As we reflected on the experience, Grace and I recognized that there were stressful times during the study we each resorted to prior (fall back) action logics (Torbert & Associates, 2004). Our awareness of fallback behaviors under stress allowed Grace and me to more fully understand our individual development and how developmental leadership worked. At the close of our work together, Grace and I reflected on our experience with the developmentally informed action research process (CDAI).

Grace began:

The thing I think this program has done for me, and the experience of this [CDAI], is pushing me to be open to new and different ideas (Grace, Conversation with Grace Transcript, August 2016).

I acknowledged:

Oh, well, that's good (Debbie, Conversation with Grace Transcript, August 2016).

Grace made reference to the way program development was approached at SU prior to our experience with this study and the impact of CDAI:

It is good, because it's really easy to take one or two people, and we think we know what we're doing, and we've talked to everybody so we know what they need and we can define what they need ...but involving more ... which I know, the more people you involve, the better. Having the folks [AR team] to talk to, having the [research] to look at, but also being pushed to consider doing it [program design] a different way (Grace, Conversation with Grace Transcript, August 2016).

Grace and I continued by reflecting on our experience with fall back action logics (Torbert & Associates, 2004). Grace spoke about her concerns with expanding the AR team to include individuals from outside of our Learning and Organizational Development team and her reservations about their seeing the mess of program development. She said:

Which I don't ... It's not that I'm not open, it's just that there's things that I don't ... Maybe that's part of the stress thing is going back to the Experts [action logic] thing, and it's true, we got to get this thing [the program] going, we got to get it out. ..not that I minded, but ...I'm not too keen on ... “We don't know what this [program] is going to look like. With a new [expanded AR team], new cohort, it needs to, in my brain, to look polished and ready, but it didn't...(Grace, Conversation with Grace Transcript, August, 2016).

I added:

... I can see that now. When you were in your stress mode, trying to get this program done, and you're in your Expert mindset, which serves you well in that space, that's what you've got to be. Then I'm going back to my Diplomat, which makes me bring in more

research, because I'm thinking that you're not approving the suggestion that I'm making (Debbie, Conversation with Grace Transcript, August 2016).

Grace shared her thoughts about how my fall back to Diplomat collided with her Expert mindset to get the program implemented:

Yeah! “Let me double down and keep showing and showing and showing, so that we're all okay with it, but really what we ... We're already on the same page, let's just make it happen (Grace, Conversation with Grace Transcript, August 2016).

Grace and I laughed then Grace added:

That's helped me, actually...just to be open to thinking differently about how to get something accomplished. I'm emerging (Grace, Conversation with Grace Transcript, August 2016).

I agreed:

We are emerging! (Debbie, Conversation with Grace Transcript, August 2016).

In addition to individual learning, the AR team’s experience of CDAI led to key team learning.

Key Team Learning: Developmental Activities Generated Emotional Responses, which Needed Facilitation and Management

Of the various courses delivered as part of the developmental leadership program, the Global Leadership Development (GLP) Feedback, Diversity, Emotional Intelligence, and Immunity to Change sessions in particular generated emotional responses that needed facilitation and management. Participants’ anonymous feedback on post class evaluations provide insight into the emotional triggers they experienced. After the GLP feedback session, one participant wrote:

It is not necessary to describe a person's ethnicity when telling a story that has nothing to do with that (i.e. My airport driver, who is African American)...can be considered condescending and offensive to state things as facts ... when speaking to a group of people from diverse backgrounds, ideologies, etc. it was very strained and made me incredibly uncomfortable (Post Course Evaluation, September 2015).

This comment shows how a story the facilitator used to illustrate diverse perspectives generated discomfort for the attendee.

After the Diversity session, one participant wrote:

Generational diversity is a significant issue, so this is very helpful. The tie in with previous sessions was very good, though took away from time discussing diversity. I was taken aback by the instructor's desire NOT to speak of diversity sensitive comments with the exception of "pale, male, stale" which I understand it was a cute statement, it offended me to be singled out (Post Course Evaluation, September 2015).

This comment shows how the participant experienced an emotional response to the facilitator's use of the phrase "pale, male, stale" in a story she used to illustrate diverse perspectives.

During the Emotional Intelligence session, the facilitator shared a story during which she recognized an emotional trigger that resulted in her poor treatment of a restaurant employee.

During our post program interview, Wilson recalled his offense to the story:

Everyone remembered the way [the facilitator] treated the person at McDonald's. And for her son to point it out! ...there are so many class issues there. When she talked to the McDonald's worker that way, I was like, "You don't know their story. You don't know what they've been through. You don't know how many forms of transportation they had to use to get here to serve you that food. You don't know what's going on in the back of

the house. You have just placed a lot of judgment on a person and you don't even know what they've been through (Wilson, Individual Interview Transcript, May 2016).

The comments presented here illustrate that training or discussing sensitive topics triggers emotional reactions and brings up upsets for people, even though these facilitators were merely relaying stories to illustrate their content.

At the beginning of the Immunity to Change (Kegan and Lahey, 2009) session, one participant approached Fox (the facilitator) and asked if the whole session was going to be about self-reflection. Upon Fox's validation of the day's agenda, the participant gathered his belongings and left the session. During the after action review session, the AR team discussed: Blake:

There was a negative reaction in our group to it [Immunity to Change], right? I think if I had to guess, the person may have had a little fatigue of like reviewing themselves, right, because we did all that at the beginning (Blake, Action Research Team After Action Review, April 2016).

I responded:

Then that makes me want to know what could we do as a leadership group to help support something like that so that it doesn't happen? To support, you know when we're asking people to be vulnerable in a session like that, like cognitive therapy. We're asking them to talk about some really personal things. What could we do to support that? (Debbie, After Action Review, April 2016).

Grace said:

A lot of that's on the participant, but for us as a- You don't know what's going to be a trigger and when, right? One of things I know we [will change is to] say, "We're really

talking about this coaching and the emotional intelligence, and there's a reason we're putting this first because there's likely to be some triggers. There's likely to be some times when you feel vulnerable. There's likely to be some things that are going to disturb you, and that's part of leading and growing." Even as sort of setting it up to say you may feel really uncomfortable talking about some of the topics, and that's actually part of what we're doing here is to feel uncomfortable here so that you can grow (Grace, After Action Review Session, April 2016).

Blake added:

I wonder if that's a place for the mentor/mentee relationship. I know my mentor was really open about the things that they struggled with, and it made me feel like I wasn't alone. Then to think that somebody at this level is having these issues. Even like being in this [AR team] and hearing you all talk about it as well, was reassuring to me (Blake, After Action Review Transcript, April 2016).

This section shows that a key learning for the AR team was that developmentally informed program components designed to expose participants to diverse perspectives triggered emotional responses which called for skillful facilitation and management. The team learned the importance of making participants aware of the potential for emotional triggers and preparing the facilitators to manage when they occur.

Key System Learning: Among the AR Team, Relationships Built through Mentoring, Peer Coaching, and AR Team Participation Increased Leaders' Sense of Self and Their Engagement in the System

In the end, expanding the team to include system leaders outside of the expertise of Learning and Organizational Development provided a rich experience for the team and led to an

effective developmental leadership program. In April 2016 the AR team came together for an after action review session. I began by sharing insights about my developmental experience with CDAI:

I learned a lot about myself as a leader. I learned when things are going the way I want them to go, I feel really great about it, at the top of my game. Then, when things are not going the way that I wanted them to go, I kind of want to pack up my toys and go home. I got to thinking about it from my GLP results. You know, what did that say about me as a leader?... Anyway, this gave me an opportunity to see myself in a new way as a leader, so I definitely have grown. Some of it has been painful because there's a lot of work that went into it. Some things in the program were going great, some things didn't go so well. I don't know, just the whole experience has been a growth for me as a leader (Debbie, After Action Review Transcript, April 2016).

I continued by sharing about my experience working with the AR team:

I've been in LOD [Learning and Organizational Development] for a lot of years, and I've worked with these guys [Grace, Jones, Fox] for a long time, but I haven't had an opportunity to work with people outside of our profession to design a program and to talk about these concepts in an ongoing and really collaborative way. Some of the insights that I've gotten from you guys talking about the mentoring program, talking about your experience with the different assessments, talking about how you used the assessment to go back and work with your team ... I feel like it's broadened my perspective of how we design programs (Debbie, Action Research Team After Action Review, April 2016).

Sparks:

Yeah, it was more organic....that instead of feeling like it's a static thing...it did feel like we were part of something changing and shaping something instead of it just being a static program, and that hopefully it will help (Sparks, After Action Review Transcript, April (2016).

Fox:

Yeah, that's the action research right there. That's the whole idea (Fox, After Action Review Transcript, April 2016).

Grace:

I do think it's helpful to have a group like this...just having folks that aren't usually necessarily here to question, to say, "Well yeah, you do it that way, but is that the right way to do it? Or is there a different way to do it? Or that works for one group, but does it work for *this* group?" (Grace, After Action Review Transcript, April 2016).

Fox:

Yeah. I just found it incredibly valuable, all the outside perspectives from them. I think it's just so helpful. It really helped make the program better (Fox, After Action Review Transcript, April 2016).

Grace:

It's easy to kind of get into here's how we, as LOD [Learning and Organizational Development], think (Grace, After Action Review Transcript, April 2016).

Fox:

Mm-hmm (affirmative), right. (Fox, After Action Review Transcript, April 2016).

Flowers:

I would say that you guys have been really open to feedback. I know I just asked 18 peer mentors about our program. I kind of felt like, "oh God, here it comes." Like you were going to come down, but you need to hear. (Flowers, After Action Review Transcript, April 2016).

Grace:

That was a gift [Laughter among the team] (After Action Review Transcript, April 2016).

During the After Action Review session, I spoke about my peer coaching experience during the study with Chakra and Flowers:

I would say for me for the peer coaching, there's been a lot going on with me and my role and this study. Just a lot of things going on, and [peer coaching] really gave me an outlet for people ... You can talk to your family about things, you can talk to your friends, but when you have friends inside your system that understand the dynamics, it really is a different level of support. Being able to talk to Flowers and Chakra, I know we keep saying it's helpful, but a specific example of how it was helpful for me, peer coaching, was I had a situation that I presented to them. I asked them to give me feedback, and I had my GLP report in front of me ...hearing their perspectives on the situation gave me new ways to think about it. That was kind of a turning point for me where moving from that conversation, just hearing ... their perspectives was a turning point and helped me think about that situation in new ways. That was really good (Debbie, Action Research Team Meeting After Action Review Transcript, April 2016).

Flowers explained:

I've never done mentoring at [SU] before. Quite honestly, because I didn't think I had anything to offer, any sort of advice. Again, how much can I teach another person? But

how much I gained from the mentoring relationship-just how it was for me, because our school is so independent, and no one ever leaves the building, and maybe it's that way for others here at the table, but it's just so helpful to always have that constant reminder of the broader [SU] and the many, many, many, many, many, many, many different teams that exist here on this campus. I don't know, I just loved every ... meeting not only learning something about myself and hopefully helping my mentee, but also just being re-energized for my job. I felt the same way after our ... I feel the same way after coming out of one of these [AR meetings] ... I need to be reminded that it's so much bigger than just what we do at our desk... how much we can share and create, just a great working atmosphere where we can plan...(Flowers, After Action Review Transcript, April 2016).

Sparks contributed:

I appreciate your comment about you don't really feel worthy to be a mentor. We all feel like we're still trying to figure everything out. I even tell my mentee that. I said, "You know, I'm glad they paired us up, but I don't know that I've really got that much to offer," but you end up realizing, oh yeah, I have been through that. Oh yeah, I did do that. It really brought out a little bit of a confidence that I didn't have in my experience because it's just stuff that happens. You move on, you know. I got a lot out of it, too. I really enjoyed that (Sparks, After Action Review Transcript, April 2016).

Chakra shared:

I'll say, too, again about Imposter Syndrome, with my mentor in here, but now that I'm mentoring somebody else, and just today said, "Can I ask you about this? What would you do?" I'm like, "Oh, I'll tell you exactly what I'd do." Not that this is the right way, but here's like a thought, or he says have you ever had anybody like this, and I'm like, "Yes, I

have." In a different level, but we do have a lot of experiences. To be able to share them with someone who doesn't exactly know in your team who it is or how that played out is awesome (Chakra, After Action Review Transcript, April 2016).

The AR team learned that collaboration through peer coaching, mentoring, and action research participation resulted in relationships and experiences which increased our sense of self and engagement in the system.

This study found that a developmentally designed leadership program created conditions which supported shifts in leadership mindset among participants. This study found that conditions which impacted development among program participants and the AR team were quality of facilitation, power dynamics, amount of time, willingness to be vulnerable, engagement in reflection, accountability and system expectation. Key learnings are 1) Awareness of center of gravity provided validation and potential for growth; 2) Developmental activities generated emotional responses which needed facilitation and management; and 3) Relationships built through mentoring, peer coaching, and AR team participation increased leaders' sense of self and their engagement in the system.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Never stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing.

Albert Einstein

This action research study began in response to Southern University's need for leaders with the capability and capacity for leadership at strategic levels within the organization. The purpose of this action research study was to understand how to create the learning conditions for midlevel leaders to develop the skillset and mindset necessary to transition from operational management to adaptive leadership. As a reminder, the research questions that guided this study were:

- 1) How does a developmentally informed program impact midlevel leaders' mindset for adaptive leadership?
- 2) What are the conditions under which program participants and the action research team are able to engage adaptive leadership development?
- 3) What happens when collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI) is used as a methodology for designing and implementing a leadership program?

This chapter begins with a summary of the key learnings discussed in Chapter 5, then presents two conclusions drawn from the key learnings. The conclusions presented in this chapter are 1) Leaders do not always lead from their full developmental capacity and; 2) A developmentally informed leadership development program design leads to the growth of adaptive leadership mindset. This chapter also presents implications for practice including a model for a collaborative approach to creating a developmentally informed leadership program in the context

of a complex organization. The chapter includes recommendations for future research, then concludes with a summary of this study and my reflections on the journey.

Summary of Key Learnings

In response to Southern University's need for adaptive leaders, this study used CDAI to engage the organization in the design and implementation of a developmentally informed leadership program. The organization's leaders came together to contribute to the design of the program, to select participants, serve as facilitators, mentors, and coaches in the program, and provided continuous feedback throughout the process. As a reminder, Table 20 summarizes the key learnings from Chapter 5.

Table 20

Summary of Research Questions and Key Learnings

Research Questions	Finding	Key Learnings
1) How does a developmentally informed program impact midlevel leaders' mindset for adaptive leadership?	The developmentally informed program design cultivated a space for learning and growth that led to shifts in participants' leadership mindset.	Participants' ways of knowing in leadership shifted and expanded from "me" thinking to "we" thinking. The intentional combination of assessment, instructional, relational, and reflective program components provided a holding environment with the appropriate supports and challenges that led participants to shifts in leadership mindset.
2) What are the conditions under which program participants and the AR team are able to engage adaptive leadership development?	The conditions within the cohort created a holding environment which led to shifts in leadership mindset while the conditions on the AR team did not.	Readiness for growth matters. Developmentally, the action research team and the cohort of program participants were reflections of one another. The holding environment matters. Holding up a mirror to compare the AR team and the cohort, the conditions that impacted development in both groups were: - Quality of facilitation - Power dynamics - Amount of time - Willingness to be vulnerable - Engagement in reflection - System expectations

Research Questions	Finding	Key Learnings
3) What happens when CDAI is used as a methodology for designing and implementing a leadership program?	The AR team's experience with CDAI led to key learnings at the individual, team, and system levels.	Individual - (1st person, Subjective) On the AR team, individuals recognized room for growth, yet resisted growing together. Team - (2nd person, Intersubjective) Developmental activities generated emotional responses which needed skillful facilitation and management. Organization – (3rd person, Objective) Among the AR team, relationships built through mentoring, peer coaching, and AR team participation increased leaders' sense of self and their engagement in the system.

As a result of the experience of the program, participants reported a shift in the way they made meaning of leadership. Participants came to the program with a view of leadership as their individual responsibility to solve problems and get things done. At the end of the program, participants reported a shift in their mindset from seeing leadership as their individual responsibility to having a more inclusive view of leadership to build capability for their teams, departments, and the whole organization. Therefore, participants' ways of knowing as leaders shifted from "me" thinking to "we" thinking. The developmental program design, which integrated instructional, relational, and reflective components, provided a holding environment that expanded participants' self-awareness and resulted in shifts in leadership mindset.

Designing and implementing a leadership program particularly focused on growing mindset (developmental) was a new approach for Southern University. While engaging collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI) to develop midlevel leaders, the action research team also intended to use the methodology for our own leadership development. This study found that while program participants experienced a shift in leadership mindset, the action research team did not. Comparison of the conditions between the two groups showed that

readiness for growth and the holding environment mattered. The conditions that led to participants' development were not reflected within the action research team. While the developmentally informed leadership program provided a safe environment for participants to express the vulnerability required for leadership growth, the absence of these conditions within the action research team impacted individual members' willingness or ability to participate in CDAI for individual development. The team's work produced a rich environment for developmental growth among program participants, but not for the team itself. The conditions that impacted the use of the CDAI methodology were quality of facilitation, power dynamics, amount of time, willingness to be vulnerable, engagement in reflection, and expectations of the system. While these conditions were favorable within the context of the developmentally informed leadership program, the same conditions did not exist in the action research team. This limited the team's ability to enact CDAI for itself (first person, subjective awareness). Even so, CDAI as a methodology effectively led to a program that engaged the organization (third person, objective impact) and guided shifts in leadership mindset for program participants (second person, intersubjective relatedness).

The experience of using action research, specifically collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI) to design and implement a leadership program produced key learnings that are important for theory and practice. At the individual level (1st person, subjective awareness), this study showed that both program participants and action research team members appreciated awareness of their individual developmental stage, which came through the administration of the Global Leadership Profile (GLP) (Torbert & Associates, 2004), a developmental assessment. For the cohort of program participants, this awareness led to shifts in leadership mindset. For the action research team, while this awareness brought validation to their sense of self and upon

reflection, eventually led to motivation for continued growth, during the study, action research team members resisted their individual development. Team members resisted the methodology by not participating in developmental activities, by reacting to emotional triggers brought on by developmental activities with the cohort, by not identifying individual development needs or participating in developmental discussions. Within the action research team (2nd person, intersubjective relatedness), program administrators learned that developmental activities generated emotional responses which were taken for granted and for which program administrators learned to be prepared. At the organizational level (3rd person, objective impact), relationships built through mentoring, peer coaching, and participation in action research increased participant's leadership confidence, perceived individual value, and their engagement in the system.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1) Leaders Do Not Always Lead from Their Full Developmental Capacity

Kegan (1982, 1994) found that we develop complexity of mind in relationship to the demands of our life and work and that those who operate from later stages of development are more effective at navigating the complex challenges of today's modern world. Torbert and Rooke (2005) found that leaders who operate from later stage action logics are more effective at leading organizational transformations. Cook Greuter (2003) found that leaders who possess more complexity of mind can more successfully tailor their interactions to the differing needs of those they work with to create greater capacity throughout a complex system. Nicolaides (2008) found that adults operating from later developmental stages can more effectively navigate ambiguity and complexity.

This study found that, although leaders may possess later stage action logics, they do not always engage their full complexity of mind in their leadership or lead from those later stage action logics. They need the support of the systems in which they lead in order to be able to grow in the transition from operational (technical management) to adaptive leadership. According to Torbert and Associates (2004), leaders develop the capacity for adaptive leadership in the late conventional/early post conventional stages (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Torbert & Associates, 2004). The Global Leadership Profile (GLP) results showed that the majority of the participants in this study measured in that late conventional/early post conventional range (Torbert & Associates, 2004), which, based on constructive developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994) was an indication of their potential to develop adaptive leadership. However, system leaders were asking for help in developing midlevel leaders because those leaders were not demonstrating their full capacity in the way they carried out performance in their midlevel roles. Southern University is a hierarchical, complex system, and as such, was keeping its midlevel leaders stuck in operational management by not providing the support and challenge they needed to grow and demonstrate their capabilities and full leadership potential. As such, Southern University was reaching outside of its system to find leaders to fill open director level positions. SU's leaders did not know how to support the growth of adaptive leadership within its own emerging leadership talent and; therefore, kept its midlevel leaders stuck in performing operational tasks and not supporting their growth for adaptive work.

CDAI is a complex methodology, which incorporates action science and constructive developmental theory, to enable the researcher and co-inquirers to gain increasing awareness at the subjective, intersubjective, and objective levels in order to employ skillful and timely action for transformation of self, teams, and organizations (Foster, 2014). To engage this methodology,

researchers and co-inquirers must be open to self-transformation, which requires a willingness to be vulnerable (Torbert & Associates, 2004). The action logics of the action research team, as indicated by the GLP (Torbert & Associates, 2004) showed that most members of the team possessed the mental complexity (late conventional/early post conventional stages) necessary for the adaptive work of CDAI. However, our own professional expertise kept us stuck. Members of the team resisted individual growth while embracing the methodology for those seen as needing development. The revelation that our action logics were similar to those of our program participants came as a surprise to some members of the action research team. Some of the Learning and Organizational Development professionals on the team assumed they possessed more advanced action logics than our clients in the program. Cook Greuter (2004) explained that learning about developmental theories is not sufficient to help people transform and that only specific long-term practices, self-reflection, action inquiry, dialogue, and living in the company of others further along the developmental path has been shown to be effective. Developmental capacity was a new concept for the team and it brings to mind whether this knowledge, more fully understood earlier in the study, would have impacted the AR team's willingness to engage the vulnerability required for development. Additionally, while the action research team strained under the system's demands for a leadership program within a specified timeframe, expert Learning and Organizational Development team members showed discomfort with the ambiguity required to engage a new method (CDAI), to involve leaders from across the system (an adaptive approach), and resisted the vulnerability required to engage in our own leadership development. This study showed that, although members of the action research team had the complexity of mind necessary for engaging in adaptive work, they chose to engage that capacity for the

development of our program participants, but not for self-development. As leaders, we do not always operate from our fullest complexity of mind or latest developmental stage.

As a result of the developmental approach to growing adaptive leadership used in this study, program participants had the opportunity to gain deep insights not just about themselves as people but, specifically, about how they show up as leaders and how they are perceived by others in their leadership. Making these insights object (Kegan, 1982, 1994) so that program participants could reflect and deepen their understanding through instructional, relational, and reflective program components helped participants see their own potential to reach beyond the limits of their individual capabilities and embrace the potential of the collective capacities of their teams in order to be more effective in their leadership. Cook-Greuter (2004) stated that, in terms of human development, we distinguish between horizontal and vertical development. Both of which are important, but occur at different rates and require different types of support and challenge in order to grow. Lateral (horizontal) growth and expansion occurs through education, training, and self-directed, life-long learning. Vertical development refers to how we learn to see the world through new eyes and how, in response, transform our views of reality. Cook Greuter (2004) states:

Most learning, training, and development is geared towards expanding, deepening, and enriching a person's current way of meaning making. It's like filling a container to its maximum capacity. We develop people by teaching them new skills, behaviors, and knowledge and to apply their new competencies to widening circles of influence.

Vertical development, on the other hand, refers to supporting people to transform their current way of making sense towards a broader perspective. (p. 2, 3)

Likewise, Smith (2016) emphasized it is important not to privilege vertical development over horizontal “filling-out”:

Development can include or be expressed as not only increased awareness and meaning-making complexity, but also increased awareness and filling-out of more parts of oneself. More significantly, this consolidation and integration can result in more wholeness, evenness, and grounding in oneself (including one’s most complex way of knowing) and in more skillful action across various life domains. (p. 260)

Smith (2016) found that “Individuals may not be fully consolidated or stable within their current stage or action logic or able to think and act according to their most complex stage” (p. 247). This study’s findings support Smith’s finding that individuals do not always carry their full capacity into every aspect of their lives. In the case of Southern University, the system was pulling for operational management while pushing for adaptive leadership. Organizational demands can keep leaders from being able to bring their full developmental capacity into their leadership. In the transition from operational management to adaptive leadership, emerging leaders require support and challenge from their leaders and from the system as a whole in order to bring their fullest capacity into their leadership, to “fill out” their capabilities, and realize their potential for adaptive leadership.

Conclusion 2) A Developmentally Informed Leadership Development Program Design Leads to the Growth of Adaptive Leadership

A developmentally informed leadership program design does lead to the growth of adaptive leadership mindset. By enabling leaders to see beyond their individual responsibility to accomplish their own tasks and goals (“me” thinking), a more inclusive view of leadership that empowers their teams and the whole organization (“we” thinking) can be achieved. In 2008,

Helsing, Howell, Kegan, and Lahey stated that there was a need for genuinely developmental professional development programs that could support qualitative shifts in the ways leaders understand themselves and their work. This study adds to the literature by showing how the intentional combination of program components can lead to shifts in leadership mindset from the individual focus of operational, technical management (“me” thinking) to a more collective, adaptive approach to leadership (“we” thinking), and by naming the conditions of the holding environment that impact leaders’ ability to engage their leadership development.

Intentional combination of program components. Kegan (1982, 1994) explains that growth and development requires a combination of support and challenge. Helsing, Howell, Kegan, and Lahey (2008) state that today’s leaders face a host of complex demands as they strive to implement lasting, meaningful change and that these demands often require personal development that many adults may not yet possess. As such there is a need for professional development programs that are deliberately, developmentally focused or, as the authors state “put the development into professional development” (Helsing, Howell, Kegan, & Lahey, 2008).

Brown (2011) found that leaders with more complex ways of knowing have the capability to lead by accessing non-rational ways of knowing that make use of systems and complexity and have the capacity to manage through dialogue with the system. Brown’s study contributed to our understanding of what leadership development programs may need to focus on to grow adaptive leaders. Banerjee (2013) found CDAI as an effective means through which to engage leaders in a complex “me” thinking system to shift to a “we” thinking approach to develop adaptive leadership among early career scientists. Later, Baron and Parent (2015) examined leadership development in a training context and found that leadership development is influenced by the degree to which facilitators are able to simulate activities representing

organizational context and that informal learning among participants is important. This study showed how a developmental approach to designing a leadership program generated the specific components (instructional, relational, and reflective) that created space for developmental shifts within a complex, hierarchical, organizational context. Specifically, this study showed that in addition to the more traditional instructional methods included in a leadership development program, an emphasis on personal interactions within the cohort group, with coaches, mentors, and senior leaders, as well as guided reflection activities impacts the growth of adaptive leadership.

As a result of their involvement in the developmentally designed program, this study's participants experienced a shift in the way they made meaning of leadership. The developmental program design, which integrated instructional, relational, and reflective components, created a rich holding environment with the supports and challenges that brought leaders to a greater awareness of how they showed up as leaders and how their ability to empower others could bring greater potential to the organization allowing participants to become less individually focused ("me" thinking) and more system focused ("we" thinking). Petrie (2014) stated:

Leadership development has come to a point of being too individually focused and elitist. There is a transition occurring from the old paradigm in which leadership resided in a person or role, to a new one in which leadership is a collective process that is spread throughout networks of people. (p. 6)

The developmentally informed approach to program design enabled participants to broaden their view of leadership from an individual responsibility to get things done ("me" thinking) toward a more adaptive capacity to engage others for a collaborative ("we" thinking) approach to leadership.

The holding environment. Kegan (1982, 1994) speaks of “cultures of embeddedness” which is a term for the context in which a person makes meaning of their world as influenced by the culture and ways of knowing within that particular environment. Kegan explains that one’s holding environment can become a bridge to transformation when an appropriate amount of support and challenge arises in response to the demands of one’s life and work. According to Kegan (1982, 1994) experiences of the limitation of our own particular way of making sense of the world create the optimal conflict that can promote development. However, what promotes transformation is a combination of support and challenge. The challenge to develop must be supported in order for adults to be able to take up the challenge. Kegan (2003) states, “It looks like people also need the supports to bear the conflict. In the absence of those supports, what most people will do is basically defend or withdraw or try to make the conflict disappear.”

This study supports Kegan’s assertions regarding the need for both support and challenge in order for leaders to grow. In the case of the action research team, members resisted the challenge to develop in the context of a holding environment that did not provide adequate support. In the case of the program participants, the midlevel leaders took up the challenge to grow in their leadership because they experienced a holding environment that provided an intentional mix of support and challenge through instructional, relational, and reflective components designed to both challenge their current ways of knowing leadership (“me” thinking) and support their development to a new way of seeing leadership (“we” thinking).

To grow adaptive leadership, the holding environment needs specific conditions to provide support and challenge. Foster (2014) refers to the developmental aspect of CDAI as necessary in the practice of the methodology because action inquiry calls for a moment to moment awareness of multiple paradigms and an increasing capacity for reaching mutuality with

others. Cook Greuter (2004) explained that development occurs through the interplay between a person and their environment, not just by one or the other. Smith (2016) found that intentional friendship is critical to a group's ability to engage the CDAI methodology for developmental growth. Smith also found that it takes time to build the level of trust within a group that can support participant's willingness to grow together. This study supports Smith's findings in that relationships built among program participants through intentionally designed, interactive cohort activities, peer coaching assignments, mentor/mentee relationships, and sessions facilitated by internal senior leaders generated a holding environment that led to shifts in leadership mindset.

According to Torbert, (Torbert, 1976, 1991; Torbert & Associates, 2004; Torbert & Livne-Tarandach, 2009) CDAI is an effective methodology through which to support transformation. In their studies, Banerjee (2013) and Smith (2016) found CDAI to be an effective methodology through which to create a holding environment up to the challenge of supporting developmental growth. This study also showed that CDAI is an effective method through which to support shifts in development given the conditions of a supportive holding environment are present. Specifically, this study showed that CDAI is an effective methodology for developing adaptive leadership when applied with quality facilitation, clear system expectations, neutral power dynamics, adequate time, and in the midst of trusting relationships.

Implications for Practice

The key learnings presented in Chapter 5 and the conclusions presented here in Chapter 6, lead to implications for practice. A collaborative developmental approach to design a developmentally informed leadership program must involve the organization to grow adaptive leadership. Engage senior leaders in the identification of specific leadership expectations (within the system context), in participant selection (to identify participants who are ready for

developmental growth), in the design of the program itself (the intentional combination of instructional, relational, and reflective program components) in implementation of the program as facilitators, mentors, and coaches (to generate a holding environment that provides the supports and challenges that can lead to shifts in leadership mindset). A collaborative approach involving the organization in the design, and delivery of a developmentally informed leadership program can generate the conditions (including quality facilitation, clear system expectations, opportunities to help participants build trusting relationships, and adequate time for development) that leads to the growth of adaptive leadership. Figure 6 presents a model for a collaborative developmental approach to engage the whole organization in the growth of adaptive leadership.

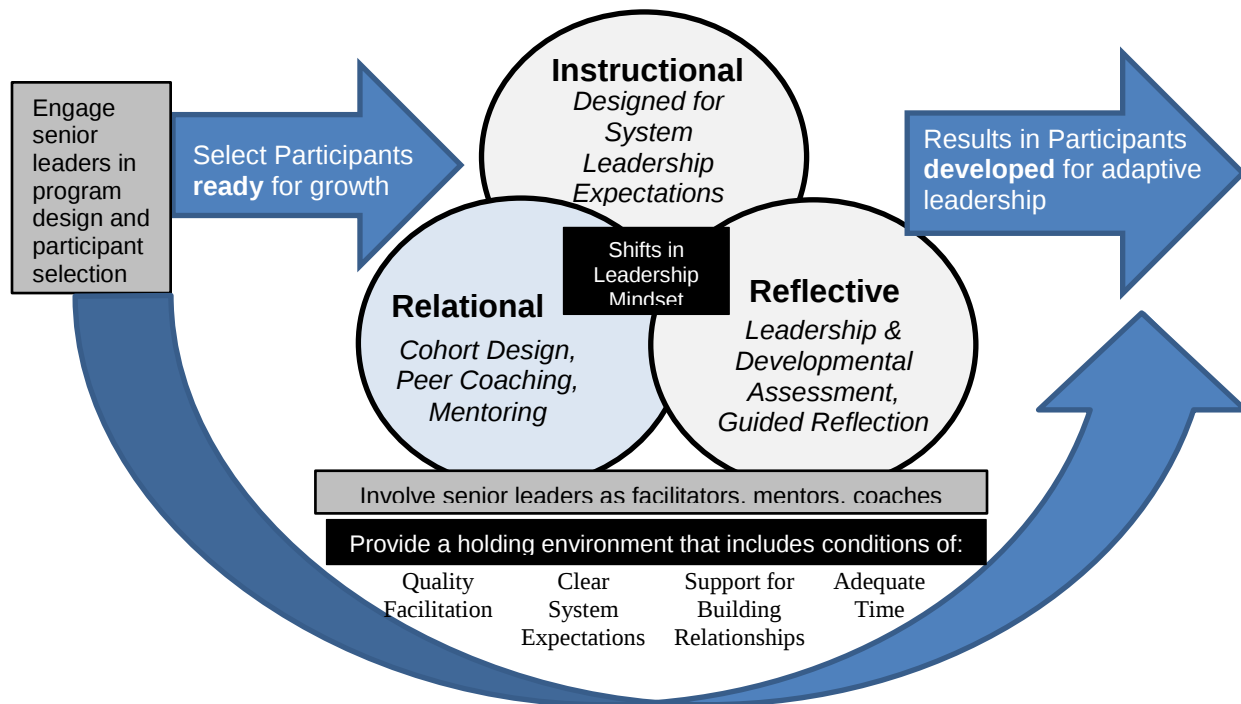


Figure 6. A model for a collaborative developmental approach to engage the whole organization in the growth of adaptive leadership. This collaborative approach includes involving leaders from across the system as members of the design team, in the participant selection process, and as facilitators, coaches, and mentors in the actual program. Emphasis is placed on the relational program components to indicate the importance of intentionally building community within the group of developing leaders and with their senior leaders. These connections are necessary for the growth of adaptive leadership among individuals, with teams, and across organizations.

Engage a Collaborative Developmental Approach to Grow Adaptive Leaders

According to Kegan and Lahey (2016) the single most powerful way for an organization to unleash the potential of its people is to become an everyone culture, a deliberately developmental organization. In such an organization, everyone (staff, manager, leaders) has the opportunity to develop and supports the development of others. Deliberately developmental organizations intentionally and continuously nourish a culture that puts business and individual development front and center every day. “Delivered via their homegrown, robust, daily practices, their cultures constitute breakthroughs in the design of people development and business strategy” (Kegan & Lahey, 2016, p. 4). Supporting leaders in their development from operational management to adaptive leadership is not just the responsibility of learning and organizational development professionals, but requires a collective approach to engage leaders throughout the organization. The action research team in this study used collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI) (Torbert, 1976, 1991; Torbert & Associates, 2004; Torbert & Livne-Tarandach, 2009) as a method through which to engage Southern University’s community of senior leaders in the development of its midlevel leaders through the identification of leadership expectations, the selection of potential program participants, the design of the leadership program, and involvement in the program as facilitators, coaches, and mentors. Engaging the system created a culture of development for these program participants and also for the leaders involved in their development and generated a system level holding environment that provided the supports and challenges to expand the leaders’ developmental capacity. According to Kegan and Lahey (2014);

A deep sense of human connectedness at work can be unleashed in many ways. But a deliberately developmental organization may create a special kind of community.

Experiencing yourself as incomplete or inadequate but still included, accepted, and valued – and recognizing the very capable people around you as also incomplete but likewise valuable – seems to give rise to qualities of compassion and appreciation that can benefit all relationships. (p. 52)

Involve the whole organization. Involving the organization in the development of its leaders is developmental for the whole organization and for the leaders involved. Engaging the system in leadership development requires a collective response to the system's need for leadership talent, helps the organization understand its leadership expectations, makes its rich leadership talent resources visible, and supports the growth of adaptive leaders.

This study was a response to Southern University's need to increase their pool of internal adaptive leaders. This study showed that a collaborative approach to engage the organization by involving senior leaders in development of the program, as members of the design team, in the process of participant selection, and in the program itself as facilitators, coaches, and mentors, supported the development of midlevel leaders. The action research team engaged the organization through methods such as interviews, focus groups, and surveys. The action research team also included leaders from across the system who contributed to program design and implementation. Including system leaders in these activities helped to get the people with the problem involved in solving the problem (Heifetz, 1994). Such approaches helped the organization know itself so that the system's internal expectations of leadership, and thus of program participants, could be named. This collaborative approach revealed the specific expectations that the system had of its midlevel leaders, showed the system how it pulled for operational management while pushing for adaptive leadership, and revealed how the system kept its midlevel leaders stuck in not being able to demonstrate their full developmental capacity

in their leadership. Rather than creating a leadership program behind closed doors, the collaborative approach to involving leaders throughout the system in the process of program development and implementation showed the whole organization how leaders are developed and exposed the process of leadership development to the system. Specifically, the collaborative approach to developing leaders supported midlevel leaders in the shift from operational management to adaptive leadership within the specific context of the system in which they worked and led.

This study showed that involving senior leaders in selecting participants for the leadership program helped the organization realize the potential of its midlevel leader talent and recognize the possibility of promoting from within the system to fill strategic roles. Including senior leaders in the selection process resulted in participants who, theoretically, came to the program with the capacity for adaptive leadership. Readiness for growth is an important factor in generating developmental shifts in leadership mindset. Helsing and Howell (2013) found a connection between a leader's developmental stage and their organization's perception of their leadership potential. This study showed that, while the Global Leadership Profile (GLP) (Torbert & Associates, 2004) was not used in the selection process, the program participants' GLP assessment results validated that the selection process resulted in participants who had the developmental capacity for adaptive leadership. The GLP showed that the majority of participants chosen operated from late conventional (Achiever) and very early post conventional (Redefining) action logics. This is supported by Torbert and Associates (2004) who found that during the journey into the post conventional action logics, individuals develop the capacity to think strategically across the system and integrate their own individual meaning making with what can be seen across the organization. Moreover, adaptive leaders require the capacity to

lead through the complexities of integrating the work of their teams with the broader mission of the organization. This broadened capacity is crucial for leaders in the shift from technical, single loop, problem solving (Argyris, 1977, 1991) to strategic, adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, 2009) in which double loop learning (Argyris, 1977, 1991) can support organizations as they address adaptive challenges. Rooke and Torbert (2005) found that leaders presenting with later stage action logics are more effective at leading organizational transformation. Therefore, attaining developmental capacity to have a broader system perspective is a critical success factor to transition from operational management to adaptive leadership.

Design with intent and focus on relationship building. Each complex system has its own culture and various sub cultures within that culture. Bringing an intentional focus to learning the developmental needs of an organization can help the organization understand itself and the what is needed from its leaders. The growth of adaptive leadership requires an intentional focus on the combination of specific program components that can address the needs of the organization. This study showed that the intentional combination of instructional, relational, and reflective components interweaved to create the conditions that led to shifts in program participants' ways of knowing leadership from operational management ("me" thinking) to adaptive leadership ("we" thinking). Kegan (2003) stated, "What creates a rich, transformational learning space is some ingenious mix of support and challenge" (p. 44). The shifts in leadership mindset among Southern University's midlevel leaders resulted from the expectation that the 20 program participants would invest time and commitment to grow and share the experience of their growth. Support came from the cohort of program participants as they built trusting relationships with each other and within their peer groups. Additionally,

support came from senior leader involvement in communicating leadership expectations, selecting program participants, and taking an active role in the program. Leaders from across the organization became involved in the midlevel leaders' development by serving as facilitators, coaches, and mentors. Senior leaders served as facilitators for instructional sessions, providing subject matter expertise and lending their credibility to the content. Program participants benefited from hearing more experienced leaders share stories of their failures and how they learned and grew from them. Senior leaders also served as mentors, providing individual guidance for program participants as they strived in their transition to adaptive leadership. Involving the organization in the execution of the developmentally informed leadership program supported participants' growth and enhanced the instructional, relational, and reflective components of the program.

Design for vertical *and* horizontal development. As the world evolves, so do the demands on leaders continue to grow in complexity, requiring enhanced approaches to developing leaders. Kegan (1982, 1994) found that our mental complexity grows in response to the demands of our lives. Many leaders likely face a gap between the demands of their role and their own mental capabilities since these demands are more complex than leaders' ability to meet them (Helsing, D., Howell, A., Kegan, R., & Lahey, L., 2008; MacCauley, C., et al., 2006). According to constructive developmental theory (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Cook Greuter, 1999, 2002, 2004; Torbert & Associates, 2004), humans evolve through the orders of development from simple to complex and later stages are only reached by journeying through the earlier stages. Cook Greuter (2004) stated that once a stage has been traversed, it remains a part of the individual's response repertoire, even when later, more complex stages are adopted. As such, Cook Greuter (2004) found that each developmental stage is important toward growth and

development to the next stage. Therefore, horizontal growth within a stage holds equal importance with vertical growth beyond a stage because one cannot progress to a later stage until having traversed fully through the current one.

Today's leadership development programs must evolve in response to the needs of participants and the systems within which they lead. Smith (2016) found that adults revert to prior action logics in certain contexts as an involuntary response and that horizontal development is not just about developing knowledge and skills but also implies the need to strengthen or 'fill out' our current developmental capacity. This study supports Smith's findings by showing that leaders do not always engage their full developmental capacity in the context of their leadership. Therefore, leadership development that both supports strengthening the leader's current developmental stage (horizontal development) and increasing his/her meaning making capacity (vertical development) will help developing leaders engage their full potential.

There are no simple, existing models or programs that will be sufficient to develop the levels of collective leadership required to meet the increasingly complex future (Petrie, 2014). As a result of their study, Helsing and Howell (2013) recommended making leaders aware of their developmental stage in order to further their development. This study showed the impact that involving the whole organization in the creation of intentionally designed leadership development program, that makes participants aware of their developmental stage and how they show up as leaders, and provides the appropriate supports and challenges through the intentional combination of program components, can support midlevel leaders in their transition from operational management to adaptive leadership.

Provide a supportive and challenging holding environment. Kegan (1982, 1994) explained that the holding environment matters in our developmental transformation and can

either keep us embedded in our current ways of knowing or support and challenge our ability to transform to later stages of awareness. Torbert & Associates (2004) explains that we must be open to our own need for development in order to fully engage the practice of action inquiry (CDAI). Banerjee (2013) provided an example of how CDAI as a methodology can provide the supports and challenges necessary to grow adaptive leadership capabilities. This study supports Banerjee's findings by showing that the holding environment matters in the practice of CDAI and extends those findings by naming the conditions of the holding environment that support participant's ability to engage the practice for leadership development. This study provides an example of the complexity of using CDAI as a methodology for designing a leadership program and reveals the impact that conditions in the holding environment have on the effectiveness of the methodology.

Smith (2016) found that the quality of facilitation matters and the facilitator's developmental capacity can impact the group's ability to fully engage the methodology for evolution of consciousness. This study supports that finding and adds that, in a work context, reporting relationships within a CDAI group can create power dynamics that increase the difficulty of the group's ability to reach mutuality.

Development takes time (Kegan, 1982, 1994, Torbert & Associates, 2004, Rooke and Torbert, 2005). This study provides an example of how a system's expectations can limit the time needed to fully embrace CDAI as a means for developing a leadership program. Torbert (n.d.) stated:

Surprisingly, action inquiry is a virtually unknown process... perhaps because learning how to practice it from moment-to-moment is no easy trick. Action inquiry is not a process that can be followed in an imitative, mechanical way, learning a few ideas and

imagining that parroting them back to others occasionally means one is doing action inquiry. Rather, action inquiry is a way of learning anew, in the aliveness of each moment, how best to act now. The source of both its difficulty and its potential is that action inquiry requires making ourselves, not just others, vulnerable to inquiry and to transformation. The rewards of action inquiry are a profound sense of growth in personal integrity, in interpersonal mutuality, and in organizational and environmental sustainability. (Retrieved from <http://www.williamrtorbert.com/action-inquiry>)

This study's findings showed that a practitioner's professional expertise (in the case of the study, specifically learning and organizational development expertise) can limit willingness to express vulnerability or to engage in reflection - both requirements for the practice of CDAI (Torbert & Associates, 2004). In the context of current challenges and issues which in turn affect systems, leadership development requires facilitators willing to grow along with their program participants. Garvey Berger (2004) states that the work of a transformative teacher is first to help students find the edge of their understanding, second to be company at that edge, and finally to help students construct a new, transformed place where, ultimately, students can find the courage they need to transform. Petrie (2014) reflected:

If you really want to help leaders develop, you must show them what development looks like. I see a lot of trainers asking other people to open up, share their worldview...but they are unprepared to do it themselves. It doesn't work. The very best facilitators I have seen aren't spectators; they show the way by opening themselves up and becoming vulnerable. If you're not prepared to go first, don't expect anyone else in the room to move either. (p. 16)

Therefore, in order to support the development of leaders prepared to deal with the complexities of today's environment, those accountable for this work must be willing to recognize and surface our own vulnerabilities and set the example for those we seek to teach and grow. Understanding developmental differences can be particularly useful in designing transformational professional development programs that are appropriate for a variety of leaders (Helsing, Howell, Kegan, & Lahey, 2008). Learning and organizational development professionals must be aware of our own developmental capacities and of our Immunities to Change (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). We must be willing to embrace the possibility that trying a new developmental approach may bring successes and failures, then embrace the failures toward new, double loop learning (Argyris, 1977, 1991), just as we ask of those we seek to grow and develop.

Future Research

The world is growing increasingly complex and organizational leaders need support to grow the mental complexity necessary to meet the daunting challenges they face. The need exists for leadership programs specifically designed for the development of mental complexity (Torbert & Associates, 2004; McCauley, C., Drath, W., Palus, C., O'Connor, P., Baker, B, 2006; Helsing, D., Howell, A., Kegan, R., Lahey, L., 2008; Garvey Berger, 2012; Petrie, 2014). Helsing and Howell (2013) called for studies to identify the role of organizations in using constructive developmental theory (CDT) in leadership development. This action research study showed the impact of a developmentally informed (CDT) leadership program on the leadership mindset of participants. Further, this study adds to the research using constructive developmental action inquiry (CDAI) to design a leadership program informed by CDT. This study was limited to the developmental experience of participants at the conclusion of the leadership program. I

recommend future research which focuses on the sustained shift from “me” to “we” thinking beyond the limits of a leadership program to further our understanding of how a developmental approach to growing adaptive leadership can impact leaders, teams, and organizations longer term.

This study showed how taking a collaborative developmental approach impacted the development of adaptive leaders within the context of a complex, higher education system. I recommend future research to further our understanding of how to create developmental leadership programs in the context of various types of systems, and how to effectively design and facilitate such programs for further development of mental complexity. Further, I recommend future research on CDAI as a methodology for sustained development of complexity of mind to further our understanding of the impact of the methodology in developing adaptive leaders with the mindset to engage in adaptive work (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, 2009).

This study provided an example of how intentionally combined program components impacted leadership development in a face to face context. Cox (2016) found the online environment could provide a holding environment for sustained learning and growth. As organizations are impacted by conditions such as globalization and technological advances, I recommend future research to further our understanding of how to engage such alternate delivery methods in ways that support the growth and development of adaptive leaders.

A deliberately developmental organization (DDO) is organized around the simple but radical conviction that organizations will best prosper when they are deeply committed to the growth of staff, managers, and leaders (Kegan & Lahey, 2016). This study showed that, although system conditions were limited, program participants still experienced subtle shifts in

leadership mindset. This study contributed to the literature by furthering our understanding of the conditions required to enact CDAI for leadership development. This points to the potential transformative power of CDAI as a method for growing adaptive leadership. Adaptive challenges are those for which there are no known solutions (Heifetz, 1994). Future studies in systems with conditions ripe for developmental growth could further our understanding of the full power of using CDAI as a means to enable co-inquirers to develop complexity of mind, engage in double and even triple loop learning to mutually create before unknown approaches to address the daunting adaptive challenges we face in organizations, society, and in our complex world.

Summary

This study found that collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI), used as a method to design and implement a developmentally informed leadership program, supported the growth of midlevel leaders in transition from operational management to adaptive leadership. Key learnings indicated that a developmentally informed leadership program design can lead to shifts in participants' leadership mindset from individually focused management to collectively engaged, adaptive leadership. Through the intentional combination of instructional, relational, and reflective components program participants gained a bigger sense of self that broadened their meaning making and extended their capacity into the way they understood leadership. Key learnings also indicated that the holding environment impacted the effectiveness of a developmental methodology, specifically collaborative developmental action inquiry (CDAI). CDAI is a complex methodology which, to support the growth of adaptive leadership, requires skillful facilitation, time for development, a willingness to be vulnerable, engagement in self-reflection, and readiness for growth. It also requires the opportunity to build trusting

relationships among co-inquirers. In the absence of these conditions, it is difficult to fully engage the methodology. The presence of these conditions generates a holding environment which can support growth and development of individuals, teams, and organizations.

This increasingly complex world needs leaders with the insight and ability to navigate the ambiguity of adaptive challenges and the willingness to engage others to bring forth solutions to the daunting conundrums we face in organizations and in society. We need leaders. Those of us accountable for the work of growing leaders must be willing to set aside our current ways of knowing leadership development, make ourselves vulnerable to developmental transformation, and reach for the expanded capacity that can be achieved through the mutually transforming power of action inquiry.

Reflection

I have learned that I still have a lot to learn.

Maya Angelou

This story began in Chapter 1 by relaying my early experience as an accidental leader and how I hoped to learn and grow my leadership capacity through the experience of this study. This has been a developmental journey for me and required that I traverse a disorienting, rough and tumble road that tested the limits of my capacity and challenged my assumptions of leadership. In the words of my major professor, Dr. Nicolaidis, “the mess is where the real grace comes.” Action inquiry (CAI) centers on a process of learning that is not mechanistic, nor does it produce automated feedback to safely engage continuous change, but rather it demands bumpy, discontinuous, upending, ongoing and transformational learning (Torbert & Associates, 2004). Banerjee (2013) offered a word of caution for facilitators of CAI by stating that the process of implementing action inquiry groups is an adaptive challenge in and of itself. Developing complexity of mind is messy. I learned that not everyone is up for or interested in

engaging the mess. Allowing myself to stay in the mess, I hung on for dear life and made it to the end of this story where now I close this last chapter. I am not the same person who began this adventure. Neither are those who traveled with me the same. There is freedom in adaptive challenges because not knowing the answers brings about the fullness of learning. Our not knowing requires us to stretch our thinking and shift from enacting leadership as an individual responsibility to reach for mutuality others. The lessons we learn along the way shape our capability and capacity to live and lead in today's complex environment. The experience of this collaborative developmental action research study pushed me to reach for adaptive leadership. This learning has become a part of me and I will carry it as I continue writing my leadership development story. The not knowing has been the fullest part of my journey.

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APPENDIX A

ACTION RESEARCH TEAM CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled "Developing Mid- Level Leaders" conducted by Debra M. Longo, a doctoral student at the University of Georgia under the direction of Dr. Aliko Nicolaides, Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy, University of Georgia (706.542.4014). I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary. I can refuse to participate in the research or stop taking part in this research at any time without giving reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this action research study is to investigate the needs of mid-level leaders as they prepare for their next level role and how to effectively develop the needed competencies.

Specifically, the research will focus on the connection between individual learning from program participants and how their learning impacts the university.

I will be asked to do the following things:

- 1) Participate as a member of the action research team
- 2) Attend team meetings and contribute to the research by following through on assignments and action items within requested timeframe

The benefits for me are the opportunity to participate in efforts to enhance leadership development at Southern University. The benefit to the university is the potential ability to

enhance leadership development programming. The benefit to the researcher is data upon which to base her doctoral project.

I understand that the researcher, Debra Longo, will maintain copies of meeting minutes and project documentation. The documentation, with identifiers removed, may be used as a part of the final dissertation.

No risk is expected.

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Name of Researcher

Signature Date

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Name of Participant Signature Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 629 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.

APPENDIX B
PROGRAM PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled "Developing Mid- Level Leaders" conducted by Debra M. Longo, a doctoral student at the University of Georgia under the direction of Dr. Aliko Nicolaides, Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy, University of Georgia (706.542.4014). Although participation in Southern University's leadership development program is a commitment and each participant is expected to complete the full program, I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and not a requirement for program participation. I can refuse to participate in the research or stop taking part in this research at any time without giving reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this action research study is to investigate the needs of mid-level leaders as they prepare for their next level role and how to effectively develop the needed competencies.

Specifically, the research will focus on the connection between individual learning from program participants and how their learning impacts the university.

- 1) Participate in the Mid-Level Leadership Development Program
- 2) Reflect on and document my learning at the end of each session throughout the program and provide this documentation to the researcher (Debra Longo)
- 3) Share key learnings as a part of post program presentations

- 4) Participate in a post program interview to answer questions about how I applied my key individual learnings to my work at Southern University.
- 5) I understand that I may be contacted again by Debra Longo for clarification of my comments.

The benefits for me are the opportunity to participate in research for a doctoral dissertation and to express my perceptions, opinions, and concerns. The benefit to the university is the potential ability to enhance its leadership development programming. The benefit to the researcher is data upon which to base her doctoral project.

No risk is expected.

I understand that the researcher, Debra Longo, will maintain copies of my post course reflection documentation and my post program presentation. Additionally, post program interviews will be recorded. The recording will be transcribed and the recording destroyed when the project is completed. All documentation will utilize code numbers for participants, and the code will be kept in a separate locked cabinet from the transcripts. Debra Longo alone will have access to the code. The transcripts, with identifiers removed, will be available to the Action Research Team that is helping Ms. Longo. If I am asked to complete a questionnaire, I will be assigned an identifying number and this number will be used on all of the questionnaires I fill out.

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Name of Researcher Signature Date

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Name of Participant Signature Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 629 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.

APPENDIX C

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATION IN ACTION RESEARCH

TO: Name TBD

FROM: Debra Longo

DATE: Date TBD

RE: Invitation to Participation in Action Research

As you know, Southern University has a long tradition of developing leaders through our various programs, including the Supervisor Development Program, the Manager Development Program, and the Excellence through Leadership Program. We are proud of the high quality of these programs and of the outstanding recognition we have received over the years. Recently, many of our University leaders across all campuses have expressed a need for leadership development of their mid-leaders - specifically, high performing managers who may be ready to move to the more adaptive role of Director.

This is an invitation for you to participate as a core team member of an action research study. The purpose of this study is to identify the competencies and capabilities needed by these mid-level leaders, to research the most effective ways for these leaders to learn and apply these skills, to use this information to create and implement leadership development program, and to measure the program outcomes at the individual, group, and system levels.

The initial commitment for this action research team will be to attend meetings bi-weekly (one hour each), to conduct/assist with research, and to provide insight and recommendations to address this leadership development need. Our initial meeting will take place

September 15, 2014.

Please let me know whether you wish to participate no later than September 1, 2014. I am available to answer any questions or provide additional information.

Sincerely,

Debbie Longo

APPENDIX D

PORTFOLIO PROJECT GUIDELINES

Purpose:

The purpose of the Emerging Leaders at Southern University program is to provide the tools and experiences for you as a participant to grow your leadership skill set and mind set to prepare to lead effectively through the challenges of leadership in higher education. The portfolio project is intended to provide an opportunity for you to demonstrate how your leadership skill set and your leadership mind set have grown by sharing your key learnings, insights, and take-aways about your leadership journey through the program.

As a reminder, there were three key areas where the program focused:

1. Leading Self
 - a. Leadership Styles and Self-Awareness
 - b. Performance-Based Communication
2. Leading Others
 - a. Coaching, EQ, and Diversity
 - b. Building Relationships
3. Leading the Business
 - a. Strategy and Decision Making
 - b. Change Management

Introduction:

Provide a brief introduction of yourself, your background, your role at Southern University.

Leadership Style:

Recall your first reflection journal assignment (outlined below). How, if at all has your leadership been enhanced or changed? Please tell us about your journey.

In preparation for the Module 1 session on 9/16, please use your journal to respond to the following prompts:

- What does leadership mean to you?
- Who is your most admired leader and why?
- How would you describe yourself as a leader, and your leadership style?
- What or who has been the most influential factor that has shaped your leadership to date?

Skill Set:

What skills have you grown as a result of the Emerging Leaders program?

What have you applied and what is the impact (to yourself, your team/department, to Southern University?) Provide an example.

Mind Set:

How has your mind grown?

How you have thought differently about a work situation and/or gained or sought a new perspective and the resulting impact (to yourself, your team/department, to Southern University?) Provide an example.

Key Learnings:

How are you different as a result of this experience?

Provide a quote, story, picture, activity, etc. that sums up your experience, shares your key takeaways, and leaves a lasting impression for your cohort

Considering all components of the program, what has been the most impactful for you? Why? Explain.

i.e., Courses (a specific course, concept, or tool), Assessments, Coaching Session, Mentoring, Peer Coaching, Reflection Journaling

What's Next?

How will you continue to apply what you have learned, and how will you continue to grow your leadership after the program?