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In This Issue:

New Challenges to Character Education

Developing Upstander Behavior

Leader Character Activation

Leading Across Cultures

Integrity in Leadership

(see back cover for full listing)

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Cover Photo: The picture on the cover highlights two iconic buildings at USAFA. In the forefront is the Center for Character & Leadership Development which was made possible through generous contributions of USAFA graduates and donors and the United States Air Force. In the background is the USAFA Cadet Chapel. Both buildings represent the necessity for character development in all leaders.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

We Don't Do that Here: Using Role Playing and Character Battle Drills to Develop Upstander Behavior at West Point

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ABSTRACT

Background: The Army is focused on the prevention of harmful interpersonal behaviors such as sexual harassment and sexual assault. Training soldiers who may witness these behaviors to intervene is considered paramount to the Army's prevention efforts. Objective: To increase the propensity and efficacy of cadets (undergraduate college students) employing upstander behaviors when witnessing harmful interpersonal behaviors in less governed spaces, the United States Military Academy at West Point facilitated two scenario-based role-playing workshops to develop its cadets while piloting new methods of training interven-

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tion behaviors. Methods: Both workshops had cadets improvise roles as upstanders, perpetrators, victims, and witnesses. The first workshop focused on developing cadets' propensity (courage) to intervene and intentionally provided cadets with little guidance on if and how they should intervene, allowing them to develop their own workable intervention strategies and skills. The second workshop focused on developing cadets' effectiveness during an intervention by having them apply the new *Character Battle Drill* (CBD) concept, which is a specific sequence of action steps to follow, including specific scripts to say during an intervention. Results: In both workshops, cadets reported higher levels of engagement than traditional forms of bystander training. Conclusions: Improvisational role playing seems promising for future training. Lessons-learned, limitations, and areas of future research are discussed.

Keywords: Harmful Interpersonal Behaviors, Bystander, Upstander, Intervention, Courage

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Harmful interpersonal behaviors (such as sexual misconduct, racism, ostracism, and bullying) often occur in the presence of individuals, who, when helpful (such as intervening and interrupting), reduce the prevalence of these behaviors (Hamby et al., 2016). The Army, therefore, considers training individuals to act as upstanders, bystanders who choose to intervene despite risk (Devine & Cohen, 2007; Dunn, 2009), to be an important element in prevention. To this end, the Army widely disseminates the Bystander Intervention Process (Figure 1) to its personnel during annually mandated Sexual Harassment/Assault, Response and Prevention (SHARP) training.

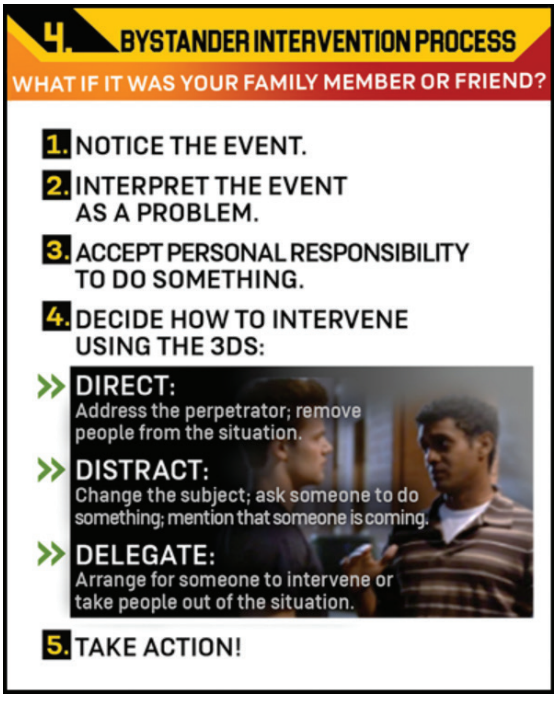
Though research has established that helpful bystanders lead to more positive victim outcomes, many bystanders still hesitate to intervene on behalf of the victim (Devine & Cohen, 2007). While most adults are good at recognizing inappropriate behavior, lower levels of moral ownership (Butler et al., 2021), moral efficacy (Mostafa, 2019), and moral courage reduce the likelihood of intervening (Blasi, 1980). In addition, the stress of being in a dangerous situation can lead to an inability to think or act (Abrams et al., 2009). From a simple utilitarian perspective, when potential upstanders perceive that the benefits of intervening do not outweigh the personal and professional risks of doing so, they are incentivized to mind their own business (Nicholson & Snyder, 2012).

Yet, behavioral economics and psychology argue that people do not always act rationally, so having bystanders practice intervention behaviors makes it more likely they will do so through the building of habit (Devine & Cohen, 2007; Etzioni, 1987). Additionally, confidence to intervene is facilitated by being taught the necessary intervention skills (Vera et al., 2019). Specifically in the realm of sexual violence, prosocial behavioral practices must be taught to counter social norms and behaviors that perpetuate sexual violence (Christensen, 2013; Kettrey et al., 2019).

The Army has generally approached the delivery of upstander intervention through large-group, slideshow-assisted briefings. Tens of thousands of supervisors are required to delivery SHARP training annually. Although they are encouraged to incorporate discussions and intervention scenarios, many, likely only conduct the minimum requirement based on other training requirements and commitments. The recommendation

Figure 1

U.S. Army Bystander Intervention Process (U.S. Army, 2021)



has been made to move away from standardized large group training toward smaller-group, scenario-based training, which has, in at least one unit, resulted in greater engagement (Urben, 2014). Similarly, a meta-analysis of college-level sexual assault prevention training indicated that lectures may be ineffective at changing attitudes toward sexual assault (Vladutiu et al., 2011).

One of the most engaging and promising pedagogies to teach skills is role playing (Manzoor et al., 2012; Sogunro, 2004, Stevens, 2015). Studies show that across educational settings, including medicine, business (Barrera et al., 2021), and foreign language learning (Burenkova et al., 2015), role playing leads to greater engagement and better academic performance (Barrera et al., 2021). Perhaps because of the greater engagement, role playing can lead to deeper processing of material, resulting in improved knowledge of the subject (Manzoor et al., 2012). Notably, role playing can increase empathy by promoting perspective taking (Corredor et al., 2021; Larti et al., 2018). More recent works have similarly cited role-playing as especially effective in training leadership behaviors in stressful situations such as crisis and hostage negotiations (van Hasselt et al., 2008) and in the training of peer providers (Oh & Solomon, 2014).

Improvisational role-playing allows participants to *experience* an everyday scenario with reduced social risk. Schwenke et al. (2021) found that improvisational role-play increased participants' creativity, mindfulness, tolerance of uncertainty, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and resilience significantly when compared to the control group that did not participate in training.

The prevention of harmful interpersonal behaviors is of concern to West Point, and upstanders are vital in the prevention process. Training can increase efficacy and propensity to intervene; however, traditional SHARP training may not be considered engaging (Urben, 2014), and standardized materials do not build in *practicing* intervention skills. Given the reported benefits of role-playing (Sogunro, 2004) on learning interpersonal skills, in early 2022, leaders at West Point facilitated two different scenario-based role-playing workshops to develop its cadets while piloting new methods of training intervention behaviors. In Workshop 1, cadets both role-played and watched their peers role play through improvised responses to different scenarios where an upstander could likely mitigate or deter harmful interpersonal behaviors. Following the experiential, improvisational role plays, the entire group was led through a facilitated reflection process. Workshop 2 used a substantially smaller sample to conduct a proof of concept (pilot) focused on developing cadets' intervention skills to be used after deciding to intervene by providing a *Character Battle Drill* (CBD) of specific set of actions to take and scripts to say during cadets' practice of being

an upstander. Additionally, Workshop 2 piloted training in a realistic environment with immediate feedback.

Workshop 1- Peer-led Bystander Intervention Role Playing and Guided Reflection

Method

Role Plays

On April 7, 2022, United States Military Academy (USMA) held a 3-h role-playing intervention workshop for all 4,400 cadets. The Corps were divided into mixed gender and class groups within their normal company (there are 36 companies with ~120 cadets per company) of approximately 30 cadets. Each small group was led by both a cadet facilitator running the bystander intervention role-play scenario activity and a trained staff/faculty mentor to ensure completion of the scenarios and subsequent guided reflection.

Materials

Role Plays

Over the course of the 2021–2022 academic year, USMA SHARP professionals worked with the cadets of the West Point Theater Arts Guild to develop several cadet-specific, situational role-play scenarios (Table 1) used in both workshops. For each scenario, facilitators received a scenario description, participant role cards for individual roles with starter prompts to support participation, an end-state (describing for the facilitator what action[s] needed to be achieved to conclude the role-play), and scenario-based debriefing questions for both witnesses and participants to process their experiences.

Survey

Following the workshop, cadets were asked to complete an anonymous feedback survey via a facilitator-provided QR-code driven questionnaire. At that time point, participants reported their engagement during the workshop, their perceived competency before they started the workshop and after the workshop in preventing and responding to sexual violence, and actions they would likely take after the workshop (Tables 2–4).

Procedure

Training the Facilitators

The SHARP professionals recruited and trained 144 cadets and 144 staff/faculty to prepare them for the workshop. During the 1.5-h training of trainers for cadets, cadet leaders were presented a video showcasing what the role-plays should look like in terms of structure, followed by time to practice the activity among themselves and ask questions of the subject matter experts. During the staff/faculty version, instruction focused on facilitating the after-workshop reflection. In both sessions, facilitators were provided with their left and right boundaries and encouraged to work with their counterpart to ensure everyone was prepared for their role.

Day of Workshop

The first 2-h of the 3-h training were dedicated to scenario role-plays facilitated by peer-facilitators. This was followed by a 1-h long reflection session facilitated by staff/faculty mentors. To begin, peer-facilitators within each group randomly distributed the roles of the various scenarios to the group participants. Most cadets were able to actively participate in at least one of the role-play scenarios throughout the 2-h dedicated to role-playing. About one in four cadets got to experience playing an upstander role in one of the scenarios, while other cadets were assigned roles as perpetrators, conformists, and colluders.

To support reflection and synthesize the lessons learned, the staff/faculty facilitator led a guided reflection discussion after the role play scenarios were complete. Following the discussion, cadets were asked to complete the feedback survey. Six months later, the authors formally requested and received approval for use

Table 1

Role-playing Scenarios for Both Workshops

Workshop 1	- Confronting locker-room talk about others who are not present (4 participants)
	- Dealing with people at their limit to cope with stress (4 participants)
	- An instructor makes a sexist comment to students (4 participants)
	- An individual is slandered on the local social media app (e.g., Jodel.com) (3 participants)
	- An intoxicated senior sexually harasses freshman cadets (5 participants)
	- A potential cadet makes racially discriminatory comments in the dining facility while on a campus visit (7 participants)
Workshop 2	- Cadet is intoxicated, making unwanted advances on a girl (4 participants)
	- Male cadets degrade the women in their company, as well as rate the ones in the bar around them. They discuss listing names on social media to compare ratings (4 participants)
	- Cadet is overwhelmed with life at West Point and exhibits signs of suicidal ideation, and friends are making fun of him/her (4 participants)

Table 2

Workshop 1: Cadets' Self-Reported Engagement

What was your level of engagement in the activity?	**(*n* = 707)**
- I was actively engaged the entire time.	398
- I was partially engaged, and will use something from it.	241
- I was partially engaged, but will not use anything.	59
- I was not engaged.	9

of this de-identified archival data detailed in the results section.

Results

Of the approximate 4,400 cadets who participated in the training, 710 cadets completed the optional post-activity survey, which represents approximately 17% of cadets who participated in the activity. The only demographic data collected were their company and class. Of the respondents, 201 were freshmen, 194 were sophomores, 146 were juniors, and 166 were seniors, and the respondents were distributed nearly equally across regiments (i.e., groups of nine companies).

Most respondents (91%) self-reported that they were actively engaged in the activity, with 56% of respondents indicating they were actively engaged through the entire activity (Table 2). Respondents were also offered the option of adding additional comments as free responses at the end of the survey. In that section, several cadets

Table 3

Workshop 1: Self-Report of Preparedness to Prevent Sexual Violence

How prepared were you (before)/are you (after) to prevent sexual violence?		
	BEFORE (*n* = 702)	**AFTER (*n* = 700)**
- I know what to do and feel ready to do it.	443 (63.1%)	524 (74.9%)
- I know what to do, but am not sure I can/would do it	152 (21.7%)	125 (17.8%)
- I think I know what to do, but am not 100% sure.	96 (13.7%)	43 (6.1%)
- I'm not sure I know what to do and I'm not sure I can/would do it.	11 (1.6%)	8 (1.1%)
- I don't know what to do or how to do it.	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

*$\chi 2(3) = 30.08$, $p < 0.00001$ (analyzing first four responses above)

Table 4

Workshop 1: Self-Report of Future Actions

What actions do you think you will take after today's activity (*n* = 632)*	
- Work to build trust and a positive culture of support	462 (73.1%)
- Be more aware of signs of sexual assault/harassment	435 (68.8%)
- Be a better leader	427 (67.6%)
- Live more fully the Army values	380 (60.1%)
- Help others be more accountable for their actions	377 (59.7%)
- Be more accountable for my own actions	371 (58.7%)
- Take more time for personal reflection	359 (56.8%)
- Share this information with others	245 (38.7%)
- I will not take actions because of today's activity	32 (5.1%)
- I don't know	29 (4.6%)
- Other	12 (1.9%)

*Participants could indicate more than one action

highlighted that the training was more engaging and beneficial than traditional training, largely due to role playing.

Results (Table 3) suggest improved perceived confidence in managing sexual violence after having participated in the workshop ($\chi^2[3] = 30.08$, $p < 0.00001$). At the end of the workshop, almost 12% more indicated that "I know what to do and feel ready to do it." Also, cadets were asked how prepared they felt to *respond to* sexual violence before the activity, and how prepared they feel now. After the activity, 13.7% more cadets indicated "I know what to do and feel ready to do it" (not shown in table).

Additionally, most cadets indicated they would take action because of the training (Table 4). Of those who indicated that they would take action after the training, nearly 21% of respondents indicated that they thought they would participate in all eight of the provided action items. On average, respondents selected 4.7 action items.

Additionally, participants were offered the opportunity to share about the personal and professional impact of this training via an open response. Of the 710 respondents, 51% (n = 397) completed this question. Of those who responded to this question, 12.6% (n = 50) indicated that they did not think the activity would have an impact, and 1% (n = 4) stated that they believed the training negatively impacted those who had experienced prior violence and/or harassment. The other 85% of open responses grouped into the following positive themes: Increased awareness, tools to deal with their own experiences, opportunity for self-reflection, increased confidence in standing up to bad behavior and difficult situations, boosted team cohesion, and reinforced moral courage and positive values.

Workshop 2- Character Battle Drills

The results from Workshop 1 suggest that the bystander intervention role-playing was more engaging, and possibly more influential, than other types of training cadets that had previously received at West Point. Workshop 2 also used role playing but piloted a CBD to provide scaffolding of intervention skills. The CBD was inspired by integrating the Army's Bystander Intervention Process (Figure 1) with the military's concept of combat battle drills. Combat battle drills are a short series of specific action steps soldiers should take immediately when in a dangerous and urgent situation, such as when receiving incoming artillery fire or treating a fellow soldier's serious combat wound, to increase the likelihood of survival or victory. Combat battle drills are trained through repetition, so that soldiers do not have to pause to make decisions when faced with mortal danger, and time is a critical factor. The CBD provided aspiring upstanders with a specific set of actions to take and scripts to say during interventions in dangerous social situations where others are at risk. The intention was to run a workshop to examine whether a CBD would increase upstander self-efficacy for interventions.

Method

Participants

The participants for this workshop were the cadet freshmen enrolled in one section of USMA's Character Growth Seminar (a pilot course that met once per week for 75-min across two academic semesters). On the day of the workshop, class attendance was 14 male cadets and two female cadets (n = 16; note that year, 24.8% of the freshmen were female). Seven months later, with the intent of research, the participants were asked to consider answering a brief online questionnaire about their experience. Ten provided consent and participated.

Materials

Character Battle Drill

During the year prior to the CBD workshop, the authors developed and shared a draft CBD with a section of 14 mostly sophomore West Point cadets and with approximately 35 West Point faculty members, both in colloquium-style discussions, requesting feedback on the concept and updating it appropriately. The CBD subsequently used in Workshop 2 was a six-step process (Figure 2), organized via the pneumonic acronym W.E.A.V.E.R.

Procedure

To create as realistic an environment as possible to apply the CBD, the class took place at the First Class (or "Firstie") Club, a bar and grill restaurant on the West Point campus created primarily for the use of cadet seniors and their guests during their off-duty hours. The 65-min event included (1) 15 min of orientation to the CBD, (2) three 10-min role-playing scenarios (Table 1)

followed by a 2-min on-location after action review, and (3) a 10-min overall after-action review (AAR). Cadet played a different role in each of the three scenarios; all took a turn as an upstander, and played either the victim, bystander, or perpetrator for the other two scenarios.

At the beginning of each scenario, faculty facilitators placed an aspiring upstander team of two cadets at a table near the victim and perpetrators. The victims and perpetrators received a set of written instructions on their role. The aspiring upstander team received no role-playing instructions in addition to the hardcopy CBD, which they were encouraged to refer to during the scenarios. Role-plays begin with victims and perpetrators acting while the aspiring upstander team was instructed to observe and intervene at the right time.

After each role play, faculty held a debrief with the participants. After the three rotations (nine separate events) were completed, a large group AAR was held, in which cadets provided feedback on the role-playing scenarios they experienced, including comments about the helpfulness of the CBD. Within three days following the event, feedback was sought from the six faculty facilitators to assess engagement, confidence in ability to intervene, and which factors were particularly impactful.

Initial observations from faculty suggested that cadets found the experience to be engaging due to the challenge and authenticity. Faculty also felt that the debrief after each role play was particularly useful for developing perspective taking and allowed for reflective learning. The AAR with cadets confirmed that practicing being an upstander was critical to their learning, and that the context of the Firstie Club made the experience more realistic. Cadets indicated they found the script to be a helpful point from which to launch, but some also indicated that they sometimes have their own style or words that work better for them.

Results

Eight of the 10 participants who completed the post-workshop survey endorsed the experience as very or extremely engaging, and three of 10 cadets indicated they were more confident to act as an upstander because of the training (Table 5). Three of 10 cadets had been in a situation since the workshop where they noticed someone taking advantage of someone else. All three of these cadets indicated that they used skills practiced during the workshop; all indicated they used the "enlist a friend of bystander to go with you." Seven of 10 cadets indicated that the W.E.A.V.E.R. framework was either "extremely useful" or "very useful" for navigating challenging intervention situations in real life, and seven of 10 cadets indicated that hosting the workshop in the Firstie Club was "very worthwhile" or "extremely worthwhile" for learning how to better intervene in real life.

Discussion

Workshop 1 was designed primarily to develop cadets' efficacy in making the decision to intervene, while Workshop 2 was designed primarily to develop participants' social skill in navigating an intervention to a positive outcome. Cadets who went through Workshop 1 found it to be engaging and felt more prepared on the whole to deal with sexual violence after the upstander training. Cadets who went through the CBD workshop (Workshop 2) found it engaging; most found the CBD, which includes both steps and specific scripts to say, to be very useful. This was particularly exemplified by the three cadets who experienced an opportunity to be an upstander in real life after the workshop; all reported using skills they learned in the training in the actual situation they encountered.

Facilitating both workshops highlighted several key learnings. First, both workshops suggest that regarding upstander training, role playing is an engaging way to teach intervention skills. Both workshops required

Figure 2

Character Battle Drill (W.E.A.V.E.R.) for Upstander Training Used in Workshop 2

Character Battle Drill #1- Upstander (W.E.A.V.E.R.)

(as you progress through the steps, anytime you conclude there is no longer a reasonable danger of character risk of harm to someone else, disengage with a

"Thank you, I really appreciate it, have a good day/evening."

1) Watch around you. If you see/hear a group character issue where people are putting others at risk...

2) Enlist a friend/bystander to join you (if available)

3) Approach group with a friendly question

"Hi, how is everyone doing?"

4) Verify the group knows their behavior appears to be questionable

(briefly describe what you observed)

"We don't do that here"

"Would you please not do that?"

Optional adds, ***"because…***
… they are our valued teammates"
… that doesn't match our values"

(skip directly to step 6 if no one is present who is at physical or emotional risk)

5) Extract potential victim(s) from situation by asking him/her

"May I speak with you alone for a minute?"

and then

"May I help you get out of this situation?"

6) Report the situation to the nearest authority figure (ranking person nearby, bartender, security)

-The next day, consider following up with the potential victim
  -Take someone with you
  -Ask if they are O.K.
  -Give them info about available resources
-If you know the potential perpetrator (or if they are in the DoD community), consider talking with them
  -Take someone with you

poc: COL Everett Spain, BS&L
08 APR 2022

the participants to play roles in the scenario beyond just the upstander, including perpetrators, victims, and witnesses. This may have allowed for the participants to gain further insight into the motivations of other actors in similar scenarios, potentially becoming more effective as a future bystander. Notably, many reported that playing the role of the potential perpetrator was the most challenging. Third, both workshops highlighted a variety of harmful interpersonal behaviors, instead of focusing solely on one type of harmful behavior, as is often traditional for Army training. By expanding the type of harmful interpersonal behaviors that the training focused on, the authors hope that the participants were able to gain a general competency at upstander behavior that can be applied to various types of harmful behaviors during their lifetimes, and not limited to upstanding in just one domain. Fourth, coupling feedback and reflection is important to role-playing when the primary objective is skill development. Guiding the participants through post-workshop, deliberate reflection suggests it crystallizes the lessons learned (Miller & Brabson, 2021). This enables participants to deeply learn from their training experiences.

Limitations and Future Research

Both studies had limitations. First, neither workshops established cadets' baseline efficacy of their propensity to intervene. Second, no process logs were completed to ensure fidelity across the different simultaneous

Table 5

Workshop 2's Cadet Self-report Responses

Self-report Perceptions Following Role Playing with CBD (*n* = 10)	**%**
- Experience was very or extremely engaging	70%
- More confident to act as an upstander as a result of training	30%
- W.E.A.V.E.R. model is extremely or very useful	70%
- Regularly practicing the W.E.A.V.E.R. would increase comfortability managing difficult social situations	70%
- Event at Firstie Club was extremely or very worthwhile	70%
- Acting as an upstander was extremely or very worthwhile	70%
- Acting as a perpetrator was extremely or very worthwhile	30%
- Acting as a victim was very worthwhile	70%
- Observing people attempt intervention was extremely or very worthwhile	70%
Self-report Application in Actual Opportunity to Be an Upstander (*n* = 3)	**%**
- Watch around you for people taking advantage of others	66%
- Enlist a friend	100%
- Approach group with friendly question	33%
- Verify group knows the behavior appears questionable	33%
- Exit potential victim	33%
- Report the situation	-
- Use any of the exact phrases from training	33%

groups (Workshop 1 had over 144 different 30-cadet groups, and Workshop 2 had three different five to six person groups).

Additionally, Workshop 2's questionnaire was issued seven months after the training event, the sample size was small, and the participants were also involved in the previous workshop the day before, so it is hard to separate the effects of the two events in Workshop 2's outcomes.

Given a response rate of approximately 20% in Workshop 1's survey and 62% in Workshop 2's survey, selection bias may limit the validity of the results. For both studies, generalizability to a civilian college-student population and civilian adult population is unknown, as cadets at USMA are in an environment where there is a saturation of espoused pro-bystander slogans such as "do the right thing," "see something, say something," and "live above the common level of life." Finally, both workshops are resource intensive, particularly for facilitator/evaluator availability and training, though this is significantly reduced by having participants play all the roles and can be further reduced by having participants serve as evaluators, which, the authors predict, would also facilitate learning.

Encouragingly, both workshops generated many questions for future research about improvisation and CBD training. One is the intersection of bystanders' social skill and the optimal use of organizationally espoused intent, steps, and scripts. Regarding the CBD concept, there was some debate in the development of the tool, to what extent the CBD should or should not include specific scripts, such as the W.E.A.V.E.R.'s "We don't do that here." For example, one group who presented with high-social skill successfully worked as team to distract the perpetrators via engaging conversation, so they could simultaneously remove the victim from the scenario, but they did not use the CBD's specific scripts. It is possible that cadets who presented with lower self-efficacy around this kind of social situation tended to lean more on the steps and specific scripts during the scenarios as an upstander.

More research is needed on how behaviors learned in the context of a workshop translate to them being used outside of the workshop. While our research suggests engagement while learning and perceived self-efficacy was higher as a result of this type of training, we do not know enough about how the skills are translated and utilized in real-life situations. Additional areas for future study include researching potential differences in upstander behaviors by gender and ethnicity, and other demographics.

Certainly, the CBD's steps and scripts should be studied for efficacy and optimized, if found effective. When studying bullying in schools, scholars have found upstander scripts are more effective when students and administration write them together (Devine & Cohen, 2007). Therefore, if used, every organization may be wise to write their own in a collaborative process, thus facilitating buy-in and customization. Finally, participants (cadets) recommended creating a version of the CBD designed specifically for use in online situations, as significant amounts of harmful interpersonal behaviors happen in the cyber domain.

Conclusion

Knowing that bystanders who observe corrosive behavior are likely to recognize the need for intervention but not likely to intervene, the experiences with two workshops at West Point show that organizations may be able to positively influence their peoples' upstander behavior through role-play training. Though follow-on research is needed on the topic, organizations who facilitate organizational-level role-playing of upstander behavior, formally create an adaptive rubric for aspiring upstanders (such as a CBD), and facilitate feedback from observers and self-reflection of participants, may build their members' propensity to intervene and efficacy during their intervention, creating a safer and more effective environment for all.

Author Note

The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not represent the U.S. Military Academy, the Department of the Army, or the Department of Defense. We have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

The Role of Physiology, Affect, Behavior and Cognition in Leader Character Activation: A Music Intervention

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ABSTRACT

We build on the theoretical model proposed by Crossan et al. (2021) to examine leader character activation, through the use of music, as a foundational area for leader character development. Our findings reveal that music influences all of the physiology, affect, behavior, cognitive (PABC) systems to more and less degrees. As well, music activates all dimensions of character, with different dimensions of character varying in their reliance on the PABC systems. Our empirical examination underscores the importance of examining activation as an initial step in development, yielding insights into the holistic role of the PABC systems in character development. Although all four systems are implicated, this study points to the need to understand how various dimensions of leader character rely differentially on the PABCs, which provides important insight into how leader character development can be tailored. Finally, the study verifies the important role of music therapy in the activation and subsequent development of leader character and

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paves the way for other innovative approaches that move beyond the cognitive and behavioral focus in leadership development to embrace physiology and affect as well.

While significant progress has been made in understanding the nature of leader character (Crossan et al., 2017; Hackett & Wang, 2012; Peterson & Seligman, 2004), with the importance of leader character development documented (Hannah & Avolio, 2011), there is a dearth of empirical research addressing leader character development. Building on prior leader character research, Crossan et al. (2021) used a cross-disciplinary approach to forge the theoretical links between the development of leader character and four underlying systems – physiology, affect, behavior, and cognition (PABCs), using music therapy to illustrate the theory. Responding to the call for further research to examine the theoretical model, we explore the effects of listening to music (self-selected songs), among leaders in the workplace, on the PABC systems and the activation of the character dimensions through an exploratory qualitative study using music as an intervention. The research questions we address are: (1) Can music activate leader character? And if so, how? (2) What is the relationship between the PABCs and the activation of leader character?

We employ the definition of character identified by Crossan et al. (2021) as, "an interconnected set of habituated patterns of thought, emotion, motivation or volition, and action (Bright et al., 2014) that satisfy very specific criteria, identified by Peterson and Seligman (2004), as being virtuous" (p. 287). We also rely on the framework of leader character that Crossan et al. (2017) propose (Figure 1), where the term leader refers to the disposition to lead. In our study, individuals also had the position to lead.

We proceed by introducing the concepts of leader character and leader character activation, and then explain how music activates the PABCs. Building on these sections, we address leader character activation and the PABCs. We present our research model, which arises from the theoretical development, along with the methods. Our findings are presented then followed by a discussion and implications for research and practice.

Leader Character Overview

Leadership scholars Hannah and Avolio (2011) claim that "character is an indispensable component of sustainable leadership performance" (p. 979). They note that "leader competence has been more extensively studied – through theories focusing on decision-making, expertise, skills, and adaptability – as compared with leader character, which has lagged in theory development and empirical research" (Wright & Goodstein, 2007, p. 979). Sturm et al. (2017) take it one step further and describe effective leadership as the entanglement of leader character and leader competence, so it is not that character displaces competence, but rather underpins it. Scholars concur that leader character – who someone is – influences what and how they do it as captured in current leadership theories (Quick & Wright, 2011).

Leader character finds its roots in virtue ethics philosophy, dating back millennia to Confucius and Aristotle (Hackett & Wang, 2012). Peterson and Seligman (2004) provided a major bridge to psychology with their extensive research applying character to individual well-being. A second major bridge was forged by management theorists who sought to apply character to leadership in organizations. Relying on engaged scholarship with practitioners to bridge the gap between research and practice, Crossan et al. (2017) used a multi-method approach to develop both a framework and an instrument (Leader

Figure 1
Leader Character Framework
***Source*: Crossan et al. (2017)**

Character Insight Assessment – LCIA; Sigma, 2018) that could be used in research and practice. Partnering with Sigma Assessment Systems (2018), the LCIA, which has both self and 360 assessment, has been validated and used in studies that support the network structure of leader character and its relationship to measures of both well-being and performance (Monzani et al., 2021). Crossan et al. (2017) relied on the seminal work of Peterson and Seligman (2004) and employed their criteria when identifying behaviors that could be considered virtuous: fulfilling; intrinsically valuable; non-rivalrous; not the opposite of a desirable trait; trait-like or habitual patterns that are relatively stable over time; not a combination of the other character strengths; personified by people made famous through story, song, etc.; absent in some individuals and nurtured by societal norms and

institutions. The 11 dimensions of character shown in Figure 1 are revealed in observable behaviors associated with each of the elements.

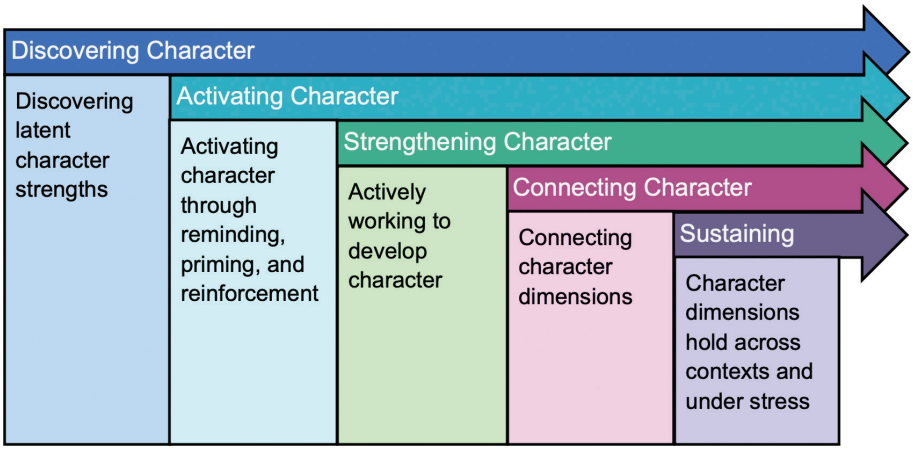
Missing from many characterizations of character is the theoretical guidance associated with the interconnected nature of the character dimensions. While treating them as distinct, as opposed to the network structure, may be simplified for research, there are serious shortcomings associated with neglecting the interconnected nature of character, particularly when it comes to development. The network structure informs that any virtue can operate as a vice when not supported by the other virtues in the constellation. The under- and over-weighting of virtuous behaviors by both individuals and organizations can lead to what could be a virtuous behavior operating as a vice, something that not only undermines individual judgment but also contributes to toxic and unfavorable environments. The under- and over-weighting is learned because behaviors that are valued by leaders become valued by their followers. The potential for a virtue to operate like a vice is perhaps the missing piece in understanding the dynamic of "excessive positivity" (Alvesson & Einola, 2019) and the "too much of a good thing" (Antonakis et al., 2017; Busse et al., 2016) effect where researchers identify that there is a curvilinear relationship between many positive leadership phenomenon and outcome measures (moderate levels are better than low or high levels). However, researchers have not anticipated the interconnected nature of the dimensions of character that would fundamentally influence the dynamic. For example, high levels of compassion that are not supported by other dimensions of character such as temperance (calm, composed, patient, prudent, self-controlled), lead to what researchers have called "compassion fatigue" (Chachula, 2022). Finally, although there is agreement that character is revealed in habit, there has been limited attention to the development of that habit (Lamb et al., 2021).

Leader Character Activation

Strong character is embodied by frequently exhibiting the virtuous behaviors, sustained across different contexts, which make up character. Crossan et al. (2021) reveal that character development occurs along a continuum as shown in the Character Development Stages Model (Figure 2). Character development begins with discovering character behaviors, followed by the activation of these behaviors. These behaviors are then strengthened with a focus toward increasing the frequency of the behavior. Strengthening one behavior supports the development of other behaviors and thus becomes interconnected to the other behaviors. And last, character is strongest when it is exhibited frequently and sustained despite context. The first two stages, discovering and activating, are critical to set a solid foundation on which character can be strengthened. An individual who develops awareness of their character and experiences it being activated can then pursue the development of character with intentionality. Therefore, this study focused on the first two stages to serve as a foundational starting point to examine how character can be developed.

Because character is a habit made of a set of behaviors, the process of character development draws from the habit development literature to inform the process of character development, and in this case, the activation of character. Habits are behavioral responses to environmental cues that develop through repetition of a behavior in consistent contexts for which strong habits typically involve strong and deliberate intention (Gardner & Lally, 2013). The first stage of character development, discovery, requires an intentional focus to examine and understand how exhibiting the character behavior would manifest. This includes self-awareness of an individual's current state of character, how it manifests, and what the behavior requires for it to be activated. The second stage of character development, activating, requires a cue to trigger the intended behavioral response (Gardner & Lally, 2013), in this case a

Figure 2
Character Development Process
***Source*: Crossan et al. (2021)**



character behavior. Activation of a character behavior is therefore evident by simply exhibiting the behavior (Rebar et al., 2019). Activation of a character behavior is focused only on a short display of the behavior, whereas the next stage, strengthening, would be more concerned with the duration or frequency of exhibiting the behavior. This study used music as a cue to activate character because of its universal applicability, relative accessibility, and because of its hypothesized effectiveness to activate both the PABCs and character behaviors. The next section describes how music activates the PABCs, which we then build on to link character activation with the PABCs.

How Music Activates the PABCs

Overview of Prior Music Research

Music can bring a listener out of their automatic functioning into a conscious awareness of their PABCs by bypassing cognitive schema scripts and behavioral scripts that enforce learned reactions, instead allowing for intentional responses (Croom, 2012). Prior research has established that music affects the listener physiologically (e.g., Karageorghis et al., 2006), emotionally (e.g., Salimpoor et al., 2009), behaviorally (e.g., Misuraca et al., 2017), and psychologically (e.g., Bigliassi et al., 2018). Although prior music research has largely focused on benefits to the listener (e.g., Randall & Rickard, 2017), it is also important to recognize that the same music activation mechanisms can also manipulate the listener's experience, which is consistent with insights from the priming literature and a prevalent practice in marketing and the entertainment industry. From the marketing and music literature, specific music can be played to cue a memory, which in turn impacts individual preferences in addition to manipulating purchasing and spending behaviors (North & Hargreaves, 2009). While in this section we focus on the positive benefits of music, the negative or manipulative aspects reinforce that importance of intentionality, awareness, and reflection by the listener. Specifically, research suggests that intentionally listening to sad music to remain or become sad produces similar emotional effects to the recollection of a sad autobiographical memory but is intrinsically more pleasurable (Vuoskoski & Eerola, 2012).

Music listening is one of the most common human behaviors around the world and is ubiquitous to our

everyday lives (Schäfer et al., 2013). Listening to music aids in the ability to function better cognitively, socially, physiologically, physically, and emotionally (Schäfer et al., 2013). Music is easily accessible and readily available, which is why music is such an effective tool to use for leader character and PABC activation. When a person listens to music, their cognitive ability to attend to a task is enhanced with resolve to achieve something, without altering the perception of the challenge at hand (Priest & Karageorghis, 2008). Thus, a music listener is more inclined to focus and see the task through more effectively and efficiently than without the presence of appropriate music stimuli, such as: upbeat and fast music for exercise, soft and calming music for relaxation, and simple classical orchestral pieces for cognitive tasks (Navarro, 2015).

How Music Influences the PABCs

Two components of music, arousal and valence, have been validated and provide insight into how music activates the PABCs (Irrgang & Egermann, 2016). Listening to music can allow the listener to express emotion and regulate affect (Swaminathan & Schellenberg, 2015). The term "affect" is used, "as an umbrella term that covers all evaluative – or 'valenced' (positive/negative) states" (Juslin & Sloboda, 2010, p. 10 in Van den Tol & Ritchie, 2014). Emotional responses are often measured along two dimensions: arousal (low to high) and valence (negative to positive) as illustrated by the circumplex model (Russell, 1980). The association between mode and affect is considered to be culture-specific to music in the Western world: songs played in the major chord are associated with positive emotions (happiness) whereas the minor chord is associated with negative emotions (sadness) (Swaminathan & Schellenberg, 2015). Listening to music can evoke emotions or prompt insightful ideas (Böhm et al., 2016). Applicably, personal music listening is effective in maintaining or achieving a specific mood or emotion, whether positive or negative (Randall & Rickard, 2017). For example, music that is slow, quiet, and played in a minor chord, often portrays and provokes more sadness than music that is faster, louder, and in a major chord, which elicits happiness (Swaminathan & Schellenberg, 2015; Van den Tol & Ritchie, 2014). Tempo is associated with emotional arousal, which is linked with the limbic system (e.g., the amygdala) and can be linked with increased heart rate and elevated breathing (Swaminathan & Schellenberg, 2015). Listening to relaxing music for instance, can lower arousal levels in the presence of stressors: listening to music has been associated with faster recovery from a stressful experience when compared with listening to nature sounds or silence, with regard to pre- and post-cortisol measures (Swaminathan & Schellenberg, 2015).

Music can be used as a tool to elicit a stimulus, which influences the PABCs to activate leader character behaviors. Physiology is mainly influenced by the tempo of a song – a higher tempo elicits higher arousal and a lower tempo elicits lower arousal (Ellis & Thayer, 2010). Affect is mainly influenced by the key of the song and the lyrics through associated memories, experiences, moods, and emotions (Schäfer et al., 2013). Behavior may be influenced by listening to music, which in turn initiates certain types of dance movements or may stimulate certain types of social interactions (Murrock & Higgins, 2009). Cognition is mainly influenced by the lyrics in a song by triggering new thoughts, ideas, or drawing on memory (Lesiuk, 2010). In film, for instance, music has been used to enhance the cinematic experience by affecting the viewers' emotions, the perception of character behavior, cueing or priming the viewers to feel a specific emotion to match the character's emotion or event (Damjanovic & Kawalec, 2021).

Leader Character Activation and the PABCs

The Role of the PABCs in Character Development

Crossan et al. (2021) describe the four PABC systems and the implications for individuals if they have

insufficient capacity to regulate the system. For example, if an individual has learned to suppress affect (feelings, mood, and emotion) rather than learning to regulate it, they will struggle to develop empathy and compassion (behaviors associated with the character dimension of humanity). Studies examining emotional regulation distinguish between deep acting, which involves changing the emotion itself, from surface acting, which involves supressing the emotion, with the former fostering well-being and the latter impairing it (Semmer et al., 2016). Cognitive empathy, or the ability to consciously detect and understand the affective state of others, can be strengthened by listening to familiar or preferred music through the activation of specific neurophysiological pathways, such as the prefrontal cortex, which controls executive functioning and emotion regulation (Wallmark et al., 2018). Specifically, more open-minded empathetic listeners will try to "see something positive" (Wallmark et al., 2018, p. 14), especially when exposed to preferred music. Karageorghis and Terry (1997) suggest that mood improvements are a consequence of listening to motivating music. Therefore, music listeners undergo emotional regulation, which can influence both their social cognitive and affective processing (Wallmark et al., 2018).

The importance of understanding the PABCs and their interconnected nature is perhaps most developed in the field of cognitive behavior therapy. Building on that research, Crossan et al. (2021) incorporate within cognition the important role of core beliefs defined as, "fundamental, inflexible, absolute, and generalized beliefs that people hold about themselves, others, the world, and/or the future" (Wenzel, 2017, p. 17 from Beck, 2011; Dobson, 2012). As Wenzel (2012) describes, "when a core belief is inaccurate, unhelpful, and/or judgmental (e.g., "I am worthless"), it has a profound effect on a person's self-concept, sense of self-efficacy, and continued vulnerability to mood disturbance" (p. 17). Crossan et al. (2021) describe that leader character can mediate the relationship between core beliefs and context as strong leader character fosters more functional, rather than dysfunctional core beliefs that allow individuals to transcend context. This is an important connection back to the discussion of activation, where prior research has characterized the individual as largely reactive to stimulus. In this study, we acknowledge that core beliefs will influence the leadership development process as an anchor point that directs attention and action. Essentially, individuals do not engage learning and development with a cognitive blank slate, but rather from a set of beliefs, some of which are known, and other beliefs are more subconscious. Part of the learning and development process therefore encourages a greater awareness of core beliefs and how these may influence the development process.

Leader character is observed through 11 virtuous dimensions shown in Figure 1. Judgment is positioned at the center connecting to each of the dimensions, as the other character behaviors are expressed through the choices and decisions made (Crossan et al., 2017). Because of their interconnected nature, if strength in one dimension is not supported by the others, this leads to what could be a virtue, operating as a vice. Aristotle's noted example is that courage becomes reckless without the support of temperance. Judgment, or what Aristotle referred to as practical wisdom, is in the center, because it relies on all dimensions of character (Newman, 2010). Good judgment requires that the person is able to regulate cognition and affect (Likierman, 2020), but as Crossan et al. (2021) reveal, it also relies on physiology because inability to regulate the physiological system underpins the fight/flight response that short-circuits cognitive function. Good judgment relies on being situationally aware, understanding the challenges that arise and having the appreciation for stressful circumstances commanding unique responses. Research has shown that cognitive biases (e.g., confirmation, risk aversion, or excessive risk) influence the choices people make (Likierman, 2020). When a person is more self-aware (a behavior associated with the character dimension of

humility), the individual is able to gain new perspective and thereby gain clarity.

The Role of Music in the Process

Self-awareness can be achieved through role-playing and simulations (Krueger et al., 2017), which offers participants the opportunity to see different positions and to consider opposing views safely (Likierman, 2020). Exercises that focus on developing self-awarea ness, such as listening to music (Navarro, 2015), can offer different viewpoints (Likierman, 2020) and assist with exercising good judgment. Music affects the listener's brain by stimulating hormone production, specifically in the limbic system (e.g., the amygdala), which results in the maintenance or shift to a more positive affective state, resulting in improved emotional, cognitive, and behavioral reactions (Navarro, 2015). In therapy, music has been used for many purposes, such as with PTSD patients learning to control their emotions by listening to songs that calm them down and slow their arousal state, affecting their physiology, which in turn exercises their integrated PABCs (Navarro, 2015). This act of becoming more self-aware is strengthened through music therapy.

Music can influence the listener's physiological arousal state through the tempo of the song (Husain et al., 2002), which in turn can activate specific character behaviors. With need for further exploration, we presume higher arousal states to be associated with dimensions such as courage, transcendence, and drive. For example, being passionate and vigorous, which are elements associated with drive, are typically supported by higher arousal states when exhibited. These behaviors are more receptive to sensory information (e.g., physiological cues such as heart rate) and can therefore be controlled with interoceptive feedback from the body and mind, which facilitates self-regulation of cognition, emotion, and behavior (Gard et al., 2014). Alternatively, we surmise that lower arousal states are associated with dimensions of temperance (patient, calm, composed), humility (self-aware, reflective), and humanity. For example, being patient, calm, and composed, which are elements associated with temperance, can utilize traditional arousal regulation strategies, such as deep breaths and yoga (Gard et al., 2014), when feeling physiologically overstimulated (e.g., elevated heart rate, feeling flushed, shallow breathing) during or prior to a task or event to decrease arousal states (Harmison, 2006).

Cognitive abilities have been positively influenced by music that puts the listener into a more pleasant mood and higher arousal state (Husain et al., 2002) connecting different variables of the dimensions to work together to produce better judgment. Therefore, having self-awareness of one's PABCs, specifically self-efficacy, posture, and state-anxiety, in addition to physiological variables such as arousal, are necessary for optimal coherence and performance (Crossan et al., 2021; Harmison, 2006).

Conceptual Model

Our theorizing associated with character activation reveals the importance of embedding character activation in a deliberate and intentional cycle as shown in the conceptual model presented in Figure 4, which includes: (1) assessing the development need, (2) making an intentional choice associated with the development need, (3) activating character and then (4) cultivating awareness and reflection associated with the experience (Crossan et al., 2013). The way in which an individual assesses their development need is influenced and can be limited by what they know and understand (Izrik & Nola, 2006 in Matthews, 2014), which is why the 360 approach is a critical component to support assessment. An individual's intentionality to activate a behavior is influenced by their beliefs about the behavior, their beliefs about how others perceive the behavior, and their ability to perform the behavior (Conner, 2020). In the case of using music to activate character, the individual's personal preferences will also influence their choice of music. The music stimulus is used as a tool to cue a character behavioral response while also

activating the PABCs that support character. The awareness and reflection that follows the activation of character is critical to inform the assessment through a feedback process, represented by the red arrow. Awareness and reflection can be tied to the dimensions of character (Crossan et al., 2013). In addition, "what, when, why, and how" are essential questions Aristotle urged individuals to address to support awareness of contextual influences and ultimately intentional action associated with the development of character (Newman, 2010). Although outside the scope of this study, the red arrow in Figure 4 reveals a feedback loop to assessment, which then continues the learning cycle of habit development. Music can be used as the stimulus to activate specific character behaviors (Crossan et al., 2018).

There are three critical implications arising from the foregoing analysis. Firstly, because this study employs a reflection-based behavior intervention, it should activate the behavior of self-awareness associated with the character dimension of humility. Although this may be the case for any study that is not simply observational in nature, we also suggest that because awareness has been identified as an important building block of learning, developing self-awareness in the course of developing any dimension of character will be of benefit. Strengthening character can be exercised through the practice of self-awareness and regular reflection (Crossan et al., 2013). Music is an example of a tool that can activate character (Crossan et al., 2018) and is universal with its impact on arousal and affect (Ellis & Salmoni, 2019). Connecting music and character activation promises to reveal how to activate leadership character (Crossan et al., 2018).

Secondly, because prior research points to habit development needing to be customized to the learner to strengthen intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), this study provides the participants with autonomy by allowing the participant to choose which character behaviors to focus on activating. Furthermore, participants are also instructed to choose their own music in alignment with the customized literature and because music preference is personalized. The participants completed a LCIA-360 prior to the study, which helped to inform their choice as we describe in our methods. Thirdly, Aristotle (Newman, 2010) outlines the need to understand the learning in its context and thus we seek to understand the basic what, when, where, why, and how music influences character development.

Methods

Participants were recruited from one organization, with offices stretching across Canada. From three cohorts totalling 158 potential participants, 48 people agreed to participate, and 28 participants completed the preliminary character assessment and telephone interview. For purposes of transparency, this study began as the first stage of a larger study that would also incorporate links to character development over time. However, the COVID-19 pandemic truncated the study, and therefore we are reporting on activation only. As we subsequently describe, the coding of the interview transcriptions revealed a saturation level of insights that deemed this initial stage as a stand-alone study.

Ethical approval for this study was sought and gained from the Research Ethics Board at the University. Eligibility for this research study required participants to be over the age of 18, proficient in working with other people and physically capable of listening to music. We recruited participants from a sample of public-sector executives and upper management team leaders. The participants' varied ethnic backgrounds, preferred language, gender, and time spent in current and total leadership roles was collected and described. The sample comprised 19 females and 9 males whose mean age was 48 years (34–63 years of age). The distribution of ethnicity within the sample was as follows: 54% Caucasian, 7% Asian, 7% African Canadian, 7% First Nation/Méti/Inuit, 0% Latin America, and 25% Other. The participants averaged 13 years of leadership experience

(a minimum 5 months, a maximum over 29 years' experience). We used a four-phase process that followed the conceptual model in Figure 4.

Phase 1

In the first phase, participants completed a demographic questionnaire and the LCIA-360. The survey consists of a series of behavioral statements in which the participants are requested to assess the likelihood of exhibiting the behavior on a 1–5 Likert scale. Participants received their self-ratings as well as ratings collected from their selected leaders and colleagues. As shown in Figure 4, the report provided feedback that would likely inform areas for development. Consistent with the customized theorizing to support intrinsic motivation, participants chose which leader character behavior(s) to focus on activating with music. The participant used the leader character framework to choose their behavior(s), which consists of 11 dimensions and the associated 4–9 behavioral elements. Importantly, the LCIA-360 was not used as a baseline measure of character but rather as a measure to examine the relationship between the assessment and intentionality to develop character behaviors.

Phase 2

In phase 2, each participant was asked to create a music playlist. Participants selected one or more song(s) to create a playlist designed to activate their chosen character behavior(s), providing them with complete autonomy. Each song was coded and assigned to the appropriate genre category (Ellis & Salmoni, 2019), defined as a category that recognizes the characteristics of a particular music file belonging to an established form of music (e.g., rock or country; Tao et al., 2017). Although songs can cross genre categories, each was categorized into the genre deemed most appropriate. The distribution of the selected songs by their genre is presented: Classical (13.4%), Opera (0.8%), Rock (38.1%), Pop (24.7%), R&B/Hip-Hop (8.8%), Rap (0.8%), Country (4.2%), Jazz/Blues (0.4%), New Age (3.8%), EDM/House (3.4%), Workout music (0.4%), and Gospel/Traditional (1.3%). With regard to genre preferences, our findings are congruent with the literature that Rock and Pop (contributing to 62.8% of total song selection in this study) are the most popular genres worldwide, likely because this type of music induces emotional responses (Brattico et al., 2011). Furthermore, Rap music and Heavy Metal are often associated with negatively valenced emotional responses (North et al., 2018) such as anger, whereas Classical music has been strongly associated with aesthetic emotions and the blues with sadness (Swaminathan & Schellenberg, 2015). The self-selected procedure ensured that the music retained individually affecting qualities. The music (one or two of their song choices) was subsequently played during the interview in phase 4. The interviewee was asked to listen to the music in whatever means they preferred (i.e., over a speaker, through their phone/computer, using headphones).

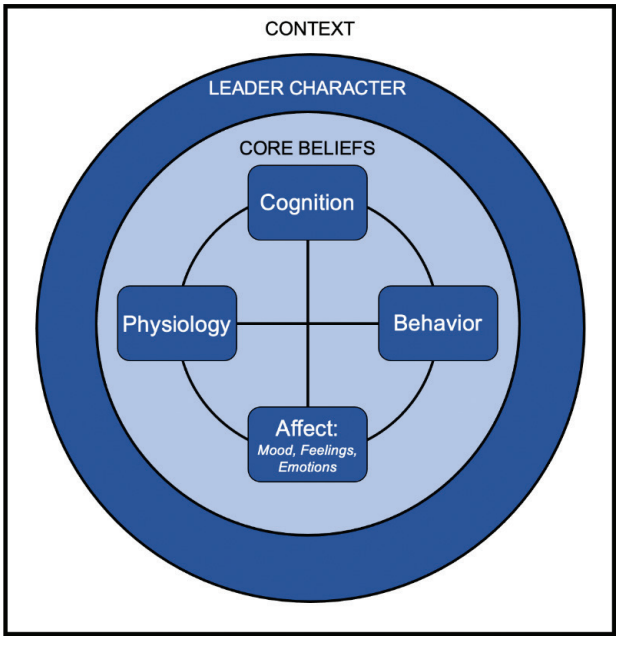
Phase 3

Phase 3 involved the beginning portion of a semi-structured phone interview (necessary amid the global pandemic), lasting between 20- and 45-minutes. The participant played their chosen music to activate their intended character dimension or its elements. According to the theoretical model proposed by Crossan et al. (2021), listening to self-selected music should activate the intended character behavior, and in addition, should also activate the underlying PABC systems, as depicted in Figure 3. For example, when a participant wanted to activate temperance by calming down and finding composure, they listened to a song from their temperance playlist that is pleasant and relaxing (e.g., Vivaldi's Four Seasons). Alternatively, when a participant wanted to activate drive and courage to "take action" and thus required increased arousal, they listened to music from their Drive playlist (e.g., Beastie Boys' Sabotage).

Phase 4

Phase 4 involved the second portion of the semi-structured phone interviews. The interview protocol is

Figure 3
Core Beliefs, Character and Context
***Source*: Crossan et al. (2021)**



provided in Appendix A. The interview structure is consistent with Aristotle's who-what-where-when-why-how approach to understand action and decision (Newman, 2010). We posed basic questions that explored why they listened to certain songs, when they listened to that type of music beyond the interview session, what it was about the music that affected or affects them, along with some questions that helped us better understand the role of the PABCs. The "who" was omitted because this question was previously answered as it referred to the participant. However, the "where" was omitted because the question was no longer relevant to our study as a result of the current global pandemic. Specifically, the "where" focused on the location of the music-listening, which was previously done during the commute to and from work and in the physical work space (e.g., private office, common meeting room). During data collection, the participants were all working from home and therefore could not practice this "normal" music-listening behavior. Instead, participants discussed their practice or intention to incorporate music-listening into their work day, that is, before meetings or presentations, and during specific tasks, regardless of actual physical space. Furthermore, we had respondents to provide measures of their heart rate before and after listening to the music to account for physiological changes, in addition to completing the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) assessment (Watson et al., 1988) immediately after listening to their music, which was designed to measure positive and negative affect. Table 1 provides a summary of key constructs and measures.

Analysis

Our primary analysis aimed to address the first and second research questions. The first research question focused on whether character was activated from the use of music. While retrospective self-report measures are the most commonly used measures of habit (Mazar &

Table 1

Key Constructs and Measurable Variables

Constructs	Measures	
Primary measure		
Character Activation and PABCs	Coding	
Secondary measures		
Leader Character Assessment	Leader Character Insight Assessment (LCIA) – 360 (Sigma, 2018)	
Music	Genre, Tempo, Mode	
Physiology	Heart Rate (bpm)	
Affect	Positive and Negative Affective State (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988) sums (scores range 10–50)	
Behavior	Action described during music listening	
Cognition	As observed in interview	
Category	**Definition**	**Themes**
Assess	Self-evaluation, assessment	Find balance, analyze, LCIA, discrepancies
Intention	Purpose, use, reason, unobserved, unintended outcome, hoping to develop	Mindset, mind frame, head-space, boost, focus, calm me, sooth, mood, goal, purpose, pleasure, to activate/strengthen
Activate	Observable behavior, strengthening and developing character behavior	Reminder, familiar, develop, strengthen
Aware/Reflect	Being self-aware, noticing, reflecting	Aware, reflect, consider, notice

Wood, 2018), we employed a hybrid self-expert measurement of character activation to enhance validity. The self-report draws from the data collected through the interviews, which is based upon self-reported experiences of how the music influenced the participant's self-reported behavior. The expert-observation draws from the researchers coding the interview transcripts to identify whether and which character behaviors were activated. Coding is a method used to label the data to provide an overview of contrasting data that allows the researcher to make sense of themes in relation to the research questions (Elliott, 2018). The second research question addressed the relationship between the PABCs and the activation of character. To examine this relationship, we continued to code for the PABCs and examined their relationship to the activated character behaviors.

Our secondary analysis continued to examine the second research question more holistically. The data were coded as themes emerged rather than at the end of data collection, and thus data analysis of each interview was subject to continual readjustment and cross-referencing. The ongoing thematic analysis provided a way in which we could code from the participants' experiences

and intentions as they were revealed: (1) before the interview (pre LCIA-360 and demographic questionnaire) and (2) during the interview with music listening.

Firstly, the interviews were transcribed verbatim by one researcher, who began to appraise content and identify potential themes. The data were saved under numerical identifiers in compliance with ethical standards and to maintain the participants' anonymity, along with screening any references to promote confidentiality. Each interview transcript was read in its entirety. After simple coding, we categorized the labels through theoretical coding. For example, "I use music to calm down" was referenced as "calm" and categorized under the theme "Intention." This process was done with each interview (until interview number 28) when it was felt that no additional categories would emerge.

The second researcher coded the data. The two researchers independently coded the first 10 interviews and compared and discussed the emerging themes in addition to any discrepancies and similarities. Any disagreements in initial coding and interpretation were discussed among the researchers resulting in 100% consensus after discussion. Subsequently, interrater reliability was tested on five independently coded transcripts and was validated with a rigor check; the two coders had a reliability of 76.64%. The coding was important since we were identifying behaviors that were aligned with the various dimensions of leader character as opposed to relying on respondents to use language such as "humility" to describe their behaviors. The first researcher completed coding of the final 13 interviews independently and shared the results with the second and third researcher.

The concept of saturation in qualitative data collection is considered the most important factor to consider with regard to sample size in qualitative research; "when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of your core theoretical categories" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 113 in Dworkin, 2012, p. 1319). Most qualitative research resources suggest using 5–50 participants (Dworkin, 2012) – "25–30 participants is the minimum sample size required to reach saturation ... in studies that use in-depth interviews." (Dworkin, 2012, p. 1320). We continued to collect data until no new codes or categories emerged and saturation was achieved, which was reached with 28 interviews (Finlay & Ballinger, 2006).

Our methods privilege music's activation of character by the very nature of asking our participants to reflect and incorporate music into their leader character activation plans. Therefore, the leader character behaviors of humility and judgment are prompted due to the nature of this study. As well, the study privileges cognition from the PABCs due to asking participants about their history of music-listening and their plan to incorporate music into their character development plans. Therefore, although we have descriptive statistics to highlight trends within our data, our interest in this research is more about the process of leader character activation and PABCs, which we describe in the next section with use of quotes from our interviews.

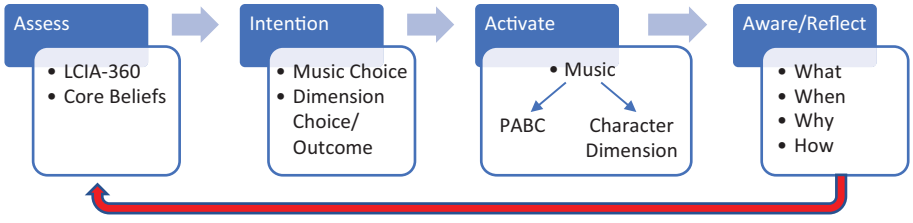
Findings

Phases 1 (Assess) and 2 (Intention)

We anticipated the LCIA-360 would cultivate awareness and help shape intention, keeping in mind that pre-existing core beliefs would also be influential. The LCIA-360 offered an opportunity for participants to understand their own self-assessment relative to the assessment of others. The self-assessment alone would have reinforced the participant's own core beliefs, whereas the assessment by others offered an opportunity to consider other points of view. The following quote illustrates the relationship:

> Well, basically, there are four areas I thought I could work on. Drive and judgment are kind of

Figure 4
Model



> together for me. Integrity, from a comment in the report about how I sugar-coat feedback, which is very valuable. But my strengths are relationships and collaboration. So I sometimes over-consult, which impacts drive and judgment. Courage, not that I don't have confidence, but it's getting it out so people can see it ... I want to work on my drive and judgment, integrity and courage. I honestly feel I do have confidence and I am brave, and I need to choose my moments so they can see this. I am analytical. I can come across as tentative.

Insights from the LCIA-360 and interview data were analyzed and revealed that the participants' raters (not including self and leader ratings) assessed the participants as being weakest in judgment (29%) and humanity (23%), on average. Leaders assessed the participants as being weakest in courage (26%) and judgment (19%). The participants self-assessed themselves as being weakest in temperance (21%) and humanity (15%). Despite judgment being identified as an area of development, the intentions to activate character were mostly humanity (22%), temperance (18%), and courage (18%). Only one participant identified judgment as an area they planned on activating, which they self-assessed as being one of their lower character dimensions:

Phases 3 (Activate) and 4 (Aware/Reflect)

The analysis of Phases 3 and 4 is structured around four areas: (1) the relationship between the phases in Figure 4 and the dimensions of character; (2) the relationship between the PABCs and the dimensions of character; (3) additional insights from the "what, when, why, how" questions; and (4) emerging insights.

Phases and Character

Table 2 provides a summary of the coding for each dimension across the phases, where the phases are referred to as categories – assess, intention, activate, aware/reflect. We present the data with the percentage of mentions for each dimension and the overall counts in the total column. Table 2 reveals that all dimensions of character were represented across all of the processes; however, there was different emphasis across the dimensions and phases.

The activation of character behaviors was coded by the researchers. Overall, the results revealed that music can activate all dimensions of character (Table 2) as per Research Question 1. Participants found the task of choosing music to activate specific character straightforward, as revealed in the following quote: "My playlist incorporates songs that activate each of the aspects of character to balance all of the behaviors, for each of them to strengthen. I went through all of my favourite songs, and my kids' favourites too, and I added the songs that spoke to me or reminded me of elements from each dimension and if it registered with a certain behavior."

However, the results revealed that participants relied on music for some dimensions more than others. With 11 dimensions, any proportion above 9.1% (green highlight) indicates a higher proportion than would

Table 2
Process Phases by Dimension

Category	Transcendence	Drive	Collaboration	Humanity	Humility	Integrity	Temperance	Justice	Accountability	Courage	Judgment	Total
Assess	6.7	13.4	16.8	7.4	23.5	6.7	6.7	3.4	4.7	5.4	5.4	149
Intention	14.4	14.4	5.2	5.8	14.8	4.7	12.1	2.9	3.6	8.8	13.3	445
Activate	7.6	8.6	6.7	16.2	17.1	9.5	13.3	1.0	2.9	6.7	10.5	105
Aware/ Reflect	4.2	6.7	10.5	10.1	23.9	14.3	9.7	2.5	2.5	5.0	10.5	238
Across %	9.8	11.6	8.5	8.3	18.8	8.0	10.8	2.7	3.4	7.0	11.0	937

be expected in an even distribution. At a summary level (across % row) the dimensions that exceeded 9.1% were transcendence (9.8), drive (11.6), humility (18.8), temperance (10.8) and judgment (11.0). Across all phases and processes, the dimensions of justice, accountability, and courage were under-represented (red highlight). Highlighted in yellow are dimensions that exceed the 9.1% threshold by more than double.

At 18.8%, humility was over double the 9.1% threshold and in particular for assess and aware/reflect at 23.5 and 23.9%, respectively. We anticipated humility would be emphasized across all phases of the process since the study prompts self-awareness and reflection. However, the interviews revealed it is important to understand the role of music in activating humility not simply because the process prompts reflection: "As soon as a familiar song comes on, I am put into the right mindset; it makes me pause. For example, humility—I am more grateful, more aware to be vulnerable; temperance—composed, calm, self-control, I am excitable; humanity—other people, more aware."

Judgment has a similar quality to humility because of the reasoning that is activated throughout the processes as revealed in the following quote: "The state of the person and where the mind is allows us to activate our character and deal with situations appropriately, allowing us to make better decisions with better judgment since the situation will be better managed. This is also the case with strong integrity and humanity. We make our best decisions when we're in the right mindset. In order to be good leaders and to show good character, we have to be in a good mindset. Others might use yoga for example, but music might be used too as a tool to get you in the right frame of mind."

Although dimensions such as justice and accountability received fewer mentions, they were nonetheless implicated, as one participant observed: "To activate accountability, particularly "accepting consequences"

seemed to be the largest discrepancy between myself and my raters. To activate justice, particularly "social responsibility" was rated lowest by raters. I listen to music in the afternoon, to remind me to attend to my weaker character dimensions." However, this mention is more about reminding rather than revealing activation.

PABCs and Character

Table 3 provides a summary of the coding for the PABCs by dimension as per Research Question 2. We present the data with the percentage of mentions for each dimension and the overall counts in the total column. Table 3 reveals that the PABCs are represented across all dimensions of character when they are viewed collectively (as seen in the PABC row). The interviews help bring the data to light about the impact of music on the collective PABCs. "My time to listen to the music, loud volume, crowd out everything else in my mind. Tempo increases my emotions. I listen to block out noise and distraction to re-focus and boost my energy levels in order to tackle the task at hand. I also listen to playlists designed to calm me down, similar to meditation and breathing."

When viewed individually across all dimensions of character, each of the PABCs are evident except for physiology and its association with collaboration. To clarify this point, it means that any mention associated with physiology and collaboration occurred alongside affect, behavior and cognition. There is differential emphasis across the PABCs and the dimensions of character. As with the processes, 9.1% is the expected proportion if there were equal influence across the 11 dimensions. What is noteworthy is that in the case of PAC, two dimensions account for over 50% of the mentions.

For physiology, drive and temperance account for 50%. It is interesting that they tend to operate in opposite directions as per the following two quotes: "I did create a playlist and created it for my temperance. I was

Table 3
PABCs by Dimension

PABCs	Transcendence	Drive	Collaboration	Humanity	Humility	Integrity	Temperance	Justice	Accountability	Courage	Judgment	Total
P	10.7	20.2	0.0	2.1	9.5	1.6	30.0	0.8	0.8	7.4	16.9	243
A	28.2	4.5	2.7	8.9	29.9	5.5	12.0	0.3	0.3	1.4	6.2	291
B	14.1	6.1	6.1	4.0	17.2	17.2	14.1	2.0	7.1	2.0	10.1	99
C	3.4	6.1	3.9	8.0	22.8	8.2	8.5	2.2	2.6	4.3	29.9	461
PABC	12.0	5.3	7.9	9.1	16.6	5.6	15.2	1.8	3.6	9.2	13.7	1008
Total	12.3	7.1	5.3	7.8	19.0	6.2	14.9	1.6	2.8	6.5	16.4	2101

trying to achieve calmness with a song and take that moment to actively breathe and to counter my drive." Whereas another participant who was working on drive noticed: "Music itself is effective. For high energy, songs are fast-beat, strong, upbeat, plus the lyrics are motivating."

For affect, transcendence and humility account for 58.1%. In virtually all instances, participants sought to induce positive affect as revealed in the following quote: "This song makes me soar way up. Something I imagine you'd play in the Cathedral or deep in a pine forest with the sun sneaking through. It makes you feel peaceful." However, there was one instance of a participant selecting a piece of music that was sad: "I especially like sad songs, like from the movie Schindler's List. It's a story, you can picture it and connect to it. Like movies and pictures and images. Emotions can jump, and we can get away from our reality for a bit and appreciate your health more. Like thinking about what those composers went through and their stories and comparing what I'm going through." This participant also scored himself as being negatively affected after listening to this song (the only participant to feel more negative after listening to music as revealed in the PANAS scores). There were many interesting descriptions around affect as revealed in the following quote: "My playlist for humanity evokes primal and for lack of a better word, ethos, from the opera songs I've chosen. Recently, I listen to audio books more than music. Now, I have reintroduced myself to music, which had been cathartic and emotional and evokes certain character behaviors."

For cognition, humility and judgment account for 52.7%. Consistent with the results from Table 2, there were several dimensions that exceeded 9%—transcendence (12.3), humility (19), temperance (14.9) and judgment (13.7). Although drive only accounted for 7.1% of all PABCs, it did represent 20.2% of the mentions for physiology. The following quote illustrates the connection: "It's not the lyrics of the songs but the tempo that drives me. Songs, in general, that give me energy and confidence. Not that I'm a lazy person but listening to these songs helps me feel like I can conquer the world and motivates me. Drive." This was reflected in the heart rate data of our participants, whereby the general pattern of pre- to post-heart rate measures increased after listening to their song choice that they used to activate lower arousal dimensions such as temperance and humanity, whereas their heart rate increased after listening to more arousing music for dimensions such as courage and drive.

Overall, the PABCs were implicated in all dimensions of character and participants had a sense of this even as they selected their music: "Each song I've chosen affects me differently. Classical music I feel in my soul. Or Adele, the words she sings, I sing along to her. Some songs I love the beat if it picks me up. Some songs I associate with a memory or a time in my life ... such a happy memory. I picked the songs for a variety of reasons, if they're from a movie or memory or the message they relay, that reminds me of a certain behavior. For example, Enya's "Anywhere Is," is for transcendence and I use it for my meditation. Collaboration for example, the lyrics in "You need to calm down" by Taylor Swift, because of Covid-19 right now, people are going a little crazy. And when I'm working with stakeholders, I have to understand their points of view. Temperance, for example, "Superman's Song" – Superman has to show restraint, and remain calm and cool, instead of using his powers to rob a bank sort of thing."

Another participant emphasized that there is an intentionality around listening that makes a difference: "I am really glad to have had this opportunity to go through this process. Instead of just having the music on in the background, I am actually listening to it. I'll put on a couple of songs if I'm having a bad day. I was amazed at the impact it has when you consciously select songs to affect your mood. I was pleasantly surprised that I could get to another frame of mind by listening to

certain songs. Lyrics and stories affect me, hearing about a situation that is similar to what I'm going through and that they were able to succeed. It's like I'm learning from their mistakes, that I find most useful and motivating."

Insights from What, When, Why, How Questions

At the outset, it is important to point out that the interview protocol did not have "who" related questions. We had assumed that the participant was the "who" but as it turned out, we did not anticipate how much individuals would rely on others in terms of understanding their needs, helping them identify music and identifying with artists in the music they chose. One participant explained how his/her music choices are influenced by the artists: "I choose music that inspires me, sung by strong role models, for example, P!nk—I like her as an Artist, a strong individual, self-confident, good values, their personality, authenticity, family-oriented, believes in herself, instills positivity. Songs that instill relationships and building strong bonds." Also, as we address in subsequent sections, music is attached to memory and that memory often included others, hence the activation of character through music was not simply a solitary experience and therefore our presumption that "who" would only involve the individual was unfounded.

The foregoing analysis captures some of the coded responses to the what, when, why, and how questions in the interview protocol (largely because the processes of assess, intention, activate, aware/reflection) capture some of the insights. Here we focus on insights from the interviews that are not captured in the foregoing analysis. Whereas Table 2 focuses on the processes by dimension and Table 3 captures the relationship between the PABCs and the dimensions of character, there were additional insights. Responses around "when" and "where" seemed to go together and were very far ranging, revealing an important versatility in how music activates character personally and professionally as revealed in the following contrasting quotes: "I listen to music to go to sleep every night. I listen to playlists in the car."; "I listen to music in the afternoon, to remind me to attend to my weaker character dimensions. It's good for a break in my day."; "I listen to music before difficult conversations and meetings … I can close my office door and listen for a few minutes." There were also interesting aspects of "when" revealing a possible temporal sequencing such as a participant talking about using music to induce a calming effect from background noise that would then allow them to become more results-oriented, activating their drive.

Whereas the previous sections focused on "what" as it relates to the dimensions of character, participants also spoke about a variety of applications with several mentions about meetings: "Before an important meeting, for example … can be intimidating with superiors. Helps me increase my confidence and settle my nerves before a task." "In the past, I've listened to music before a presentation when I'm nervous, or before difficult meetings. I'll listen to some music before the meeting to calm down and feel grounded." "I tend to work right through lunch, and I don't take a break, now I would like to take a break. Now I would like to take a lunch break and sit in my reading nook in the office with my speaker and listen to music and take a pause and activate certain character traits with specific playlists to activate and prepare for meetings. I know I can't do it every day, maybe three days a week though, but I need some balance, for mental health and to breathe, eat, stop, pause, and think about what's coming in the afternoon to prepare for it. I need to be more healthy and find sustainability to centre me."

Music also went well beyond the dimensions of character, revealing a connectivity to core beliefs: "I mostly listen to music when I want to get into 'my soul'—I don't listen to music very often, but when I can, I listen to music to return back to myself." "In today's society, so much of the news is on politics and war and negatively portrayed media, which surrounds us so we are forced to live in a world with this negative lens and even the chemicals we consume are negatively impacting us. Now

we need these positive tools, such as mindfulness and yoga to help us be more emotionally and spiritually and physically balanced. For example, art, dance, photography, reading, and music. Music is global, it's not necessary to know the lyrics since you can translate it and find the story meaningful."

The processes in Table 2 and the PABCs in Table 3 provide important insights about how music activates character. In this section, we underscore the point made earlier that it is not simply an individual experience but the "how" needs to consider the collective experience. This also extends to the activation of character in others as described by one participant: "For example, colleagues of mine were frustrated with the photocopy machine this morning so I played my temperance songs for them and they became much calmer. The ripple effect for the rest of the day was noticeable and with their interactions with other people too." There was also an important link to memory that we had not anticipated, as discussed next.

Emerging Insights

Although Crossan et al. (2021) theorized about the role of core beliefs, the PABCs and character development, there were important insights about memory itself that merit unpacking. The underlying theory that character can be activated and primed, presumes a connection to memory, yet this connection has not been theorized. The interviews provide initial insight into this connection as per the following quote: "I chose songs for my playlist either because of the association or memory that it brings up or the lyrics or message." Another participant described that music carries with it meaning, whether it is a prior experience, something about the artist, or the lyrics. Music, therefore, seems to tap into a collective consciousness, not simply the memory of the person listening to it.

Insights from the data have revealed the critical role memory plays with the use of music to activate character. This supports the character development model, which places the conditioning and priming as an important foundation to occur first to support the activation of character. Memory is elicited more effectively when attached to strong emotional events (Croom, 2012; Damjanovic & Kawalec, 2021). Music can be used as a stimulus to influence one's emotions, thus altering or maintaining their affective state, and improving their present cognitive functioning (Croom, 2012; Damjanovic & Kawalec, 2021). This finding supports how music is a powerful and effective tool that can be used to activate character. The activation of character is a critical step for the individual to not only be able to acknowledge they are capable of exhibiting the behavior but also provides a clear understanding for how character is activated, which is a critical step that precedes the development of character.

Limitations

Although saturation was reached in the responses from respondents, this study is limited by the number of respondents. As such, we only used the PANAS and HR measures to augment the interview data and point researchers to the potential of employing these measures. In addition, participants self-selected into this study. Because it was not our intention to measure the impact of music vis-à-vis other methods or no intervention, we did not employ a control group. Rather we relied on prior music research, which emphasized that every listener has a personal experience of music. Thus, we were not seeking to identify whether certain tempos, for example, would elicit certain responses, but rather whether listening to music would activate the PABCs and the dimensions of character.

While we relied on prior research that justified self-report experiences associated with activation, future research would benefit from other measures of activation, such as change in PANAS and HRV. Finally, because we did not address the bridge between activation and development, it remains to be seen how acti-

vation feeds into development. For example, is development a series of activation points or is there some other mechanism needed?

This study used music as an intervention to explore the links between music, character, and the PABCs. This study provides insight into the processes of how music influences character through the PABCs, but is limited by its qualitative design as these findings do not determine whether these changes are significant or their effect sizes. Further research is warranted to examine causal relationships, such as using a classic intervention design with a control group.

Implications for Research

We sought to address whether music can activate leader character, and if so, how? In addition, we sought to examine the relationship between the PABCs and the activation of leader character. Our findings reveal that music can activate leader character and we documented the relationship between the PABCs and the dimensions of character. Our findings reinforce the importance of understanding the PABC systems in leader character development. And although we focused on the activation of character because leader character and leader competence are entangled (Sturm et al., 2017), it is expected that the PABC systems apply more broadly than character, and thus warrant examination and understanding in leadership research.

We chose to focus on activation as a foundational step in the development stages, and as revealed in Figure 4 we employed several constructs to unpack activation with respect to associated processes (assessment, intention, awareness/reflection), a set of what, when, why, how questions in the interviews, in addition to examining the role of the PABCs to understand how activation occurs. This study reveals that there is further opportunity to study activation, for example given the important role of memory. The critical role of memory in the study, both as an individual and collective construct, raises an important question about where character resides and how individuals can access it. For example, the mentions by participants about tapping into the experience of artists and their music suggests that individuals may derive immediate benefit from tapping into these external resources. However, this suggests the reverse is also true so that there may be positive and negative influences associated with the activation of character. A benefit of music is that individuals can, with intention, construct the experience they seek. Even here, it is important to recognize that music is often used to manipulate the experience of a person as employed in film (Costabile & Terman, 2013) and consumer marketing (Allan, 2006). One aspect of the intentional and unintentional aspect of the activation of character is the sequencing of the PABCs as they relate to learning. Building on the work of Crossan et al. (1995) who identified behavior change, preceding cognitive change as a form of experiential and experimental learning, there is opportunity to insert physiology and affect into the sequential process to examine how the activation of the PABCs influences the learning process.

We conclude that there is significant opportunity for further research on activation beyond examining constructs such as memory, specifically as building on measures of PANAS and heart rate, which although introduced in this study, were not a central feature given the smaller sample size. There is further insight to be gained by making these measures more central in studies of character activation. Ideally, as suggested by Crossan et al. (2021), heart rate variability would be measured as opposed to simple heart rate. As they describe, it is the variability that is more predictive of positive and negative outcomes. There was preliminary indication in this study about how music was employed to activate affect in a way that we interpreted as processing affect. This is in line with the view of e-motion as energy in motion (Crossan et al., 2021) and thus there is insight to be gained about how music can be used to regulate affect. For example, as revealed by one participant, lis-

tening to the music from Schindler's list stirs emotion in a particular way. Crossan et al. (2021) observed that individuals who have not learned to regulate affect, will be impeded in their development of character, and thus there is need for further research that addresses how music is used to process emotion, building on research that has tapped into this area (Jahanitabesh et al., 2019). Because individuals and organizations face emotional trauma (deKlerk, 2007), future research would benefit from understanding how music can help individuals to process emotions.

This study revealed that music activated some dimensions of character more than others and hence there is opportunity to understand more clearly how various dimensions of character are activated. For example, we anticipate the dimension of Justice to be activated by other triggers, such as events (O'Neill & Cotton, 2017). Here again, there is important insight to be gained by parsing, intentional and unintentional activation of character. This is particularly relevant because events, broadly defined, are both planned and unplanned, positive and negative, and hence understanding the impact of such events on character is critical.

We anticipated that core beliefs would influence the activation of character as revealed in the Crossan et al. (2021) model. However, this was not a central focus of the study, but rather, as shown in Figure 4, a factor that would influence intention. There is an obvious connection between core beliefs and memory, which deserves further examination, and more broadly, we see opportunity to consider the activation of character as a means of influencing core beliefs. The potential to connect to core beliefs is quite promising given leadership challenges associated with areas such as unconscious bias, implicit bias, and research associated with growth and fixed mindsets (Rattan & Dweck, 2018). This will be an important line of inquiry since there are many aspects of leadership development specifically, and management more broadly that rely on shifting core beliefs (e.g., Sai Manohar & Pandit, 2014).

Although we focused on the activation of character, activation is an important first step in development as shown in Figure 2. While there is a significant literature on habit development more generally, there is a need for future research that builds on activation to understand habit development with respect for character. For example, is activation always implicated in development? In addition to the PABCs and the processes in Figure 4, this study reveals the specific role of memory as an influential force in character activation and understanding the role of memory in the habit development cycle will also be important. We anticipate a diary method would be extremely helpful in understanding the nuances of habit development.

Music revealed itself as an important means to activate the PABCs and the dimensions of character. Given the ubiquity and universality of music, it offers promise for both research and practice. Whereas music offers a means to influence all of the PABCs, future research would benefit from contrasting music as a methodology with approaches that might be considered more single channeled, such as lectures and readings.

Implications for Practice

The foregoing discussion touched on implications for practice and now we highlight three important implications for practice. Firstly, the study revealed that individuals had no difficulty using music to activate character. Thus, there is an immediate and practical application of this research since music is available to all and can be tailored to the learner's needs. Secondly, the breadth of application, as individual often paired the activation of character with a particular need, such as preparing for a difficult conversation, a challenging task, or using it to calm themselves. Thus, music is a ready resource that can be employed in the workplace. Thirdly, as organizations

seek to elevate leader character alongside competence, there will be demand for approaches that foster character development. This study reveals the important role music can play in the leadership development agenda, keeping in mind the role of the PABCs in the activation of the dimensions of character. Importantly, while in this study music was used in an intentional way to activate character, organizations need to be mindful of the ways in which character may be activated (for better and worse) through implicit and explicit practices and processes that can support or undermine character development. Crossan and Crossan (2023) articulate a model of character development that highlights the impact of peer and cultural influence on the intention to develop character. Thus, while music may be a useful approach for individuals to exercise their character development, those efforts can be thwarted by organizational processes and practices that over-weight some dimensions of character and neglect others.

Conclusion

Our findings reveal that music activates all of the PABC systems to more and less degrees. In addition, music activates all dimensions of character, with different dimensions of character varying in their reliance on the PABC systems. The study makes three key contributions. Firstly, it underscores the importance of examining activation as a precursor to development because the process of activation yields insights into the holistic role of the PABC systems. These insights prompt researchers and managers to consider how leadership development experiences need to account for the activation of the four PABC systems in character development. Our study reveals that leader character activation, which Crossan et al. (2021) see as an initial step in development, relies on all four systems. Secondly, although all four systems are implicated, this study points to the need to understand how various dimensions of character rely differentially on the PABCs, which provides important insight into how leader character development can be tailored. Thirdly, the study verifies the important role of music therapy in the activation and subsequent development of leader character and paves the way for other innovative approaches that move beyond the cognitive and behavioral focus in leadership development to embrace physiology and affect as well. Understanding what it takes to activate character yields further insight into the nature of leader character specifically, and leadership development more broadly.

Although our findings reveal that music can activate leader character, reinforcing the importance of understanding the PABC systems in leader character activation and development, we learned far more in the process. Important questions about where character resides, and the role of memory in character activation and development, along with the important role of the PABCs in character development ensure a robust future research agenda.

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Appendix A

semi-structured interview guide

1. Pleasantries: How are you? Is this still a good time to speak?
2. Can I have your heart rate? We will need this as a baseline measure for the study
3. Leader Character Insight Assessment (LCIA) Feedback Report
   a. What is your previous experience with/exposure to leader character?
   b. What were your insights about th LCIA-360?
   c. Were there any discrepancies between your self assessment and that of others?
   d. What are your preliminary intentions about developing the character dimensions?

4. Experience with music
   a. What is your habit around listening to music? For example, do you listen to it often, and perhaps under particular circumstances?

5. Describe the music you have chosen
   a. Purpose? that is, character, mood, etc.
   b. Why did you choose the songs?
   c. When do you listen to it?
   d. What is it specifically about the music that affects you?
   e. How does it make you feel?
   f. How can you use the music to activate your [character dimension]?
   g. When will you listen to it?

6. Listen to your music
   a. Let them listen to a couple of songs
   b. Ask them about the songs they listened to and how they feel
   c. What is their HR?

7. [1]Next steps:
   a. 7-day Reflection
      i. Template e-mailed to you
      ii. You will listen to your playlist every day
      iii. Record the songs you listen to
      iv. Record your heart rate immediately following listening to the music
      v. Note your movement while listening to the music – did it change?
      vi. Rate how you're feeling
      vii. Did you notice anything else?
      viii. Please submit this to OWL site, under "Assignments"
   b. The link to your follow-up LCIA will be e-mailed to you once this has been submitted.

8. Final questions, remarks, suggestions...

1 Given the restrictions associated with the pandemic, we truncated the study and did not include the 7-day reflection

FEATURE ARTICLE

Aligning, Integrating, and Synthesizing Leadership Development Education at the U.S. Air Force Academy: A Small Success Story

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ABSTRACT

This article responds to internal calls for leadership curriculum integration at the US Air Force Academy as well the Air and Space Force strategic system alignment of performance expectations to develop leaders capable of adapting to leadership's complexity within people and organizations. This summary provides an update on

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our progress and continued efforts at integration and alignment across multiple fronts. It shows initial efforts at integration between academic departments and mission elements (academic, military, and athletic areas) in response to the demand for excellence in leadership to meet Air and Space Force requirements. We rely upon systems thinking, boundary spanning relationships, and persistence for our pursuit. We explain what we have learned while laying the groundwork for our systems-based approach to leadership and how boundary spanning relationships and partnerships have enriched the cadet leadership curriculum. We conclude by laying out the next steps for our integration as dogged persistence would prescribe in an organization that demands continuous improvement and strategic relevance.

Keywords: Leadership Development, Curriculum Integration, Systems Thinking, Strategic Alignment

Introduction

"We're not integrating!" was the battle cry of our cross functional group's founder, Col Gary Packard, then Vice Dean of Strategy and Integration. The United States Air Force Academy's (USAFA) rigorous program of academics, military, athletics, and character development leads cadets to complete their 47-month experience with a sophisticated combination of knowledge and abilities that will allow them to succeed as members of the profession of arms and citizens. These are known as the nine Institutional Outcomes[1] and the Academy established interdisciplinary teams to organize and measure ongoing progress toward their achievement in our graduates.

The Leadership, Teamwork, and Organizational Management (LTOM) Outcome team was charged with integrating likely the most ubiquitous, ill-defined outcome, "leadership." Approaching the 2019 National Character and Leadership Symposium (NCLS) Packard put his voice into words in an article "Moving Beyond the Status Quo: Leveraging the Leadership, Teamwork, & Organizational Management Outcome at the U.S. Air Force Academy to Improve Leadership Education and Training" published in the *Journal of Character and Leadership Development*.[2] He made the case that USAFA was not effectively integrating leadership development across our portfolio of education, training, and experiences. Many of us took this as a call to action, but still tripped over our experiences and professional disciplines.

To move toward that integration, we lay out next steps in a systems-based approach for teaching leadership at USAFA. This summary provides an update on our progress and continued efforts at integration and alignment across multiple fronts. We show initial efforts at integration between academic departments and mission elements (academic, military, and athletic areas) in response to the demand for excellence in leadership to meet Air and Space Force requirements. We explain what we have learned while laying the groundwork for our own systems-based approach to leadership. Next, we share how the boundary spanning relationships and partnerships have enriched the cadet leadership curriculum. Finally, we map out the next steps for our integration as dogged persistence would prescribe.

While we share the ongoing efforts, we conclude that continued leadership development in alignment with the duties and expectations framework depicted by the major performance areas (Figure 1) remains vital to develop leaders capable of adapting to the complex nature of leadership in the Air and Space Forces.

1 A description of each of the outcomes can be found at: https://www.usafa.edu/academics/outcomes/

2 https://jcldusafa.org/index.php/jcld/article/view/136

Figure 1
Visual Depiction of AFI 1-2 Commander's Duties and Responsibilities from AFI 90-201 Major Graded Areas (2018).

Systems Thinking: Our Initial Challenge and Discovering the Air Force System

If you were asked to create a course on leadership for future officers like we were a few years ago, what would you include? If you are an experienced leader, you may reflect on your experience as a starting point. If not, maybe you would read popular books on leadership written by leaders that you admire. As engaged scholars, our starting point was scholarly articles and textbooks on leadership. What we found was an immeasurable number of approaches to leadership and its cultivation. Some work focuses on traits of leaders, others on values, and still others on leader behaviors. Both narrow and broad explanations of "what leadership is" have emerged in the literature. Beyond the challenge of empirically driven leadership development, there are countless celebrity leadership promoters that claim simple and key ingredients for success as a leader. As leadership instructors, we make no claim that leadership is simple as an axiom or a process. It most certainly is not. As faculty at the U.S. Air Force Academy tasked with creating a leadership capstone course for senior cadets, and as might be expected, we simply were not able to thoroughly review all the literature and explore all possibilities for our course. We found that developing a leadership course can be a more daunting and overwhelming task than we imagined. What would due diligence when exploring leadership knowledge even look like?

By good fortune, that exploration was focused as we created Leadership 400, the Organizational Dynamics Capstone for the Air Force Academy. The Air Force developed Air Force Instruction 1-2, *Air Force Culture: Commander's Responsibilities* where it defines Air Force culture and operationalizes it with four major performance areas and commander's responsibilities: executing the mission, leading people, managing resources, and improving the unit (Figure 1). In addition to the responsibilities of the commander, these performance areas will serve as "day one" expectations for graduates of USAFA because they are the framework Air and Space Force units are expected to use to assess themselves. Since the four given performance areas are shared by both organizations and its leaders, the Air and Space Forces have carefully crafted an organizational system to convey expectations and assess Airmen, Guardians and their units. Although

this system was in place since 2014, it was not utilized to its fullest extent.

Members from across the Air Force Academy, as part of the LTOM working group, continued to see the question of how to teach leadership from our own experiences or disciplinary lenses despite being implored to integrate.

USAFA's purpose is to develop leaders of character for the U.S. Air and Space Forces. Our cadets demand relevance in this charge. By that, we should deliberately be infusing Air Force and Space Force culture and governance into our leadership development processes. While time and space will not allow discussion of the Department of the Air Force's deliberate reinforcement of performance expectations, below are the seminal research reports, instructions, and policies that create a system of coherent actions defined by performance.

AFI 1-1 *Air Force Standards*, (2012)
RAND study, *Charting the Course for a New Air Force Inspection System*, (2013)
AFI 1-2, *AF Culture*: *Commander's Responsibilities,* (2014)
AFI 90-201, The Air Force Inspection System (2015, Updated 2021)
Airman Leadership Qualities and the Airman Comprehensive Assessment Addendum

These contributions clearly convey the aspirational Air Force culture of initiative, collaboration, and continuous improvement. The given system alignment helps to fill gaps in system understanding and leadership. Furthermore, in addition to the direction of Air Force leadership, the conceptualization of performance in this way corresponds to literature. The performance areas closely align to leadership scholar Gary Yukl's hierarchical taxonomy of four meta-categories (2012). The Air Force framework (mission, people, resources and improvement) broadens the focus from solely individualistic models of leadership that rely upon fostering relationships and trust to a mutually supporting systems approach that recognizes how these relationships are impacted by the structure of the organization, the environment, and the culture. This framework not only allows for effective interpersonal behaviors but also explains other factors that impact the timeless call to take care of people.

Boundary Spanning Rela tionships: Persistently Refining the Systems Framework with Creation of Leadership Capstone and Institutional Partnership

For decades, cadets took a single academic class on leadership during their junior year taught by the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership (DFBL). That tradition recently changed when the institution decided to break that one semester (40 lessons) course into four 10 lesson courses that would be distributed across all academic years to provide "just-in-time" education, tailored to the appropriate level of leadership that a cadet is experiencing. As a result and to the credit of Packard's boundary spanning call, DFBL invited the Department of Management (DFMA) to teach the 10-lesson senior level course, Leadership 400 Organizational Dynamics, to the cadets that lead the cadet wing. The cadet core Leadership courses 100, 200, 300 and 400 are built around the application of behavioral and social science to achieve the aspirations of our Leader of Character Framework[3]: Live honorably – Lift others and – Elevate performance.

The Department of Behavioral Science and Leadership teaches courses at the 100 (personal), 200 (interpersonal), and 300 (team and organization) leadership levels using a behavioral science lens. The DFMA teaches the 10-lesson senior-level capstone, Leadership 400, focusing on the complexity of organizational leadership from an organizational management perspective. To synergize that curriculum, the DFMA Leadership

3 https://www.usafa.edu/character/

400 team meet regularly with members of DFBL teams teaching Leadership 100–300 as part of the Leadership, Teamwork and Organizational Management integration team. In addition, to further work for institutional integration qualified members of the Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD) were invited to teach courses at each level of Leadership 100–400. While these steps may not seem significant at first glance, they were seismic as they broke down stovepipes across the institution and fostered collaboration. At last, collaboration across mission elements began to occur and leadership is viewed as inherently interdisciplinary.

To effectively judge leadership approaches, a leader's actions and the system they create must manifest itself in an elevation of performance, interpersonally and organizationally. Understanding the weight of the Academy's mission to develop leaders of character, all leadership classes assert the application of multidisciplinary concepts, with Leadership 400 as the leadership capstone course. Based on that interdisciplinary fact, and with the trust fostered as a result of the work on the core curriculum, other collaborations have become possible. For instance, we evaluated the courses for the Air Officers Commanding (AOCs) who are the commanders, counselors, and role models of active duty service within the cadet squadrons. These officers complete a Master's Program which was rebuilt so the cadets' commanders have a graduate level mastery of the material, concepts, and knowledge from the cadet's Core Leadership Courses. This includes a final course taught in a DFBL/DFMA collaboration. Top graduates from the program will be qualified as instructors in the leadership 100 through 400 course sequence.

Additional integration of the overall leadership curriculum includes USAFA's CCLD taking on Cadet Leadership Enrichment Seminar (CLES) formerly run through the DFBL. CLES is the professional development series designed for cadet commanders. The program design makes facilitators not only available to help cadets reflect and internalize their leadership lessons but also to serve as advisors in any capacity the cadets need. CLES facilitators now come to CCLD from across the institution to help incoming cadet squadron commanders plan and prepare for their new role. CCLD has expanded the one-day CLES seminar into a semester-long experience for cadet squadron commanders. Furthermore, USAFA now has Air University (AU) officers acting as liaisons looking for opportunities to align and integrate leadership development.

While USAFA makes adjustments, we are mindful of the evolving missions and policy changes of the Air and Space Forces. AU provides the full spectrum of Air Force education from pre-commissioning programs for new officers to graduate programs in specialized military disciplines as well as progressive, career-long professional military development for officer, enlisted, and civilian Airmen (PACE, 2020). In summer 2020, two liaison officers from Air University arrived at USAFA to strengthen collaboration and partnerships between these leadership development institutions (Drawdy, 2019). Their arrival coincided with the Leadership 400 tectonic shifts and collaboration between DFBL, DFMA, and CCLD. The partnership is valuable because both AU and USAFA are focused on operationalizing the Air Forces core values in performance and developing proficiencies in our leadership development. The liaisons look to find synergies and share best practices. For instance, Air University's portfolio of military and academic specialties enables USAFA to rely upon disciplines such as leadership, followership, diversity, inclusion, ethics, and innovation that align well with USAFA's Developing Leaders of Character Framework (Clark, 2021) to live honorably, lift others, and elevate performance. Each have value in crafting a systems approach to ongoing leadership development initiatives that increase the collective capacity of organizations (Day et al., 2014).

Dogged Persistence: Next Steps in Integration

In reality, our job is to help cadets develop as leaders and make sense of their leadership experiences at the Academy. To account for all of the missions and disciplines at the institution as well as prepare them for a myriad of potential careers they could enter into upon graduation, Leadership core course directors (100–400) in DFBL and DFMA created a comprehensive set of themes across Leadership courses that will equip cadets to apply their lessons in leadership with a broad systems lens:

- People are complex and greater diversity adds complexity and value.
- People are motivated to engage when they feel their contributions are valued.
- Organizations are shifting coalitions of people with diverse interests and goals.
- Leaders help align group and individual interests with organizational goals.
- Organizations are complex systems.
- Systems produce what they are deliberately or inadvertently designed to create.
- Leaders are the architect of both the system and the behavior within it.

The assessment framework pictured in Figure 1 also provides a tangible target for officer candidates because it holds the immediate expectations for leaders in the Air and Space Forces. Furthermore, the Academy's Leader of Character framework challenges those at the Air Force Academy to develop leaders of character. Enroute to developing leaders who live honorably, lift others, and elevate performance, the framework challenges individuals *and* the organization to "assess." Conveniently, AFI 1-2 points us to the standards of competence for leader assessment, superseding disciplinary theoretical preferences and a roadmap to begin to assess our program. Currently, the LTOM team is working to map where the proficiencies of mission, people, resources, and continuous improvement are introduced, developed, and mastered in our course of instruction. Once this is completely mapped, we can find efficiencies and build synergies across their Academy experiences and, thus, deepen cadets' proficiencies as they join the profession of arms.

Conclusion

The Air and Space Forces require leaders that can execute the mission, lead people, manage resources, and improve their units. By aligning USAFA's core leadership and leadership capstone courses with organizational management, psychology, and sociological concepts and Air Force culture and practices, we are developing leaders who are ready to answer that call. In fact, the current Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF) reinforced this systematic approach in new Air Force strategy documents and personnel system changes. In *Accelerate Change or Lose Action Items*, General Brown has declared the need for continuous improvement at all levels with his statement that Air Force leaders must "empower our incredible Airmen to solve any problem" (2020). Delivering on that goal, in February 2021 General Brown institutionalized the use of Airman Leadership Qualities for officer and enlisted evaluations: Airmen will "adjust to changing conditions," "achieve an inclusive climate," and think creatively about different ways to solve problems (Cohen, 2021). These expectations demand not only results, but a culture of mutual respect and human dignity by which these results must be attained. By this action, individual and organizational assessment are aligned. The Chief's actions should ignite our urgency to equip cadets with a broad systems understanding of human and organizational performance so cadets can assess individuals and their organization with a lens that enables them to look for better solutions in their squadron, team, club, and, most importantly, in their profession as officers. This article described our journey, thus far to help make the Chief's vision a reality at the U.S. Air Force Academy. While, we are proud

of the small successes we described here, we still have a ways to go.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

New Challenges to Character Education

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ABSTRACT

The recent growth of character education worldwide has met with a number of criticisms. This article applies a humanities methodology to investigate three of these criticisms in the belief that a growing movement can only benefit from attention to its critics. The first criticism is that character education depends on flawed or unreliable social science methods. In response, the article recommends more focused attention on the philosophical foundations of empirical research on character. The second criticism is that character education leaves unjust systems unchallenged. In response, the article recommends increased academic dialogue between character education discourse and social justice discourse. The third criticism is that character education violates the purpose of a university. In response, the article denies the objection, appealing to historical and philosophical sources to argue that character has been and should be at the heart of all Higher Education.

Keywords: Character Education, Social Justice, Empiricism, Higher Education, University, Virtue Ethics

Introduction

Research and teaching on character and virtue has been growing over the last two decades. Many new institutes, courses, and research centres have sprung up around the world.[1] Every growing and successful movement attracts criticism, and every healthy and respectable movement engages that criticism and seeks to learn from it. This has already been done once for character education. Thirteen years ago *Debating Moral Education* was published, an edited volume containing both critiques and defences of character education (Kiss & Euben, 2010). But since then, many more critical voices have been raised, some of which directly respond to arguments made in the aforementioned

1 See, for example, the research and teaching centres whose work has been documented in the following studies: (Brooks et al., 2019; Lamb, Dykhuis, et al., 2022). The Institute for Culture and Society (ICS) at the University of Navarra (Spain) and the Center for Research, Transfer and Innovation (CITEI) at the Universidad Internacional de La Rioja (Spain) are also launching research projects on character development.

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book. A survey of these criticisms shows three to be the most frequent and prominent. This article examines each of these criticisms in programmatic fashion. It does not pretend to have a comprehensive or satisfying response to any of them. Its purpose is to map out what kind of research would be needed to provide an adequate response. I will propose directions for future study in character education by attention to the points of greatest vulnerability. This will enable character education to adapt and grow into new forms that overcome its weaknesses.

First Criticism: Research on Character Depends on Faulty Empirical Methods

In order to prove its effectiveness, character education is frequently observed and measured by social scientific studies, which evaluate whether they are having an impact on the character growth of students. Two attacks have been levelled against the social scientific research on character, from opposite angles. Some criticise the methodologies of the research as unreliable; others take the exact opposite route, and use empirical research to refute the effectiveness of character education. By juxtaposing these two critiques I wish to show the importance of assessing the broader role of empirical studies in character theory. Let us begin with the latter critique.

As is well known, in the medieval period the Aristotelian ethical framework, modified by the Christian tradition, was pretty much the only framework available. The idea that the goal of life is the pursuit of virtue, and that virtue is best pursued by practice and cultivation of habits, was commonplace. But when and why did that change?

It changed with Martin Luther, one of the most significant political, theological and philosophical figures of the modern era, whose ground-breaking ideas gave birth to the Protestant Reformation. Luther rejected Aristotelian virtue ethics wholesale, along with the its later Catholic developments, seeing the whole idea of virtue as a misguided attempt to achieve righteousness by one's own efforts that can only be achieved by faith in Christ. Luther wrote, for example, that "the righteousness of God is not acquired by means of acts frequently repeated, as Aristotle taught" (Cited in Zahl, 2019, p. 201).

Luther can be considered the greatest and most influential opponent of virtue and character in the Western world. Luther's arguments are of course not new, but they are being used in a new way to attack the resurgence of virtue ethics in the modern university. According to Simeon Zahl, Professor at the University of Cambridge, "one of the strongest arguments behind the early protestant protest against virtue-based paradigms ... has not yet been refuted, and the recent theological revival of virtue ethics is on less solid ground than it appears" (Zahl, 2019, p. 222).

Zahl's basic argument is that the Lutheran critique of virtue ethics is not a philosophical critique but an empirical one, and that this makes it far more powerful than is commonly recognised (Zahl, 2019, p. 205). Luther did not reason his way into rejecting virtue ethics as an inadequate paradigm, he *experienced* his way into it. Zahl writes that "Luther supports his views about the bondage of the will and the inability of human beings to fulfil the Law through arguments explicitly derived from *his personal experience of the insuperability of sinful affections and desires*: Years of ascetic practice, community life, and prayer, under ideal early modern conditions for the production of virtue – a scrupulous Augustinian cloister – simply had no substantial effect in diminishing sinful desire that he could discern" (Zahl, 2019, p. 212). Luther believed he was not virtuous, in spite of years of trying. Because virtue ethics did not work for him, he abandoned it.

Zahl's argument is solely rooted in Luther's own self-assessment. Zahl does not engage any contemporary empirical studies of virtue and the efficacy of character education to see whether their results com-

pare with Luther's. Zahl's method raises a number of weighty questions. Should other opinions be founded on Luther's experience? What makes Luther's experience more definitive than the experience of any human being alive today? What happens when two experiences suggest contradictory theses? None of these questions can be addressed here. The question that matters for the purposes of character education is the following: how much weight should we place on empirical studies to demonstrate the fruitfulness of character education?

If we think that Luther's self-assessment was unreliable, then we have to be consistent and ask about the reliability of contemporary self-assessments as well. The problem is that most empirical studies of character are based on the exact same measure that Luther used: self-assessment of the subjects of study. As Kristján Kristjánsson notes:

> The great majority of existing instruments to measure character [are] simple self-report questionnaires. [There are] possible response biases in such measures caused by self-deceptions and self-fabulations. Even if I consistently think I am a duck, this does not make me a duck. (Kristjánsson, 2013, p. 283)

Similarly, Joshua Hordern, Professor at Oxford University, worries that a self-assessment of character is a fallible foundation on which to make moral reasoning depend. He writes that the "endemic human tendency to overestimate, underestimate, or misunderstand entirely one's own moral state' means that 'one's own character is normally little known to oneself" (Hordern, 2012, p. 102). Our ability to self-assess accurately is itself dependent on certain virtues, like honesty, humility, self-awareness, and someone who lacks these may go dramatically wrong in their self-assessment, yet how do we determine whether they lack these virtues or not if self-assessment is what we're relying on?

Hordern also worries that the use of virtue in moral decision-making can insulate an individual or a community from critique, since it obscures the rationale for a course of action, making it instead a function of (purportedly) virtuous person's intuitive sense about what is right. He writes, "making one's moral understanding dependent on one's virtue of character habituated by one's society and a highly specified account of *eudaimonia* may foreclose the possibility of experiencing moral correction" (Hordern, 2012, p. 102). In other words, an entire community could become a self-congratulatory echo chamber, where everyone affirms everyone else's virtuousness and nobody realises that some key virtues are being entirely missed. To be sure, using 360 degrees of assessment will help significantly, but it doesn't solve the underlying problem, which is the absence of an objective benchmark for character that the social sciences can base their studies on. As Kristjánsson points out, we "may suggest triangulation via reports of peers and significant others (teachers, parents, siblings, etc.), but the snag is now that even if not only I think I am a duck but other people too, this still does not make me a duck" (Kristjánsson, 2013, p. 283).

This dependency on subjective measures, which are affected by the character of the subjects in an epistemological circle, makes character education vulnerable to the changing tides of social scientific studies. To change the metaphor, it makes character education into a house built on sand. There are as many empirical studies that deny the effectiveness of character education as ones that affirm it. The situationist critique of character also uses empirical studies (see, e.g., Doris, 2002; Harman, 1999).

What needs to be explored is a robust account of the *proper role* of empirical study in the broader efforts to cultivate virtue and character. We need empirical data, but these empirical data are always interpreted by a philosophical framework that evaluates its significance. Empiricism is itself a philosophical position about how we get knowledge, a position that reaches its full flourishing in the natural sciences. As Daniel Little points out,

"if social scientists are captivated by the scientific prestige of positivism and quantitative social science, they will be led to social science research that looks quite different from what would result from a view that emphasizes contingency and causal mechanisms" (Little, 2009, p. 175).

It is a mistake to think of science as a body of knowledge. Science is actually a *mode of enquiry*, and all knowledge it claims to have is always provisional, open to being overturned by the next laboratory experiment. In order to respond properly to Zahl, Hordern, and Kristjánsson, we need not only more methodologically robust empirical studies, we need a stronger account of the philosophical position that is affected by, but not wholly dependent on, whatever social scientific research currently exists.

The questions that need answering in order to provide a robust response to critics of character education theory are as follows. Firstly, what are the philosophical presuppositions behind empirical research on character? Secondly, what is the rightful role of empirical data in measuring character development? Thirdly, how should empirical data be interpreted by its broader theoretical framework? To answer these questions requires engaging with the literature on the underlying philosophical presuppositions behind social science research.[2] Attention to the philosophical theory behind both virtue ethics and social science can help show how they relate and what role social science can play in forming a strong foundation for character education.

Second Criticism: Character Education Leaves Oppressive and Unjust Systems Unchallenged

A completely different kind of objection is raised against character education by those who see in it an excessive focus on the individual at the expense of systemic injustices, leading to the perpetuation of inequality in the structures of society.

2 The following, *inter alia*, might be a good place to start: (Mantzavinos, 2009; McIntyre, 2018).

In the aforementioned 2010 volume, *Debating Moral Education,* Romand Coles writes the following strident criticism of character education. In his view, its proponents:

> tend to focus on renderings of honesty, courage, character, respect, fairness, generosity, and so forth that are framed as if they could be achieved without doing much at all to question and change the basic parameters of our political economic relationships, practices, and the associated theodicy of history that has bound our ethical-political imaginations. It is as though, if we just walk our paths with moral rectitude and perhaps a little bit of tinkering at the edges of things—that might be enough. But what if many of these sanctioned paths are directly corrupt for the evil they do, or indirectly corrupt for the responsibilities they deny? (Coles, 2010, p. 228)

Coles is worried that character education can silently legitimate structural injustices by drawing attention away from them, implicitly suggesting that the structures are not really the problem. Coles' objection received no response from other contributors to the volume and remains unanswered in today's literature on character education.

In 2018, a special issue of *Sociological Research Online* appeared that was devoted to attacks on UK character education initiatives. Spearheaded by Bull and Allen, it offered a series of scathing critiques about the vulnerability of character education to manipulation by a right-wing political agenda. They expressed concern that a focus on character places an undue burden on oppressed individuals to change their character instead of changing the system that oppresses them:

> By occluding the social context, individualised character 'traits' become located as the primary cause of social mobility or 'success' in life, when in fact, they instead provide a means for the

> rationalisation or justification of unequal outcomes. Such a focus on individualised attributes is particularly insidious because it outlaws political anger at structural inequities and injustices, focusing it inwards instead. (Bull & Allen, 2018, p. 396)

They see this as evidence of an "implicit theory of capitalism visible in character and resilience discourses, which requires individuals to uphold morality because the economic system cannot" (Bull & Allen, 2018, p. 396). Similarly, another contributor, Nick Taylor, writes that "emphasis on individual virtues, psychological traits, or skills as markers of success ... risks perpetuating existing discourses that individualise responsibility for a highly unequal society and economy" (Taylor, 2018, p. 403).

There is much in these criticisms that misses the mark. For example, character theory is not individualistic, but gives a social dimension to the very essence of virtue. Cameron, Bright, and Caza, aware that virtue theory is frequently associated with political conservatism, draw on ancient discussions in order to affirm that virtue is "synonymous with the internalization of moral rules that produce social harmony" (Cameron et al., 2004, p. 767).

Character theory is also not unaware of the impact of social systems on the development of virtue. Research at the Oxford Character Project has produced seven strategies of character development, one of which includes awareness of the ways in which systems and structures impact virtue capabilities (Lamb, Brant, et al., 2022).

Nonetheless, the way society and systems are referenced in these approaches is insufficient to answer this objection, because the focus is still on the ways in which character is shaped, or character growth inhibited, by such systems, not on the social inequalities embedded into the system. Therefore, I suggest that proponents of character education take seriously this critique as something that does not undermine the value or importance of training in virtue, but that might point out ways to strengthen and improve it.

It is a remarkable fact that academic debates on character and virtue have very little overlap with social justice discourse, even though both inhabit the broader field of ethics. This absence of dialogue between the two may be partly explained by different focal points: one orients its discussions around the transformation of personal qualities, the other around the transformation of political structures and social contexts. If the broader goal of both is human flourishing and well-being, then we can see how both start from opposite ends of the spectrum in pursuing that goal. But the two focal points are inextricably intertwined: the character of individuals both shapes and is shaped by the systems they inhabit in circular fashion. This means that each of the two ethical foci is only impoverished by a lack of attention to the other. What is needed is a fuller picture of the conditions for human flourishing that takes into account both aspects of what is needed to engender change. This can take place at both the research and the pedagogical levels.

Firstly, research. Let us consider two examples of engagement between virtue ethics and social justice. James Hankins' *Virtue Politics: Soulcraft and Statecraft in Renaissance Italy* argues for a foundational connection between virtue and society in Western political thought (Hankins, 2019). The seminal political theorists of Renaissance Italy saw the goal of politics as the formation of virtuous citizens, and conversely considered virtuous citizens to be an essential factor in the maintaining of a just and peaceful society. This book could be seen as approaching virtue from the side of politics and society. Conversely, Lisa Tessman's *Burdened Virtues: Virtue Ethics for Liberatory Struggles* starts from the opposite end (Tessman, 2005). Tessman explores what Aristotelian virtue ethics can offer to the struggles for justice and equality in today's society, with a focus

on gender equality. These contributions are necessarily limited by the scope of a single academic monograph. The particularity of their foci shows how much more needs to be done to bring these two discourses together fruitfully.

Secondly, pedagogy. Those who engage in character education should make systems change an explicit focus, highlighting it as a desired consequence of the character formation of those in positions of power. They should also raise awareness of the privileged status that belongs by necessity to anyone with the leisure to receive character education. Programmes like the Oxford Character Project are offering character education for the privileged elite, those with the training, capability, and financial support to study at graduate level at Oxford. This should have an impact on the kind of virtues on which such a programme chooses to focus and on how those virtues are manifested in leadership. Educators of character need to be explicit about the ways in which character qualities can help transform unjust systems and create fairer and equitable structures for the benefit of all.

Character education discourse needs to show more awareness of the structural injustices and inequalities, which pervade our world – not just the way those systems inhibit character growth, but the way they inhibit all kinds of human flourishing including opportunity and provision of basic material needs. The problems we see in the world can be addressed from the top down and from the bottom up simultaneously, and we should not prioritise one approach over the other. The most powerful and effective social action will be the kind that harnesses the insights of *both* virtue ethics *and* social justice to address the problem at both the micro-individual level and the macro-structural level.

Third Criticism: Character Formation Violates the Purpose of the University

We now come to an objection that considers character education inappropriate for the university, however appropriate it might be for primary and secondary education contexts. David Carr of Birmingham University has three concerns about the principles behind character education. Firstly, he worries that teaching character to over-18-year-olds could be seen as an unwarranted restriction of their moral freedom to choose for themselves what is right and wrong. He writes:

> Up until a certain point, we have to make decisions for young people, but after that they may be left – are, indeed, entitled – to decide for themselves. But, by much the same token, what scope or justification might remain for formal moral education beyond generally accepted years of discretion? (Carr, 2017, p. 114)

He concludes that "the key question about teaching moral virtues is not that of whether we are cultivating morally questionable qualities, but of how we might teach them is a way that does not undermine or inhibit the freedom of choice that is a sine qua non of virtuous action or conduct" (Carr, 2017, p. 112).

A few qualifications to make sure this objection is understood. Carr is not arguing against the legitimacy of ethics as a topic of higher education. He recognises that an ethicist may teach ethics to students. But to avoid indoctrination, the ethicist is expected to teach ethics in an open-ended manner, giving students tools for enquiry rather than imposing the teacher's own answers on students as if they were the right answers. This means, necessarily, that the ethical debate is framed and assessed as a purely intellectual enquiry without reference to the actual decisions made by the students outside the classroom. While virtue and character could be and sometimes are taught in this way, proponents of character education typically argue that it *ought not* to be taught in this way. They frequently quote Aristotle's dictum that "we are inquiring not in order to know what virtue is, but in order to become good, since otherwise our inquiry would have been of

no use."[3] Character education is not about intellectual debates on the relative merits of virtue, or rather, it is only about them as a means to the end of *becoming virtuous*. Proponents of character education would consider a course on virtue ethics a failure if all it did was increase students' intellectual knowledge of virtue theory without transforming their character. But to aim at transforming their character in a particular way implies that the teacher is pushing a particular ideological stance on the students.

Carr has identified an unavoidable tension between freedom of opinion and learning objectives. The teacher of character formation cannot avoid having a set of character qualities whose development in the students is one of the goals of the course. If it were open to debate whether or not these qualities were desirable, the teacher could not make them a goal of the course, since the students might legitimately decide that such qualities were not desirable and thus choose not to develop them. The ethical value of a particular virtue cannot *at once* be open to disagreement *and* a development objective.

Carr's second objection to making character a learning objective is that it breaks down the separation between professional and private, since the teacher is aiming to change the way the student behaves everywhere, not just in class. It is one of the core definitions of a virtue that it is only a virtue if it is consistent across different spheres of life. This means that to cultivate virtue successfully in a student, they must become courageous, honest, empathetic, humble, etc. not only in the profession they are training for but also in their private lives as well. Yet while such interventions may be appropriate for children, nobody has the right to interfere with the private life of an adult. "Trainee doctors, lawyers or business executives," Carr writes, "may reasonably protest that so long as they are conducting themselves justly or virtuously in professional role, it is no-one's business but theirs whether they conduct themselves virtuously in their private lives" (Carr, 2017, p. 117). A teacher may give students a failing grade in virtue ethics if they cheated on the exam. But he or she may not give them a failing grade because he or she saw them having a drunken brawl on the street a week before the exam. In short, if Higher Education is about professional training, then according to Carr, character education is not appropriate for it.

Thirdly, Carr objects that character education violates an older, more traditional goal of the university – the disinterested pursuit of knowledge. He contends that the goal of virtuous formation of university students undermines the university's "traditional commitment to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake" (Carr, 2017). This means that "while it may be that [some] studies involve significant character-forming discipline, the adoption by teachers of any more explicit character-forming agenda might well be regarded as so much personally intrusive imposition" (Carr, 2017, p. 120). In short, whether the university is seen as a professional training school in the newer model, or as a sanctuary for the disinterested pursuit of knowledge, in both cases the goals and methods of character education are inappropriate and should not be used.

What follows will begin as a simple refutation of Carr's critique, before exploring what can be learned from it for the benefit of character education. We start with his third objection, that character formation violates the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.

There are two difficulties with Carr's position: one historical and the other philosophical. From a historical perspective, the notion of the University as committed to disinterested knowledge is by no means 'traditional'. It arose as part of the Enlightenment and found its full flourishing in 19th-century Germany, with the ideal of *Wissenschaft*, or rigorous critical enquiry. This notion replaced the older and more traditional ideal of *Bildung*,

3 See *inter alia*: (Euben & Kiss, 2010, p. 12; Lamb, Brant, et al., 2022, p. 124; Lamb, Dykhuis, et al., 2022, p. 239).

or intellectual and moral formation. Several scholars have pointed out that the university *was* in fact in the business of character formation right from its origins, even if such formation was focused more on intellectual than on moral virtues. As Rowan Williams writes: "a closer look at the origins of the university might give us pause before we simply oppose modern pragmatism to ancient contemplation." For the premodern mindset, he tells us, the purpose of a university was "to create "public people" – people who, whatever their specialism, are committed not only to reasoned argument ... but to a responsibility to the ideal of rational governance and rational public discourse." The university's role in society was to "nourish ... honest and hopeful speech, for the sake of a properly reasonable culture and politics" (Williams, 2004) – in other words, the formation of intellectual virtue. Similarly, Nigel Biggar concludes a brief historical survey with these words: "Universities were never simply the child of an ivory-tower love of knowledge for knowledge's sake. They were always partly fuelled by practical concerns, whether the concerns of private individuals or of those with public responsibility" (Biggar, 2022, p. 99).

But there is also a philosophical difficulty with the idea that the university should pursue disinterested knowledge, which is that such a pursuit is impossible for human beings as we are.

Anyone who spends time reading the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century –people such as Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, Gadamer, Wittgenstein, Ricœur, Polanyi, among others – is met with the very strong unifying theme that there is no such thing as disinterested knowledge, no such thing as the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, no such thing as neutral enquiry, no such thing as an objective point of view. For such thinkers, these treasured notions of the 19th century are a myth and must be exposed as such. All knowledge is interested, in the sense that it is formed in response to implicit questions that arise from a particular cultural and historical situation. All knowledge is situated in the mind of a knowing subject, which 'knows' in a unique way due to his or her upbringing, history, and concerns. All intellectual pursuit is driven by the needs and interests of a particular cultural milieu, and has certain goals in mind. This is very easy to see if we read the supposedly neutral scholarship of an era other than our own – the particular interests, presuppositions, and perspective stands out to us as if it was written in blood (Gadamer, 1977). It is only the scholarship of one's own time and place that can ever give the illusion of seeking knowledge for its own sake.

Moreover, Carr would be unlikely to deny that even the "pursuit of knowledge for its own sake" (if such a thing exists) requires formation in order to be done properly. A scholar doing rigorous scholarly research needs to be possessed of the intellectual virtues – honesty, thoroughness, fairness to all sides of a debate, not presenting the work of others as if it was one's own, not twisting the evidence to fit prior opinions, etc. The same tension Carr identified between learning objectives and freedom of opinion applies to all scholarly training. One cannot penalise a student for plagiarism at the same time as keeping the question of whether or not plagiarism is wrong a matter of debate in the classroom. Teaching cannot but assume the truth of the standards by which students are measured, and this means that all teaching has at its core some principles that are not open for debate. Why, then, should these be limited to the intellectual virtues?

What the defenders of disinterested knowledge were trying to get at is better expressed through the notion of *freedom of enquiry*, the liberty to pursue any line of questioning without having to justify its immediate relevance, without dogmatic restrictions on what one is allowed to question or propose. This notion *does* rightly belong in character education because it is one of the intellectual virtues necessary for honest rational debate. Carr is right that students' freedom of choice in this area should be

protected. If a student of character education wants to ask whether honesty or humility or courage really are desirable virtues and not vices, or whether virtue can be acquired, or whether there is any point in pursuing virtue, the teacher should not shut down these questions as illegitimate. But even while the debate is going on, the student needs to be made aware that the course assumes that virtue is worth pursuing and that to question that is to question the very purpose of the course. This principle applies to all other kinds of teaching as well. A student may be free to argue that dishonesty, plagiarism, and sloppiness are appropriate forms of scholarship, but if they try to *do* scholarship in that way, they will fail the course. If Carr wants to call that educational compulsion, we must only reply that such compulsion is a condition for the possibility of any university education of any kind.

This last point also refutes Carr's first objection, that character formation should not be imposed on adults. All teaching imposes values, whether implicitly or explicitly. Because character education does so explicitly, it draws attention to this fact, but this does not make it unique or distinctive in any way. Carr's objection to character education in Universities falls apart, then, both because character formation is a more traditional goal than the pursuit of disinterested knowledge, *and* because insofar as the latter has any meaning, it includes character formation at least at the intellectual level.

Let us turn, finally, to Carr's second objection: that character formation violates the separation between professional and private. Insofar as he means that that teachers can't follow students around 24/7 and grade them on the virtuousness of their lifestyle, no proponent of character education is suggesting such a method. A student will always be able to do well in a character formation assessment while remaining unvirtuous. This unavoidable disjunct between the classroom and the rest of life only reveals the limits of a teacher's ability to formally measure and assess student learning. Such limits are already known and compensated for in the ordinary course of employment. Employers know that a student with top grades in medicine or law may for some other reason be unsuitable for a medical or legal job. That is why businesses hire people not only on the basis of their resumes or curriculum vitae (CV), but conduct interviews and ask for character references.

What, then, can we learn from Carr for the future of character education in Universities? Two points are worthy of note. First, we need to remember the limits of our ability to measure students' character. This point is reinforced by our first criticism about the limits of empirical study on character more broadly. Without any objective guarantee that character formation is having its desired effect, teachers are compelled to cultivate the virtue of *hope* in themselves. Hope is unnecessary where there is certainty. But without certainty, the need for hope becomes manifest. Teachers may reasonably hope that their teaching is having some effect outside the classroom. Secondly, we need to encourage critical debate about virtue itself in the classroom, instead of presenting a pre-decided framework as dogmatic and unquestionable. Students must always feel free to challenge the premises of the education they are receiving, and the teacher must always be open to changing his or her mind on the basis of something the student has said.

Conclusion

Those invested in character education can only benefit from paying attention to its critics. If in the worst case they are correct, and if this exposes a fatal flaw in character education, it is better to be honest and admit this sooner than later so our energies can be directed elsewhere. But if, as is more likely, they do not undermine the entire project, they can still serve to highlight flaws and point to areas of improvement in how we understand, teach, and communicate about character theory. If character theory is to grow and develop, it can only do this by learning what its weak points are. Addressing these weak points will enable it to adapt and change until the criticism no longer applies. And even if the

criticism misses the mark completely and is already fully addressed by existing accounts of character theory, still, the criticism may draw attention to common misconceptions about virtue, or to a prevalent position concerning it, and thus help its proponents to direct their efforts towards countering that misconception. If a critique represents the common opinion of millions of people, then it is a critique worth knowing about and developing resources for a public response.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

Integrity in Leadership: Insights through a System Design Approach

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ABSTRACT

This article highlights a process of inquiry used to develop an institutional-level strategy for student leadership development at a comprehensive liberal arts college. The authors make the case for why having a leadership development strategy is of broad interest in higher education. This article offers practical insights from relevant literature and the authors' expert opinions. The article models a process for how any organization, especially those in higher education, can form an executable leader development strategy by following the example provided.

Keywords: Integrity in Leadership, Leadership & Character Development, Organizational Culture & Design, Strategy

If you wanted to reliably prepare college-aged adults to be effective leaders, how would you do it? Berry College, a small comprehensive[1] liberal arts college in northwest Georgia, offers an intriguing case to explore an answer. While the context at Berry is surely unique, our approach may prove valuable to others vested with the responsibility to promote character and leadership development, especially in higher education contexts. The contribution of this article is to provide an example that encourages organizations to think comprehensively about leadership development and to take action that brings about the desired results.

1 Berry is different from a traditional liberal arts college in that it offers professional and pre-professional programs that are not commonly found at other liberal arts colleges.

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Across its 120-year history, Berry College operates on the idea of exchange: Berry helps students plan for personal and academic success, provides hands-on experiences, and surrounds students with mentors. In return, Berry asks students to make a difference in their communities and the world. Early in Berry's history, students practiced skilled trades such as manufacturing bricks and constructing campus buildings, improving the campus while learning through marketable experiences. Today, Berry's purpose is enacted through a shared commitment to produce outcomes that are perhaps less tangible, yet equally essential to our graduates' success. Developing individual and collective leadership capabilities are key themes that connect many of the important conversations taking place on our campus. While leadership development is a complex phenomenon, its importance as a marker of graduate readiness for the workforce has long been an aim at Berry.

At the dawn of the 20th century, President Theodore Roosevelt described Berry as one of the greatest works of the time for American citizenship (Kane & Henry, 1956). We undertake a focused interest in leadership development to refresh our approach and revitalize our commitment to fulfilling this accolade. What does success look like? Fundamentally, the answer involves preparing graduates who practice disciplined ways of thinking and patterns of behavior that promote well-being for themselves and others, encourage engagement, and contribute to performance. Our aspirational ideal is based on the assertion that Berry is stronger when character and leadership development principles, values, and norms are widely held, respectfully practiced, and kindly reinforced.

While Berry's enduring culture is fertile ground for developing character and leadership, we recognize that leadership development cannot be left to time or chance. In both social and economic terms, current events the world over reveal the pressing need every community has for effective leaders. Our graduates join communities and workplaces in desperate want of effective leaders. A recent survey reveals that 89% of college graduates are hired by employers who expect them to lead (Zapier, 2019). Where wisdom obliges us to extol character and leadership development because we believe it is the right thing to do, prudence suggests we must also act to fulfill the community's needs. The contribution of this article is to document our efforts to develop a strategy to serve as highly effective stewards of the young citizens placed in our charge, fully preparing them to lead wherever the world takes them.

The Berry Center for Integrity in Leadership

The Berry Center for Integrity in Leadership is a relatively recent addition to Berry College. The vision for the center was inspired and sponsored by the efforts of Cecil "Buster" Wright III, an alumnus and current member of the Board of Trustees. Wright witnessed the effects of character and leadership deficiencies in various professional settings over his career and was inspired to act. Under his faithful stewardship, he envisioned and established early partnerships that resulted in the creation of the center and its first initiatives. The Carper Mentoring Program has operated continuously for the last 10 years. The program provides students the opportunity to build developmental mentoring relationships with professionals who inspire and encourage learning, promote student ownership and pursuit of developmental aspirations, and serve as positive role models. The center's efforts also include a lecture series that invites the community to explore diverse perspectives offered by a variety of thought leaders. Our guests over the years include Makoto and Haejin Fujimura, Dr. Barbara Kellerman, Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, and an impressive representation of contemporary leaders. These leaders have consistently brought ideas and challenges about leading others to light in unique ways. In addition, the center has experimented with other leadership efforts including the Collegiate Leadership Competition, student-led leadership initiatives, and academic courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Today, the center is building upon these preliminary successes by working on a vision where character and leadership development is a means toward and an objective of Berry's purpose and mission. We began this effort by confronting the somber reality that most leadership development efforts involve the expenditure of resources without bringing about the desired effects (Kaiser & Curphy, 2013; Pfeffer, 2015; Reimer et al., 2021). In part, we think part of the problem is that leadership interventions, no matter how well intended, fail to achieve outcomes when they are mismatched to the environments in which they function and for the people that they serve. Until there is a clear, unifying plan for leadership development, it is quite difficult to take stock of what is needed and what can be achieved.

Given such a plan, we humbly admit that success is anything but guaranteed. Leadership development involves leadership. As a dynamic process, the leader, followers, and the situation all get votes, and these votes are not equally or consistently weighted positively toward intended outcomes. In some circumstances, even optimal conditions in one area can be insufficient to overcome the limitations of another. Put simply, even the very best leaders face failure, especially when leading change.

A rain-soaked Martha Berry faced just such a leadership challenge when she asked a local congregation to fix the leaky roof of their small country church. As the story goes, a well-meaning parishioner (who was surely aware of the personal cost and time involved in fixing the roof) correctly observed no action was needed because it might not rain the following Sunday. The allure of his solution is that it is both plausible and authentic. Martha Berry persisted and arranged a solution because she correctly understood that inaction cost considerably more than an occasionally damp service. Sure, there are always good reasons to maintain the status quo and dismiss the rainy days because they are beyond our control. The response to rainy days, however, is fully our responsibility.

A former college administrator aptly observed that the center's periodic leadership development efforts and limited capacity programming fell short of providing developmental opportunities for the full community of our students. We aim to remove barriers so that any community member can benefit from our efforts. We considered the effects of expanding offerings to reach more students and how developmental effectiveness can depend on offering a range of experiences (e.g., Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Fenwick & Haigh, 2004; Selzer et al., 2017; Van Wart, 2012). In key instances, researchers conclude that programs tailored for diverse students produce the best returns. Each effort, however, (e.g., creating courses, planning seminars or workshops, providing personality assessments, or arranging for external experts to contribute diverse perspectives) requires considerable resources. We wrestled with the idea of how many individually tailored programs would be enough. The problem gets further out of hand when we started to consider the demand for follow-up efforts to each tailored offering. We loved the idea of offering something for everyone, but quickly reached the point where reality loomed. Left unchecked, scheduling and resource constraints could conceivably cause our efforts to completely miss our goals.

Implementing a Systems Approach

A systems approach provides a means to achieving similitude between desired and achieved results. Admittedly, we discovered this approach as we reflected on our progress in the last year. This retrospective review was taken in keeping with the leadership principle of learning from our leadership experiences (Ashford & DeRue, 2012). We believe our journey was effective, but perhaps not as smooth as it might have been. When we started to see the patterns of our efforts, we were able to identify, organize, and derive greater meaning from our efforts. Two lessons learned stood out. First, organizing efforts according to a systems approach offers an orderly approach to inquiry, design, implementation, and revision. Second, a systems approach encourages intentional accounting

for how intermediate results contribute to a specific end. Considering the effects of leadership development in terms of dynamic skills and abstractions (Day & Dragoni, 2015), it is necessary to account for how experiences interact and accrue over time (Tesluk & Jacobs, 1998). After all, the direct result of any single intervention in a larger developmental experience is not leadership. For example, consider a leadership intervention focused on a topic such as empathy. Participants may demonstrate measurable differences in knowledge, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral action. Nonetheless, empathy is not leadership. Rather, empathy is rightly understood in the context of a greater suite of leadership behaviors that serve as explanations for ways to improve bonds between people and advance performance (Kellett et al., 2006). This example illustrates the need to connect each element to the broader system.

We also discovered that just about any undergraduate program can claim it develops leaders. It is readily observable that degree-granting institutions universally challenge students to learn, practice, and refine diverse skills that are fundamental to leadership including communication, persuasion, teamwork, adaptability, and self-discovery. Effective leaders, however, must practice behaviors that are relevant to achieving results and performance (Campbell et al., 1993). The center contends that isolated competencies are insufficient to produce effective leaders unless they are integrated. In their comprehensive outcome-oriented review of leadership development, Day and Dragoni (2015) conclude that individual experiences and interventions bring about developmental indicators that when combined with support produce individual leadership outcomes. Simply stated, developing disaggregated skills does not make someone a leader. Leadership development is a complementary process of growth that embraces the interplay of what leaders know, value, and can do.

We are committed to outcomes that result from the integrated effects of the inputs we make to the system, intermediate effects, and eventual outcomes. Here, we offer a summary of key principles we observed in reflection of our design effort based on a general application of systems engineering design practices (e.g., INCOSE, n.d.). In our efforts to serve as a community-wide catalyst to achieve Berry College's purpose and mission, we describe our process in a manner that any organization, especially those in higher education, should find relevant and practical to informing their developmental efforts.

Inquiry

The main thrust of our efforts started with a question that challenged us to think about the end we wanted to achieve. We began with the broad question, "How can we best produce individual and collective leadership capabilities through experiences and interventions on our campus?" We quickly discovered the need to define what we mean by individual and collective leadership capabilities.

Simple, but accurate definitions improve our ability to communicate what we are after, without prematurely biasing the emerging design to align with a particular leadership theory or model. We define character as practicing helpful ways of principled thinking. Our definition broadly incorporates concepts such as attitudes, motives, and values that represent learned patterns of thought. Leadership is character's directly observable companion and is defined as learned patterns of effective, influential behavior. Character and leadership fulfill complementary roles and explain how to unite groups of people (e.g., teams, organizations, and communities) and promote prosperity (e.g., achieving positive social and economic change). Defined in this manner, deficiencies in one quality confine what can be achieved with the other. Furthermore, we crafted our definitions to reflect the fundamental qualities of a liberal arts education. The center's efforts must contribute to the day-to-day efforts of learning that are essential for citizenship.

Our inquiry also helped us to understand that the idea of integrity in leadership was not widely understood on campus. Building on Berry's culture, we defined integrity in leadership as the whole person, lifelong process to form and master the head, heart, and hands to work in mutually reinforcing ways that inspire emulation and generate collaborative excellence (Berry Center for Integrity in Leadership, 2023). Defining integrity in leadership enhances our ability to communicate key ideas that explain the conditions of leading, learning to lead, and learning to be a leader.

The process of conceptual exploration involved careful consideration of goals to serve the college, its faculty and staff, current students, and future graduates. Character and leadership development is envisioned as an enhancement to ongoing activities that already reach every student. Berry offers students more than 75 areas of academic study and encourages students to explore career possibilities in over 180 work centers. With so many demands upon students' time and talents, students could easily become consumed by their interests and experience divides. Berry mitigates this risk by assigning every first-year student a peer and faculty mentor. As students complete four-year degrees, mentors guide students and promote student learning. Berry's mentor community inspires student action and contributes to the creation, exploration, and pursuit of consequential personal and professional goals.

In particular, the mentor community helps students derive meaning from key experiences. Through Berry's student work program students explore and build expertise. Real work on campus provides a meaningful context where students learn to function as teams, negotiate how to structure work and practice supportive norms and processes, and make consequential decisions. Berry is also responsive to emerging social needs. The Good Neighbor Challenge operationalizes a culture of belonging and equips community members to improve relationships across campus (Berry College, n.d.). Bringing students together with mentors, in work centers, and through community initiatives all represent efforts to promote subgroup membership. Researchers have observed that such efforts can reduce the salience faultlines that would otherwise make heterogeneity more noticeable (Rico et al., 2012; Bezrukova et al., 2016). At Berry, students discover common interests with diverse peers in the pursuit of shared goals.

Our inquiry also involved identifying extant conditions (e.g., resources, talent, values, norms, and buy-in). Consideration of extant conditions involved taking stock of active influence processes that operate at multiple levels and through diverse domains (e.g., Mathieu et al., 2019; Yukl, 2013). The center identified three dimensions that operate as prevailing contextual influences at Berry. These dimensions include organizational culture, the contributions of community members (e.g., faculty and staff, alumni, benefactors, and the local community), and the experiences of our customers (i.e., our students). By seeking to understand each of these key influence processes, we seek to produce efforts in accord with Berry's culture to improve the likelihood of broad adoption and eventual effectiveness of our efforts.

Culture. Organizational culture plays an important role in any organization's performance. As observed by Schein and Schein (2017), embedded socialization processes dominate organizational behavior and inform who we are as members of these organizations. Every member of the community plays a central role in defining how values are carried out. What Berry's community values and how it implements these values are consequential to what the center can achieve.

Berry's motto, "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister" is unquestionably one of Berry's most established socialized values. Ancillary values that are widely evident at Berry include a deep respect for the whole person, lifelong learning, and making a difference (i.e., practicing leadership). Berry's values are clearly and

consistently evident in processes including the exchange between the college and student, the purpose of paid professional development experiences for students, the reason for Berry's emphasis on mentoring, and how the world's largest college campus serves as an inspirational learning environment. The motto reflects how community members should and do act. Of note, Berry's formal leaders hold responsibility and authority but tend to lead with influence and through culture. In an environment like this, it can be difficult to distinguish leadership and culture as they drift together and substitutes for leadership form (Hartnell et al., 2016). Berry operates as a community where members primarily pursue common interests, values, and goals through relationships. Serving others is a dominant motivating factor that attracts faculty and staff to the campus, informs how organizational members approach work, and is of keen interest to the present effort.

Community. While cultural messages and norms inform and guide community members about the right way to approach work, culture is not the only source of influence. Action also results from individually held attitudes, motives, and values. As posited by Kohlberg and Candee (1984), people make judgments of responsibility before they initiate action. The implication is that the center's approach to leadership development must also account for how leadership development fits with the intrinsic qualities of the people who comprise our community.

A key quality observed in how Berry's faculty and staff get work done suggests that the community relies on processes of empowerment. Empowerment emerges from the formal roles and responsibilities people hold, the characteristics of community members, and the ways that leaders initiate and achieve goals (Maynard et al., 2012). Students experience varying degrees of autonomy and responsibility for other students and assigned work. This appears to be especially true for upper-class students who are more likely to hold formal administrative and leadership roles. Empowerment has significant effects on performance and learning behavior (Seibert et al., 2004) and these effects are strongest in the presence of interdependence (Hülsheger et al., 2009; Van der Vegt & Ven der Vliert, 2002). Our presumptions about the role of empowerment suggest it will be important to assess how empowerment functions as an explanatory condition of our efforts.

While most of our faculty and staff are unlikely to immediately endorse the idea that they are leader developers, organizational members demonstrate that they have a grasp of the power of purpose. Purpose involves helping students find meaning in routine activities by reinforcing behavioral ideals, providing developmental feedback, and generally promoting leadership development (Reimer et al., 2021). Faculty and staff are central to helping students discover the meaning of experiences. Subjects such as moral action, personal responsibility, leader identity, and leadership efficacy are highly relevant to establishing meaning (Bandura, 1986; Hannah & Avolio, 2010; Hiller, 2005; Kiker, 2021). As observed by Larsen (2019), an effective leader developer "has a disposition toward developing others as leaders, embracing the challenge of the messiness of development, while being humble and teachable" (p. 145). The center has a pivotal role to develop the leader developers but must do so in a manner that reflects and values the incredible efforts that occur daily on our campus. Efforts that enhance how community members approach individual contributions to student development appear key.

Customers. Berry's legacy depends on a thriving process of engagement that produces citizen leaders who are inclined to be and do good. Students learn character and leadership by observing, inquiring, and practicing the examples set by community members. Across successive generations, Berry students emerge as valued citizens who demonstrate mastery of essential knowledge, skills, experiences, and values.

Students' definitions and assumptions about leadership provide insights into how to best support the discovery and pursuit of developmental needs. Many students appear to have misgivings or simply fail to understand what leadership is. Students form perspectives from a variety of sources about who leaders are and how they should act. In addition, students tend to possess simplistic schemas that limit their perceived need to develop. For example, when asked to reflect on leadership experiences and how they could have led differently, students regularly suggest that exercising power and authority are the only alternatives. Emphasizing positive alternatives can expand student capacity to lead through the discovery of new attitudes, values, motives, and behaviors. Opportunities to intentionally practice leadership development across a range of activities appear as an effective means to energize the community and bring about the intended results (Scisco et al., 2017).

Course feedback from Berry during the Spring of 2023 revealed that students report learning more when they are challenged and receive proportional support as they explore new perspectives and make personal discoveries about their values, knowledge, and skills. Course feedback from one of the author's prior experiences offered a warning about what not to do. Students can easily misconstrue leadership as a cold and loathsome subject when we allow it to become disconnected from the experience. There is clear value in approaching leadership as a scholarly discipline that informs observation and analysis of what it is and how it works (e.g., Rosch & Anthony, 2012; Samuels et al., 2013). Regardless, the scholarly pursuit of leadership must be relevant and connected to a student's current state and future aspirations. Discernment about when and how to introduce new ideas appears to be important and nuanced.

Design

The value of an education at Berry College has always been one that emphasizes the education of the head, heart, and hands in an experience-rich environment (Briggs, 2014). Accordingly, any approach to leadership development must be highly relatable, memorable, and practically relevant. Our design processes flowed from the process of inquiry toward desired outcomes. The nature of experiential learning through paid work on campus and mentoring culture at Berry indicated priority opportunities for our efforts. The present effort is focused on delivering a high level of design where we identify how to best leverage Berry's existing culture and structures. The goal at this stage is to improve, encourage, and support leadership development (Allen, 2008; Reimer et al., 2021) that illuminates future efforts that advance our purpose.

Successful leadership development at Berry College involves establishing developmental practices that can reach any student regularly. Two features of Berry's experience caught our attention. First, more than 90% of our students take advantage of paid professional development during their time as a student. Depending on several factors, students can work between 10 and 16 hours per week during the school year and up to 40 hours per week during the summer. Student work appears as a critical process where developmental efforts can take root and produce benefits for individual students, work teams, and the college. Second, Berry has a culture of mentoring. Every incoming freshman is assigned a mentor and Berry's norms and values encourage students to seek out additional mentors to learn more from their experiences. Seeking new mentors serves several roles. Data collected by the center suggests that students seek different types of mentors. Students appear more likely to seek mentors who will help plan and support career progression. Be that as it may, students also express interest in exploring relationships with mentors who can help them navigate personal challenges and serve as positive role models. Considering the reasons students are looking for a mentor informs practices that can enhance the effectiveness of mentoring relationships (Rose, 2003). Because supervisors have considerable opportunity to observe students through routine work and mentors are actively sought

out by students, investing in faculty and staff who serve in these capacities emerged as an implementation priority.

Credible and engaging experiences should spark curiosity, encourage perspective-taking, and entice action. An integrated education of the head, heart, and hands reflects the idea that education involves a lot more than simply acquiring knowledge or skills. Integrity in leadership requires developing the whole person. The resulting design spurred detailed discussions about the role of the head, heart, and hands in a leadership development context. The "head" addresses questions concerning what we know and need to learn. This comprehension-oriented element of the emerging framework represents a commitment to the lifelong, intellectual pursuit of knowledge that informs, creates, and expands our individual and collective potential. The "heart" addresses questions concerning who we are and aspire to become. This value-oriented element involves the continuous formation and refinement of attitudes, motives, and values that concern what is important, right, and noble, which drives us to pursue change in ourselves and to lift others. Lifting others includes relational activities that serve to inspire and maximize the personal and professional potential of others (Johnson et al., 2022). "Hands" addresses questions related to how we relate to others and our environment. Hands involves mastering skills and abilities that bring people together to combine their efforts and produce shared value. Our expressed values and behavioral actions should serve as a source of inspiration to others. Integrity in leadership gives a name to Berry's distinctive approach to preparing students to make meaningful contributions by helping the community remember the essence of what leadership is for Berry and providing a common language and set of practices that encourage and reinforce learning across campus experiences.

Implementation

Our process of inquiry began with the identification and investigation of three prevailing influence processes. Upon examination, we discovered important qualities, characteristics, and issues that informed our goals and objectives. Exploring Berry's culture revealed new insights about Berry's formal philosophy and espoused values. The role of Berry's community indicated the need to encourage efforts related to habits of thinking and action that promote their roles as leader developers. Finally, inviting students to share in the rich cultural context of the school and its community is essential to breathing life into character and leadership lessons.

The Berry community values relationships and everyday interactions because they are both plentiful and meaningful. Rather than vying for that perfect moment to bring some leadership or character principle into focus, the center needs to raise awareness of the opportunities inherent in daily life. Berry's relationship with students builds upon intellectual exploration and practical experiences in conjunction with strong support, engagement, and empowerment that further reinforce leader development in day-to-day conditions. The members of Berry's community, regardless of differences in stature or position, require support so that they can continuously share, model, and teach value-centered ideals to students. The community's values are deeply ingrained, regularly communicated, and exemplified through consistent and resolute practice.

We are now applying the systems design approach to implement our first major initiative by building upon Berry's long-standing tradition of an education of the head, heart, and hands. The center is exploring and designing a coaching intervention. We arrived at coaching after a considerable investment in the systems design approach. Reflecting on our discoveries and observations, coaching skills promise to enhance communication, improve engagement around our objectives, and support a feedback-rich culture that leads to improved discovery and awareness of how each member of the community is valued and can grow.

To understand the effects of this effort, as part of the next design process we are planning assessment efforts

that will support the revision process. We are focusing on key, measurable variables that are foundational to leadership practice (Scisco et al., 2017). These variables include self-awareness (using reflection, feedback, and assessment to improve the accuracy of personal insights that inform and support development), learning agility (applying lessons from diverse experiences to find better solutions to new challenges), communication (building interpersonal relationships through the exchange of ideas, active listening, establishing rapport, and clarifying objectives), and influence (building cooperation and commitment by shaping attitudes, values, motives, and behavior to develop and implement effective change). Initially, we plan to implement assessment at the individual level. Using lessons learned from this process, we plan to expand assessment efforts to understand how these individual-level competencies work at the team level to better understand higher-order effects. The emerging coaching initiative resulted from considerable investment and planning based on qualities inherent to our organization.

Revision

We started with the assumption that despite our best efforts, we will not get everything right. Throughout the process of inquiry, design, and implementation, one element that revision involves is actively encouraging and inviting feedback to enhance and learn from our efforts. In part, this involves seeking to understand diverse perspectives and working to achieve shared solutions. We expect to encounter difficult challenges and diverse points of view through this process.

As important as the perspectives of others are to success, we cannot rely on the input of others alone to establish accountability. Accountability in terms of ongoing monitoring and assessment provides the means to recognize sound investments, indicates the timing and nature of adjustments, and informs the need to eliminate those things that prevent success. Accountability must be tailored to the organization, involves clearly and consistently communicating values and aspirations, and entails transparency.

The progress achieved in the past year reflects hours of conversations with campus partners, answering questions, accepting critique, and revising our own developing understanding of what we aimed to achieve. In a sense, this article is an artifact of that effort through which we invite dialogue and shared learning.

Conclusion

The center's vision is to become a community asset for character and leadership development so that Berry graduates are known as citizens who possess integrity in leadership as evidenced by their capacity to bring people together to inspire and achieve collective success. Our second aspiration is for faculty and staff to be known for exemplifying integrity in leadership by developing and inspiring students who make significant contributions to the communities in which they live, work, and serve. Achieving our overarching vision involves community-wide development that operates on Berry's enduring principles and values. When we started our inquiry, the center already offered a host of programs and initiatives to students. Rather than growing our programming, we invested in an intentional process to better communicate the center's intent and what we want to achieve. Being busy, by artlessly providing students with one leadership experience after another, creates a challenge of abundance that is hardly a great way to substantiate success.

Leadership development results from purposeful efforts that serve individual and collective needs while advancing an organization's purpose. First, the center will serve as a community-wide catalyst to achieve Berry's purpose and mission through innovative and adaptive character and leadership solutions. Second, the center will empower and equip the Berry community with growth-oriented, learner-focused, evidence-based engagements that advance character and leadership development. Third, the center provides, shapes, and

refines character and leadership development solutions that are self-reinforcing, scalable, and sustainable. These statements posture the center to share our vision and invite partnerships, establish priorities, and steward resources as we move forward.

Achieving our vision depends on our continued success in inviting current and prospective students, faculty, and staff to share our values and aspirations for developing leaders. The idea that "the people make the place," (Schneider, 1987, p. 437) is central to our approach. Our people determine the behavior, look, and feel of experiences at Berry College and ultimately shoulder the responsibility to prepare Berry students to be accountable, humbly confident, and steadfast leaders of character. The center's role is to influence objectives and strategies, motivate the community, coordinate efforts, and promote shared values and practice. Character is cultivated and formed through strong relationships, everyday habits, instruction, and inspirational environments (Snyder, 2019). Character and leadership formation is not simply an ideal but is a tangible and viable solution to overcoming challenges that our students face now and into the future.

Leadership development is essential to being competitive and successful in all manners of organizations and communities. Developing individuals into leaders requires every member of the community to share in the responsibility of providing requisite knowledge, skills, and values. Introducing and sharing these qualities must be done in ways that respect theories of organizational culture, leadership development, and the needs of the learner. Our journey and approach are rooted in our campus culture and community while illustrating that any organization can engage in leadership development in a manner fitting with its history, culture, and context. We have endeavored to model principles and ideals that we believe are worthy of inquiry and pursuit in the readers' organizations.

Thus, our emerging approach to leadership development through daily life at Berry represents a significant shift in the center's traditional role. Rather than simply planning and hosting programs and events, the center's investments must serve to inspire and empower Berry's citizens to consistently embody highly valued and widely applicable leadership knowledge, skills, attitudes, and motives that meet institutional priorities and bear evidence of individual and collective growth.

Berry's culture strongly represents values and norms that are immediately conducive to our efforts. Nonetheless, we cannot take Berry's culture for granted. Sustaining the beliefs, values, and practices that underlie Berry's reputation requires ongoing investment, renewal, and refreshment. The center's efforts embrace the responsibility to cultivate character and leadership development. The integrity in leadership framework offers an appeal to the Berry community to pursue leadership development as a whole-person, lifelong process that transcends academic disciplines, increases access to development across campus experiences, and celebrates individual differences and expressions of leadership. Our founder Martha Berry established the values and practices that created our culture. Our future depends on committing to this exciting contribution that starts us on the right foot and guides us in the journey.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

Leading Across Cultures: Crafting a Curriculum to Improve Inclusiveness – A Service Academy Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This case study details the evolution of the U.S. Naval Academy's "Leading Across Cultures" Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion curriculum initiative, from conception to execution. University leaders initiated the program during the racially fueled national tumult of 2020, in an effort to develop in students an ability to build inclusive teams while leading across different cultures. The university studied many commercially available diversity and inclusion educational programs but deemed them unsuitable for a military academy setting, and instead, developed its own. The Naval Academy's Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership led this endeavor. Its leaders started by compiling learning outcomes drawn partly from the U.S. Navy's broader diversity and inclusion efforts and partly from the leaders' belief that an ability to work across cultures represented an integral part of learning how to lead. The learning outcomes included all three domains of learning: cognitive, behavioral, and affective.

Keywords: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, DEI, Inclusiveness, Annapolis, Mutual Obligations

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Introduction

During 2020, as U.S. citizens wrestled with a series of racially fueled incidents across the nation, the U.S. Naval Academy's (USNA) Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership commenced work on a discussion based program to aid future military officers in leading across different cultures and building inclusive teams. Entitled Leading Across Cultures, the discussion-based program aims to provide a framework for building more inclusive groups, a model that students, faculty, staff, and coaches could use in Annapolis and beyond. The curriculum includes a series of small group training and discussion sessions. The program features monthly follow-up small-group discussions.

This article explains the evolution of the Leading Across Cultures initiative from conception to execution. It includes how the leaders of the Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership narrowed down the focus of the effort and selected a series of learning outcomes, how the contentious national political environment shaped the final product, and how/why the Stockdale Center chose the Mutual Obligations Approach.

This article does not attempt to capture everything the USNA did in response to the racial difficulties of 2020 and 2021. That response included dozens of offices and hundreds of people. Rather, this article attempts to explain how the Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership responded in creating its Leading Across Cultures program, which is used today for two purposes: firstly, to train those faculty, staff, and coaches who have expressed an interest in improving cross-cultural relations and secondly, to train a cadre of student Dignity and Respect Program (DRP) facilitators, also called Dignity and Respect Officers (DROs) who serve in each of the 30 companies (a military unit with approximately 150 Midshipmen) on campus and on every varsity sports team.[1] In mid-2023 the Commandant of Midshipmen (equivalent to a civilian dean of students) expanded the program by mandating that all extra-curricular activities and club sports teams with 30 or more participants include a trained DRO.

Search for Existing Racial Reconciliation Programs Leads Stockdale Center to Construct Its Own

In spring and summer 2020, as racially fueled protests and riots spread across the nation, the staff at the USNA's Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership pondered how it could respond. The mission of the center involves using externally provided gift funds to stage extra-curricular and co-curricular activities to develop ethical leaders for the naval services. The Stockdale Center staff commenced its efforts by reviewing many of the racial reconciliation books and training programs available in the commercial marketplace. For multiple reasons, the Stockdale Center staff chose not to select them. Some proved so closely connected to civilian business applications that they failed to account for the unique facets of military organization and life. Other programs openly embraced controversial political views that threatened to draw the Stockdale Center into the thorny, partisan national debate over race, gender, and sexuality, which might jeopardize the Center's long-standing aim of remaining apolitical. Still others featured online learning, which we believed would be ineffective in fostering learning in the affective domain. Having found no commercially available products or curricula that fit, the Stockdale Center leadership team began to craft its own program that aimed to foster discussions about diversity issues and how to create more inclusive teams. As with the creation of any new curriculum, we started by asking ourselves, "What exactly are we trying to do?"

1 Originally titled the "Diversity Peer Educator" (DPE) program, USNA leaders in early 2023 changed the name to the "Dignity and Respect Program" (DRP) to better reflect its aims. This article uses the revised nomenclature. The reasons for the name change will be addressed later in the article.

Learning Outcomes

Concurrent with the Naval Academy and Stockdale Center efforts, the larger Navy headquarters in Washington had compiled an Inclusion and Diversity Core Competency Continuum that provided some broad learning outcomes upon which to build the Leading Across Cultures curriculum (OPNAV N-1, 2021):

Learning Outcome	**Primary Domain of Learning**
1. Create an inclusive environment for all members	Behavioral
2. Demonstrate inclusion through communication	Behavioral
3. Understand organizational and social norms	Cognitive

To these, three other outcomes were added that were drawn from a set of U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet directives on desired Navy Signature Behaviors (U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet, 2020):

4. Embrace the diversity of ideas, experiences, and the backgrounds of individuals	Affective
5. Treat every person with dignity and respect	Behavioral
6. Intervene when necessary	Behavioral

In addition, Naval Academy leaders added several additional outcomes:

7. Understand the science of perception and bias and strategies for addressing them	Cognitive
8. Understand the terminology and logic of contemporary academic arguments concerning Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Cognitive
9. (For future facilitators) Facilitate discussions related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion topics	Behavioral
10. Internalize the belief that all people were created equal and that everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, as reflected in the Navy's shared military virtues	Affective
11. Internalize the belief that naval leaders must master the ability to lead across cultures	Affective

Borrowing from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy

In 2021, about the same time that Stockdale Center leaders were crafting their curriculum, the USNA Chief Diversity Officer asked the Stockdale Center staff to train participants in a new program patterned after the U.S. Coast Guard Academy's Diversity Peer Educator (DPE) program; after initially using the same name, in early 2023 the Naval Academy retitled its program to the DRP, staffed by Midshipmen DRO. The plan envisioned training a cadre of students, at least one from each of the 30 companies at the USNA, as well as at least one representative from each of the varsity sports teams. Once trained and certified, these DROs would then become chief facilitators and discussants on inclusion-related issues throughout the 4,400 students in the Brigade. Stockdale Center leaders believed that its nascent Leading Across Cultures program could be used for that task. As part of adapting the curriculum, a formal mission statement for the DRP program was crafted:

> ***Mission:*** *To create an inclusive environment that fosters dignity and respect throughout the Brigade by equipping Midshipmen to lead across cultures* (U.S. Naval Academy 2021).

The word inclusion in the mission statement proved important. Often the words diversity and inclusion today get used interchangeably. There exist, in actuality, substantive differences between them. *Diversity* refers to the degree to which an organization consists of people of different traits, such as race, religion, technical skills, age, etc. As such, then, diversity represents a quantifiable metric. *Inclusion*, on the other hand, represents something less concrete and more abstract. Inclusiveness consists of two components: belongingness and uniqueness. Inclusive leadership, in that vein, involves "fostering a shared team identity and individuals' feelings of belongingness," while at the same time "enabling individuals to express their uniqueness" (Ashikali, 2019).

Relatively few people decide the diversity of an organization; at the Naval Academy, it is U.S. Congressmen, Senators, and the admissions office staff who shape the incoming class of students. Everyone, on the other hand — Midshipmen, faculty, staff, and coaches — shapes the institution's environment of inclusion. The ability to lead across different cultures, and to make everyone, regardless of their background, feel that they are a part of a unified team — to feel like they are included, in other words — represents a fundamental mission of all members of the armed services.

As an adjunct to the mission statement, Stockdale Center crafted a DRP Objective to provide some additional clarity on how to achieve our learning outcomes:

> ***Objective:*** *The Dignity and Respect Program supports the moral mission of the U.S. Naval Academy by facilitating small group conversations that educate and inform Midshipmen, Faculty, and Staff and foster a culture of inclusion across the Yard, resulting in resilient teams ready to exert maximal performance and win the naval service's battles (U.S. Naval Academy, 2011).*

Teaching and Learning in the Three Domains

Educators and social scientists frequently classify learning into three domains: *cognitive*, *behavioral*, and *affective*. The cognitive domain includes what is traditionally thought of as classroom learning, such as mastering the periodic table, for example, or learning how to complete long division. The behavioral domain includes learning physical skills, such as learning how to swim or to dance (Rhode, 2004). The third domain, affective learning, aims to foster changes in peoples' attitudes, feelings, and interests (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2021). The list of learning outcomes governing the Leading Across Cultures curriculum includes all three domains of learning. Like at most universities, the USNA faculty and staff possess considerable experience working in the cognitive domain, which serves as the foundation of most traditional college courses. USNA staff also works frequently in the behavioral domain of education. All students receive physical training in swimming, martial arts, and military drill. The Stockdale Center staff, however, possessed much less experience working in the third domain of learning, the affective domain. In early deliberations the Stockdale Center staff agreed that the program — whatever its final form — should involve all three domains, with special attention to shaping students' affect or feelings.

In preparing to teach students in the affective domain, Krathwohl's Taxonomy of Learning in the Affective Domain was referenced. It involves five different levels of growth in student affective learning, from most basic to most advanced:

Receiving refers to the student's simple awareness that a thing exists.

Responding refers to active participation on the part of the student.

Valuing involves a commitment to something.

Organizing brings together different values, resolving conflicts between them, and begins the process of building an internally consistent value system.

Characterizing by a value set. This culminating stage is reached when an individual has developed a value system that controls their lifestyle; the behavior is pervasive, consistent, and predictable (Indiana University, 2022).

With respect to the learning outcomes that fall primarily in the affective domain, while we hoped our students would one day reach the fifth and highest level of Krathwohl's affective learning — getting all service members to develop a value system that views all humans equally, who commit themselves to treating all people with dignity and respect and who recognize that they must master an ability to lead across all cultures — we concluded that was perhaps too lofty a goal given our time constraints. Instead, we adopted the fourth level as a more realistic end-state: bringing together different values, resolving conflicts between them, and beginning the process of building an internally consistent value system. Having set an overall goal for learning in the affective domain, the Stockdale Center staff then set about trying to construct a curriculum to meet all of its learning outcomes.

Selecting a Dominant Pedagogy

While Krathwohl describes levels of learning in the affective domain, he does not offer suggestions on how to achieve it. Thus, began a debate within the Stockdale Center on how best to change attitudes, feelings, and interests. Traditional classroom lecture and online computer-based learning were ruled out. The first often requires little of a student beyond sitting in a seat while someone else talks, and the second involves little human interaction with others as the learner flips through online slides. Over time, Stockdale Center leaders selected a pedagogy that primarily involved small group (approximately 10–15 people), in-person discussions, led initially by the senior leaders from the Stockdale Center. Ultimately, however, Stockdale Center leaders aspired to get Midshipmen to lead these small group discussions.

A Curriculum to Meet the Learning Outcomes

As a result of this work, the Stockdale Center crafted a 15 hour Leading Across Cultures educational curriculum composed of several different modules, all aimed at meeting the learning outcomes. The curriculum opens with a 90-minute guided scholarly discussion on perception and bias. This segment aims to address the cognitive learning outcomes of the curriculum. In the Naval Academy's freshman leadership course Preparing to Lead (NL110), Midshipmen learn about perception, cognition, and bias, and how the human brain frequently and naturally makes rapid conclusions when it confronts new things, new ideas, and new people. In this opening segment of the curriculum, these concepts are reviewed. We discuss how this sub-conscious human process of making rapid conclusions can prove beneficial when it provides quick meaning in a complex or dangerous environment: it allows one to draw upon prior experience to determine safety or danger in "fight or flight" survival circumstances.

Daniel Kahneman, who has popularized a model of the mind that explains why the brain operates quickly in some situations yet slowly in others, a differentiation that is important in understanding the emergence of human stereotypes and biases, is introduced. In his influential book *Thinking Fast and Slow*, Kahneman explains that there exists a figurative part of the brain (referred to as System 1) that operates quickly and makes rapid conclusions, with little or no effort and no sense of voluntary control. The brain's System 2, on the other hand, allocates attention for effortful mental activities, including complex computations (Kahneman, 2011).

What importance do System 1 and System 2 have for our understanding of inclusion? They are important

because they impact the manner in which humans judge others. When meeting someone new, the average person sums up the other very rapidly, sometimes within just a second or two of meeting, based upon our experiences and learning that may have come decades before. There exists a growing scholarly literature that supports the idea that the human mind makes quick decisions about others, usually at the subconscious level. One scholar has cautioned, "Although cultural wisdom warns us not to judge a book by its cover, we seem unable to inhibit this tendency even though it can lead to inaccurate impressions of people's psychological traits and has significant social consequences" (Zebrowitz, 2017). Thus, the brain's System 1 is very powerful and often leads people to make conclusions about others much more quickly than a rational analysis of their backgrounds, skills, knowledge, or competencies might otherwise suggest.

Kahneman cautions that it is very difficult to avoid our own biases even if we know that we have them. So, what are we to do? We spend time in this unit discussing some suggestions. Firstly, when making an important decision, increase the number of people involved and ensure that they come from diverse vantages; in doing so we can seek out alternate opinions and explore them fully, thus providing an opportunity to see inconsistencies and faults in our own logic (Kahneman et al., 2011). Secondly, when interacting with someone different than ourselves, we might paraphrase back to the speaker what we think we heard, in order to confirm that we have interpreted their words correctly and that our understanding has not been clouded by our own biases (Shanahan, 2021). Finally, we can make a conscious effort to learn about others and perhaps change our pre-existing attitudes and beliefs. This opening lecture unit aims to address the cognitive learning outcomes.

After the scholarly unit the curriculum continues with a discussion about the importance of creating in their groups a warm and welcoming environment. This exercise purposefully begins the process of achieving the behavioral learning outcome "create an inclusive environment for all members"; and the affective learning outcome "embrace the diversity of ideas, experiences, and the backgrounds of individuals." In this unit, students break into small groups of 3–4 people for a group exercise called the "Name Game" in which they share some information about their name. We've found that this exercise helps our participants get to know one another on a personal level, and they begin to feel more comfortable revealing their hidden selves. We aim, in other words to begin to build in their groups some psychological safety.

The curriculum then proceeds to the next unit, a shared video viewing and discussion session on cultural inclusion. The locally produced video (Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership, 2020) features interviews of minorities sharing their experiences at the Naval Academy. We have found that the video and the guided discussion that follows normally initiates conversations that rarely happen spontaneously, and it also serves as a template that DRO's can use in future inclusion-related discussions. This video, along with others in the Conversations in Conscientious Leadership series, all aim to provide an opening device to generate similar conversations in small group settings, and to stoke learning in the affective domain.

The next section of the curriculum focuses on how to become an effective facilitator: one of the learning outcomes in the behavioral domain. We discuss techniques for good facilitation, such as lesson planning and developing a set of open-ended questions that will elicit a free-flowing conversation. We talk about skills such as how to handle the "loud-mouth" who attempts to dominate a discussion, how to encourage a reluctant talker to join the conversation, and how to re-center a wayward discussion back to the desired subject. This is followed by a discussion around active listening.

Next, we introduce the concept of cross-cultural competence. We discuss the culture Iceberg, which suggests that the most important dimensions of a culture — like that of an iceberg — lie hidden under the surface, awaiting exploration from an interested and eager learner. We encourage students, to take some time to study the history and literature of other cultures, particularly those with whom they will interface in the workplace or on an upcoming deployment. We follow that up by having them take a cross-cultural competency online test, which often proves humbling to even the most internationally minded person.

Role Playing Exercises

After discussions on active listening and cross-cultural competence, the curriculum then moves into some role-playing exercises, aiming in part to meet the "Intervene When Necessary" learning outcome in the behavioral domain. Learning to "Intervene When Necessary" serves as one of the Signature Behaviors that fleet leaders want officers and sailors to exhibit. But how does one develop the skills to intervene in fraught and tense situations? We give participants an opportunity to practice such interventions. Again, in small group settings, we distribute scenarios to participants that include a difficult race or cultural dilemma. The purpose of this role playing is not to determine right or wrong, but to develop among future facilitators some interpersonal skills that they can use to help facilitate discussions to defuse tensions before they explode.

Mutual Obligations Approach

The curriculum then turns toward a structural framework to improve inclusion in the fleet's operational forces. Sociologists Emerson and Yancey developed a Mutual Obligations Approach to transcend barriers between people of different cultures, backgrounds and attributes. Their framework empowers and encumbers *all* members of a group to help shape group attitudes, beliefs, and practices, and as such, represents a form of both "affective" and "behavioral" learning. In the curriculum we talk about how individual service members might adapt it to help improve feelings of inclusion:

1. Initiate inter-group communication under controlled circumstances
2. Listen to each other
3. Recognize and incorporate individual and group interests
4. Search for a critical core that all can agree on, giving voice to cultural uniqueness
5. Acknowledge and define the inter-group problems at hand
6. Devise ways that allow for negotiation of these individual and group interests to produce a solution to which all can agree (Emerson & Yancey, 2010).

One of the steps in the framework encourages all members of a group to "search for a critical core that all can agree on." In the naval services, the long-standing virtues of honor, courage, commitment, and respect provide such a critical core:

Honor. We honor our shipmates when we accept them as equals, regardless of their race, color, creed, sexual orientation, faith or other attribute. We honor them by celebrating their histories as well as the struggles that they face.

Courage. Courage is the ability to do something that scares someone. We can all habituate courage by practicing bystander intervention, like when we hear off-color jokes or overhear a slur. Intervening takes courage, because it compels us to speak up: "Hey shipmate, your behavior is improper, and you must change it."

Commitment. One shows commitment when one exhibits a steadfast dedication to a cause. In this context, we can habituate our commitment to stand up for equality for all, regardless of one's race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnic origin. Such a commitment might involve our dedication to improving feelings of inclusivity in our units.

Respect.[2] Finally, we can exercise the virtue of respect by recognizing that, as human beings, we all possess an inherent human worth, equal in power and weight to that of all others. One of the Enlightenment's foremost thinkers, Immanuel Kant, placed respect at the very top of moral thinking about the equality of humans. By virtue of their existence, Kant believed, all humans possess certain things that no one else can take from them (Hill, 2014).

By habituating these cherished naval virtues of honor, courage, commitment, and respect, and by utilizing the Mutual Obligations Approach, over the long term we intend to build bridges across social divides and help forge a more inclusive environment. The next component of the curriculum surrounds an objective review of the heated and contentious political perspectives on Diversity and Inclusion, which fulfills learning outcome 8. The Stockdale Center believes that members of our nation's officer corps benefit from understanding the logic behind the various viewpoints.

Culminating Project

In the culminating project, students break into small groups of 3–4 people and develop their own discussion-based lesson plan and execute it. This also becomes the chief assessable product for the curriculum. Throughout the program, students are encouraged to think about how they might use a vehicle around which to build a small group discussion among their company mates or team mates, similar to the vehicle of the Conversations in Conscientious Leadership video that preceded the group discussion earlier in the curriculum. We then discuss the importance of developing a lesson plan, which includes a set of goals or learning outcomes, and some open-ended discussion questions that will lead to a productive dialogue.

On the final day of the curriculum, we provide about 20 minutes per group for the students to present. We allow them 10 minutes for their vehicle — the short video clip or other such device. Then, they move into the discussion phase, to see if the team can exhibit good facilitation techniques and if they have prepared a worthy lesson plan. In almost all cases, the students want to perform well in front of their peers, and the discussions prove very robust. After they present, they are provided honest but constructive feedback.

Assessment

The Leading Across Cultures curriculum has an accompanying assessment plan that initially assesses one of the learning outcomes discussed earlier in the article: "Facilitate small group conversations related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion topics." The Stockdale Center leadership chose that outcome to assess first since leading small group discussions serves as the primary function of the campus's Dignity and Respect Officers. In succeeding years, the Stockdale Center will choose different learning outcomes to assess. Of particular interest is the ultimate goal of discerning whether or not the Leading Across Cultures curriculum has actually improved measures of inclusion among the student body.

In recent years several scholars have purported to have developed measurement instruments for inclusivity, both at the individual and group level (Ashikali, 2019; Jansen et al., 2014; Lennox et al., 2022; Wilson & Secker, 2015). These are currently being reviewed to discern what validated instruments and measures might be appropriate for future use in a military academy setting.

Conclusion

This case study detailed the evolution of the USNA's "Leading Across Cultures" curriculum initiative, from conception to execution. University officials initiated the program in an effort to develop in students an ability to build inclusive teams while leading across different

2 Naval leaders in early 2021 suggested that they would add "Respect" as the fourth core Navy core value, as explained in the "Task Force One Navy Final Report," February 2021, page 14. https://media.defense.gov/2021/Jan/26/2002570959/-1/-1/1/TASK%20FORCE%20ONE%20NAVY%20FINAL%20REPORT.PDF, cited 10 August 2021.

cultures. While the leaders of the Stockdale Center have embarked on modest efforts to assess student learning — namely to measure competencies connected with facilitating challenging conversations — the staff recognizes that it needs to develop additional tools to measure progress on achieving the other learning outcomes connected with the Leading Across Cultures initiative.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

Leadership & Culture

Jason Garrett, NBC Sports & Jason Garrett Starfish Charities

Interviewed By: Douglas Lindsay

Lindsay: Do you mind starting off by talking about your journey and how you got to where you are today?

Garrett: Absolutely. I grew up in a family of eight. My dad, Jim was a football coach and a scout at the college and National Football League (NFL) level. My mom, Jane, is a saint. I have seven brothers and sisters. We are all 1 year apart. I'm seventh out of eight. Football was a big part of our lives because of what my dad did. As a result, we moved around the country a lot. I was born in Pennsylvania, but I don't really remember being there. We lived in Florida, Texas, and when I was 4 years old, we moved to New Jersey. My dad was coaching for the New York Giants. When I was in second grade, we moved back to Texas, and then eventually we moved to New Orleans, Louisiana where he was coaching for the Saints. When I was in seventh grade, we moved again, this time to Cleveland, Ohio where he was coaching for the Browns. That's where I went to junior high and high school, then I went to Princeton for college. After college, I was an aspiring football player but was not drafted in the NFL. I was signed by the New Orleans Saints and was on their practice roster for my first year. I got released and the next year played in the World League of American Football in San Antonio for a year. Following that, I went to Canada for a stint with the Ottawa Rough Riders. Then, I got a chance to sign with the Cowboys and ended up playing there for 8 years. After leaving Dallas, I played for the New York Giants for 4 years and I played for the Tampa Bay Bucs and the Miami Dolphins in my last year.

Two weeks after retiring from playing, at 38 years old, I became a coach for the Miami Dolphins. Nick Saban was our head coach. I worked for him as his quarterback coach for 2 years. Then, I came back to the Dallas Cowboys as the offensive coordinator for 4 years. After that, I became the head coach of the Cowboys for 9 years. When I left there, I was the offensive coordinator for the New York Giants. Right now, I'm doing TV. I work for National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and I am part of the Sunday Night Football studio show, Football Night in America, with Coach Tony Dungy, Chris Simms and Maria Taylor. I am also the analyst for the Notre Dame games on NBC.

My wife's name is Brill. We met at Princeton. She's been with me for this whole journey. We also have two dogs, Baci and Bella, a chocolate lab and a black lab.

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Lindsay: I appreciate you sharing that because I think it really speaks to the breadth of experience you have had. There's the moving around aspect, there's the player aspect, the coach aspect, and now doing other things like TV. I believe there is real value in the journey. You've obviously had success as a leader, but you have also been around a lot of other great leaders in terms of some of the names that you mentioned. I want to dive into that idea of leadership a little more.

Our mission at the Air Force Academy is to develop leaders of character. It's not just about developing leaders and their capacity, but really working on how to develop leaders of character. Leaders that live honorably, lift others, and elevate performance. We see character and leadership connected. Would you mind talking a little bit about your experience and how you see character and leadership connecting to one another?

Garrett: Well, you said it. I've had great experiences being around some amazing leaders. I start with my parents. My mom and my dad, they raised eight kids. Like I said, we moved all over the country, and they were just sterling examples of leadership to me. How to lead a family. How to lead a household. My dad had a very strong personality. He had tremendous enthusiasm for life and was such a positive person. He always conveyed an amazing spirit that allowed us to overcome any adversities. He always gave great wisdom and advice. So, I think that goes to the kind of person he was and it helped him immensely as a leader. I would say the same thing about my mom. My mom was a selfless leader. As my dad was coaching and spending so much time at work, as coaches do, she was the one raising eight kids and moving us from house to house all over the country. She just had a selflessness about her. That was a great example to me as well because I believe the best leaders are selfless. So, I would start with them.

I was also so fortunate to have amazing coaches all throughout my life. I went to a school outside of Cleveland, Ohio, called University School. It was an all boys prep school. A very academic school, but we had some fantastic coaches in all sports. Some of the coaches who had been in the public school system in the Cleveland area for years. When they retired from there as the football coach or the baseball coach, they came and coached at our school. Cliff Foust was our football coach. He spent 33 years at Garfield Heights High School and then came and coached us. We had this wealth of experience. This wealth of knowledge. Fred Heinlen was at Shaker Heights High School where he was a legendary baseball coach and he came over to our school to coach as well.

So as a young kid, when you're 14, 15 years old and you're playing sports and you have the opportunity to be around these people who were just amazing coaches. But more than that, they were amazing people and leaders. When you are in the formative years of your life and to be around these people, my parents, coaches such as Coach Foust and Coach Heinlen, they are very impactful. In many ways, they were examples and they were models for how you wanted to live your life. Oftentimes you don't really fully understand the messages they are sharing with you when you're at that age. But, when you reflect back on them later and you say, "Ah, that's what they were talking about, you know?" You just don't fully understand why certain things are being emphasized by those in leadership roles in your life. I reflect back with immense gratitude for having those influences in my life.

That continued in college and I had great coaches there as well. Then, into the NFL, I was fortunate to play for Jimmy Johnson in Dallas my first couple years. He was an amazing leader, leading the whole organization. Other coaches who I worked more directly with were Norv Turner and Sean Payton, and guys like that who were my coordinator or position coach. Ernie Zampese was an amazing coach. They all had different personalities, but I would describe each of them as really

impressive leaders as well. Each of them brought different things to the table.

It wasn't only coaches though. It was also the players. Many of my teammates were people I looked up to as incredible leaders. I do think the kind of people they are allows them to be that much more of an effective leader. Whether it's work ethic or the examples they set or the things they believed in, I think all those things contribute to their ability to be strong and impactful leaders. At the end of the day, when you are a leader, you have to be who you are. But I don't think there's any question that you are impacted and influenced by the people you're associated with along the way. You can always learn from them, and that's what I've tried to do.

Lindsay: You hit on a couple of very important parts there because not only were you open to that example, teaching and the role modeling, but you also engaged in that and were part of that process, right? Because we see a lot of people, I think, that have talent and ability but they don't engage in the moment or understand or appreciate the moment. There's an engagement in that process as well and being open to that teaching and that learning and that leading, right?

Garrett: No doubt. I remember having a conversation with my dad when I first went to Dallas. We were talking about the dynamic between ownership, Jerry Jones and the head coach, Jimmy Johnson. Then, Barry Switzer became the coach. I can remember my dad saying, "Hey. Just watch. This is a valuable time for you as someone who at some point might get into coaching down the road. Just watch and observe these guys. How they interact with each other. How they interact with the team beyond just the Xs and Os." So, I always pride myself on being perceptive of relationship dynamics and people in these roles and to try to learn from them.

As a backup quarterback, you have more of an opportunity to do that because you're able to observe more than if you were playing. Troy Aikman was our starting quarterback, and what an amazing leader. I can remember a number of times in my head coaching career talking about the impact that he had on me as a leader of an organization because of how he handled himself as the quarterback. So, I definitely think being open, being someone who has their eyes open and their ears open, having some awareness about dynamics in an organization, and how the leadership interacts with everybody else, those are valuable things.

At the end of it though, you have to be yourself. I said that earlier because I've seen a lot of people try to be someone else as a leader. They get the promotion and they get a chance to be the coordinator, the head coach or whatever they are in any walk of life, and they try to copy this person who was very successful. I used to always say this when I was playing quarterback, if I got in the huddle and tried to be like Troy Aikman, the guys would've laughed me out of the huddle, you know? I mean, authenticity is so important. Just being who you are and knowing that you belong in that role…you are there for a reason. I think that's a big part of leadership. But having said that, you need to be aware, watch, learn, and ask questions. I think purposefully growing as a leader is an important part of it because you don't have all the answers, nobody does. Trying to benefit from your surroundings and learning from other great leaders, I think, can certainly help you grow in that leadership role.

Lindsay: That is such an important point you just said. We don't have all the answers. It's that humility, that genuineness to admit that fact that is important to our development. As the backup quarterback and you can approach that several different ways, right? You can choose to be able to learn and listen in that moment, even though you still want to be out there and play. To prepare and be ready when you needed to step in and make the most of the situation. You were ready and you were present to do that. Being transparent and humble and open to the experience.

You mentioned that you shifted quickly from being a player to being a coach. How did you prepare for that? How was that to make that shift and step into that leadership role that way? To play for the Dallas Cowboys and within a relatively short amount of time, be the head coach.

Garrett: Well, let me hit on the humility piece a little bit first. What I've found is that might be the single most important part of leadership for me, the understanding that you don't know everything. We have a leadership forum that we do in conjunction with our football camp at Princeton every summer. And this has been a topic that's been of interest to me for a long time, since I was in junior high when I first became a quarterback. The leadership part of the quarterback position is something that I've been drawn to, and always loved, as much as anything else. How can you get a group of guys, when you get them in the huddle, 10 other guys, to believe that what we're doing is so important? That their job is so important to get this done so we can drive down the field and score a touchdown. I mean, I love that. I loved that part of playing quarterback.

This idea has obviously been on my mind a lot as a coach in the roles that I've been in. At our leadership forum every summer, we have a number of different people in leadership roles who come to be part of it. And they are from all walks of life. Last summer, Jackie Joyner-Kersee was our keynote speaker. Before that we had Admiral Bill McRaven. We've had Roger Goodell, Troy Aikman, and others. Amazing leaders. Again, not only from sports but from all walks of life. One of the themes of this is, we say, there are doctors in the audience, lawyers, people who work on Wall Street. There are football people and there are academics. We talk about the commonality and the common traits of leadership and how they apply. Do they always apply directly? No. But there are so many things that apply in so many different areas, and that's what we discuss. That's what we talk about.

And that one piece, humility, is the one that continues to show up as being so important because regardless of what role you're in. It is critical. For you, to be the one who steps into that position, you know you have to grasp the mantle of leadership. That's a huge part of it when you're in those positions. If you go in the huddle as a quarterback and you are shy and you don't take command and take charge of the situation, nobody's going to respond to you. So, that's a big piece of it. Balancing that with, I'm grasping the mantle, but I'm also open to know that I don't have all the answers to everything. So, how do you balance those things?

I was always compelled by the idea that if you think you know everything, the whole organization's potential is connected to your individual potential instead of trying to empower other people and letting them grow. By letting them grow and reach their potential individually, then we all grow together, and it's then that we have a chance to reach our potential as a team and as an organization. That's something that I think is so important to understand.

For example, if I was an offensive coach with an offensive background—someone who played quarterback and coached quarterbacks—and, all of a sudden, when I become the head coach, I try to be this defensive expert, that is problematic. Am I going to tell the defensive coordinator, who spent his entire life in defensive meetings, that, all of a sudden, I think I'm the expert on defense just because I'm the head coach? Well, the organization's going to go south if I take that approach. I have to try to empower the defensive coordinator. That's not to say I don't try to understand and ask questions, but I have to bolster him, learn from him, and then hopefully create an environment for him to be his best. I need to do the same thing with special teams coach, with the trainers, with the equipment people, etc. So, that's the idea. And if you don't have enough humility to understand that, to try to step back and empower people and take on a role of trying to create great environments for

them to be their best, I think you're missing it. That's not always easy to do, but I think that's when leaders are at their best, and when organizations are at their best.

Now for your other question about the Cowboys. I do think it helped me playing for the Cowboys for 8 years. It helped me immensely as a coach in being able to understand the dynamics of the organization. There were a number of the people who worked there when I was a player and continued to work there when I became the head coach. I had relationships with them and could speak honestly with them about the things we were trying to achieve. I also understood the high-profile nature of the Dallas Cowboys organization. You are always going to play five primetime games, the maximum you can play in the NFL, and you're going to play on Thanksgiving and Christmas. You are going to have a schedule that isn't always easy because the Cowboys are going to be in the national spotlight.

You understand that when you have success, it might be exaggerated. And on the flip side, when you have adversity, it's also going to be exaggerated. Being even-keeled and trying to keep everyone balanced in the organization is an important role for a leader. There's a lot of distraction or potential distraction. Being someone who doesn't contribute to that distraction and someone who finds ways to keep everybody focused on what we need to do each day is important as well. That's big for any leader, but in a high-profile position like being the head coach of the Cowboys, it's even more exaggerated. So, there's no doubt that having played there, having seen that dynamic up close, helped me as a head coach.

Lindsay: You mentioned so many important leadership components there. The power of relationships. The importance of understanding the culture and what the culture was all about. Respecting that each person has their role to play. All of those are so important to leadership.

I wanted to touch on something that you just mentioned with respect to humility and understanding that we all have a role. That makes me think of the upcoming NFL draft. Certainly, the physical potential of individuals is pretty obvious and important. There is the NFL Combine process where you can really see how they perform on the physical side. But what about the who they were as a person? How do you assess that component of it? They have the skillset and they might be the best receiver on the market, but what about the person component to understand that, "This is Dallas and that's not how we do things in Dallas. Or how they will fit into the culture?" What role did that fit into thinking about the team that you were trying to develop or how you had to invest into maybe some people more than others if they didn't quite understand that notion of the team?

Garrett: Great question. That was a huge part of it, for me and for us. We used to have a grade sheet for every player we evaluated. On top of it we had this category called "makeup" or "character specifics." It was all about evaluating the player's character—personal character, football character, work ethic, passion for the game, toughness, accountability, etc. It's about evaluating all those different things that we believed were so important for players to succeed. We certainly tried to evaluate that. I always thought it was symbolic that we put that at the top of the grade sheet. Now you and I both know, the player has to be talented. He has to have talent enough to play, and the best players are immensely talented. But I've also seen a lot of really talented players who didn't have some of the other intangible qualities and they couldn't survive. Not just in Dallas, but all across the league. So, that part of it, who the player is as a person was always so important for me and to us.

Now the next question is, "Okay. I get that. I understand that. But how do you evaluate that?" Those are intangibles, right? By definition, you can't see them. I certainly recognize that and don't claim to be an expert on this in any way. They are intangibles, but I've

always argued that there was evidence of intangibles, you know? You go talk to the linebacker coach at the school of a player that you're thinking about drafting, and he says, "Oh, he loves football. He really does." Then you put the tape on and he doesn't sprint to the football. He doesn't finish the plays. He's always tapping out. You ask, "How is he in the weight room?" You hear, "Well, he misses sometimes or he's not one of the strongest guys or hasn't improved that much." There is all this evidence of him not loving football. He might love the idea of football and putting the sweatshirt on and wearing it around campus and being Mr. Football player, but does he really love it? What's the evidence of that love?

When we were at the NFL combine, we interviewed the players. They call them "The Big Room" interviews and you get a chance to interview 60 guys. It's a 15-minute interview. It starts with a horn and ends on a horn. Players come in, and it's like speed dating. We always had our position coaches and coordinators ask questions as well as people from our personnel department. I would always ask two questions. The questions I asked were, "What's the biggest challenge or adversity you've had in your life, and how'd you get through it?"

My other question was like this. I would ask, "Let's say there are a 100 football players at Ohio State (or wherever the player was from) and we are going to ask everyone connected with the program to rank the players based on one criteria, 'how much you love football?' Where do they rank you and what is their evidence? We are talking about your teammates, your coaches, the staff members, anybody connected with the program who see you and interact with you on a daily basis. Where do they rank you and what's the evidence of how much you love football?" To me, sharing the evidence was always the most important piece because oftentimes the player would say, "Oh. They would rank me number 1. I love ball. I'm just so passionate about it. I just love it." I'm like, "Great. What's the evidence? What would they say about you that they see every day that says you love it?" I might hear, "Hey. I'm in the weight room early. I stay late. No one knows the stuff better than I do. In terms of being a teammate, I'm always spending extra time." Whatever it is, let's look for the evidence of those intangibles. That's the love that's so important to us. Do you love ball? Because you've got to love it. It's hard. It's hard to play in the NFL. So, you better love it. You better have a passion for it. Or, are you just in love with the idea of playing in the NFL? I used to always say, "He's the guy wearing the sweatshirt at the mall. He's the guy sending the box of hats home," right? "Hey. I'm with the Kansas City Chiefs. I'm with the Dallas Cowboys. Isn't that great?" Well, do you love it? Do you love it like Patrick Mahomes loves it?

To me, that was big. So, as you're trying to figure out who you want to have on your team, talent matters. You have to know how fast they are, how big they are, can they throw it, can they run, can they tackle? All the things that you need to do physically. You have to look for talent, but having those other intangible qualities is huge. Then trying to be an active observer, someone who's an active evaluator of what those intangibles are, looking for evidence of them, I think is another big part of it.

Lindsay: All of those intangibles really do speak to that character. You talked about, "Do you love the game?" It's passion. Am I there early? Am I the one in the playbook? Am I the one working in the off-season before we get to camp? What am I doing to help the team be better with that? So those intangibles are really related to character. What does my practice look like or my workout regime look like when no one else is in the weight room? So, ability is important because you've got to have that baseline performance. It is about winning games. There is that component that you need, but the sum of the talent on the team doesn't just have to be additive. It becomes exponential when you start having people together who love the game, understand the team, are willing to work, are taking care of one another, policing

each other, doing those important things. That's not additive, that's exponential. And that's where you have probably had your more successful teams, right?

Garrett: No doubt. I was fortunate to be on three Super Bowl championship teams and one team that went to the Super Bowl. When you reflect back on those teams and think, "What were they all about?" They were talented, sure, but they were guys who loved the game, guys who wanted to be part of a team, guys who were willing to sacrifice their individual success to be part of the team and the team's success. That's ultimately what you are trying to build. It's hard to do. To get the right collection together of players and coaches where everybody is pulling in the same direction. And again, you need talented guys physically, but that other part is huge. I would always argue that there are plenty of guys who have a lot of talent who don't have those intangible qualities and they don't have the success. It's the guys that have both. They are the ones that have Hall of Fame jackets and play on Super Bowl teams. If you're fortunate enough to have been around those types of people, I think you have to use your experience as a leader to try to recreate those environments.

Lindsay: With that idea of wanting to recreate the environment, that means you have an idea of what you want to have as a culture for your team. How did you accomplish that? What did that look like for you in terms of how to set that culture? Obviously, you're messaging what you want, you get in front of the team and you set the example. How did you really solidify that culture in camp or when you brought new people in to the team? What was it that you leaned on to say, "This is how we do things in Dallas," or, "This is how we do things in whatever organization you are leading?"

Garrett: Well, it starts with what we just were talking about, people. I have countless stories about this. I'll tell you one of them, if you have a little time?

Lindsay: Absolutely!

Garrett: When I was a senior in high school, I had to take wood shop my last trimester of school as a requirement. I go to the class and Mr. Howarth was the teacher. He was straight out of central casting for what you would think a wood shop teacher would be. He was so enthusiastic about it. He met me at the door and he said, "Hey. I'm so excited you're here. What do you want to make?" I said, "My buddy was in the class last trimester and he built a wooden NERF hoop that was just great. Like a fan backboard. We can paint it up and I could have it in my room. It'd be great. I'd love to do that." He said, "Fantastic., Go over there and pick out some wood." In the corner there was some different kinds of wood. I didn't know one wood from another, to be honest.

So, I grabbed a piece, picked it up and went over to the teacher. He said, "Okay. Now draw it." I was like only 3 minutes into class, but I drew it on the piece of wood I picked out. He then said, "Okay. Let's go over to the saw." And so, we go over with this piece of wood with the drawing on it and we are going to cut it. As I cut it, I'm obviously not very good at it. It's a little lumpy on the right-hand side. We look at it, he says, "We've got to file this down. Go over to that part of the room. There's a file over there, a sander, you can sand this thing down." I go over there and I spend the rest of that class sanding it down.

The next day I'm sanding it and then I sand it too much. So now I've got to sand the other side down to balance it out, right? I do this for a couple weeks. Then, he meets me at the door coming in that third week, and he says, "Mr. Garrett, you are a really nice guy. I really like having you in class, but you've been working on that thing for a while and we've got a lot of serious wood shop people in here. Here's what we're going to do, you don't have to come to class anymore. I know you're taking this pass fail, so I'll give you a passing grade, but you

don't have to be here anymore because the room's a little small." I was like, "Okay." It was last period of the day. My initial reaction was, "I get that last period free," but then as I'm walking away, I'm like, "I just got cut from wood shop!," right?

I've reflected on that many times through the years. What happened was, I went over and picked out some wood that I didn't know what kind of wood I was picking out. Then, I didn't cut it right from the start. I spent every day trying to shape it, trying to shape it, trying to shape it, and trying to shape it. After a couple weeks later, some guy tapped me on the shoulder and said, "You're a really nice guy, but we're going to ask you to leave," you know?

That's always been symbolic for me of making sure you pick out the right wood and making sure right at the outset you get everything as squared away as possible. Because if you don't do that, you're going to spend a lot of time playing catch-up, playing whack-a-mole, trying to get it right, and then they're going to ask you to leave. I bring that up to answer your question, to say, picking out the people, getting the right people in there and then laying out the standards and expectations from the start on day one will get everybody on the right path to what we are doing. We won't be spending all of our time working with the wrong guys because we didn't pick out the right wood, and then not really making it abundantly clear what we need to do at the outset. If we do that, then we're just playing catch up and are never going to be able to get it right.

The idea is, let's get the right ones on day one. Let's be crystal clear as to what the standards and expectations are for everybody. When you have your first team meeting, I always believed it was important to say, "These are the standards and expectations. This is what you as the player can expect from us as coaches." And so, we would go through that. Then we would turn around and say, "You can expect that from us, but, here's what we expect from you. And let's try to live that way each and every day." You try to keep the rules to a minimum as much as you can, but you also want to be crystal clear about what you want. The most challenging piece of it is, we'll have to hold ourselves and each other accountable to that. I've said a number of times that, "Good teams have coaches who will hold players accountable. Great teams, championship teams, have players, coaches and staff members hold themselves and each other accountable to the highest standards." I believe that.

That is what some of those championship teams that I was on were able to do. Everybody was holding each other accountable to what we're trying to get accomplished. That's what the best ones do. However, if you don't know what those standards and expectations are, again, you're playing whack-a-mole, and you're playing from behind. So, get the right people, be crystal clear at the outset, and then the daily grind is, "We are all holding ourselves to this, and we are all holding each other to that." If we do that, we give ourselves the best chance to succeed.

Lindsay: And that creates an identity, right? It's not just you as a coach trying to keep everything together. You are not having to police everything, because everybody else is already organically doing that. And so, you get to leverage all that. With that in mind, looking back on all your teams, what are you most proud of?

Garrett: I think when we were at our best, we did exactly what we were talking about. We got the right people together, we did things the right way, and we played the right way. We didn't win a championship and that's certainly disappointing, but the team was playing the right way. To your point about identity, we wanted to be a team that would fight. We wanted to be tough, physical, and relentless, and play like a team who loves playing ball and have our passion for the game show up. We didn't win all of our games, but I think if people watched us play, I think they would like how we played.

It wasn't perfect, but we worked hard collectively to do things the right way, coach the right way, and play the right way. Hopefully that reflected on Sunday afternoons. Rarely were we totally out of it. We always battled back. We always fought.

Day one the message that we gave, we talked about standards and expectations. Every year our players and coaches got to their room at training camp and everybody had a blue or a gray or a white hooded sweatshirt waiting for them on their bed. It had the word "FIGHT" on the front of it. Fight. They had their name on the back. Fight to us meant fight to be your best, fight to live up to the highest standards, fight to get the job done, and fight for each other. So, hopefully if you watched us through the years, you saw a group of people who were fighting, fighting for all those things. That's something we tried to pride ourselves on.

Lindsay: That is exactly who I saw show up on the field on Sunday afternoons. Shifting gears a little bit, I would like to hear about the great work you are doing with the Starfish Foundation. It really speaks, I think, to the responsibility of leadership that we have to help and develop leaders and impact our communities. Would you mind sharing a little bit about that vision and how that came to be?

Garrett: Absolutely. My wife Brill and I first heard The Starfish Story at my graduation from Princeton. The valedictorian spoke and he finished his talk with this story. It's a story about a young boy on a beach who's throwing starfish into the water. A woman comes upon him and asks him what he's doing. He said, "There was a big storm last night and all these starfish washed up on the beach, and if the afternoon sun hits them, they're going to dry up and die." She said, "There was a big storm. The beach goes on for miles. There are millions of starfish, your efforts are not going to make any difference." With that, the young wise boy reaches down, picks up a starfish and says, "I'll make a difference to this one," and he throws it into the ocean. My wife had graduated the year before, but she was there for my graduation. I was sitting with my friends, and afterward, that's the first thing we said to each other like, "Wow! What a great story?"

What struck both of us is that there are so many big problems in this world. Hard problems. Whether it's the education system, poverty, clean water in Africa, etc. There are a lot of things to do. Oftentimes, we have this feeling in our hearts to go do something to make an impact. And then we get close to one of these big problems and we say, "Wow. I can't make any difference here. That problem is too big." So even though we have good intentions and want to help, we turn and walk away. To us, the Starfish Story has been encouragement just to say, "The beach does go out for miles and there are millions of starfish. Well, it'll make a difference to this one. So, let's reach down and try to make a difference to one of them and know that, if we do, our efforts will be worthwhile." With that in mind, we started our foundation, Jason Garrett Starfish Charities. The first idea was to do a football camp. We did one for 5 years in Dallas when I was playing there. Then, when we moved up to New York to play for the Giants, we started doing the camp at Princeton. Being in football, you are going to move around. So, we said, "Princeton will always be near and dear to us, why don't we do it there?" It's been 21 years this June up at Princeton.

The biggest part of what we do with our foundation is our football camp. It's a 1-day camp for roughly 325 kids from the New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania areas and the majority of the kids are from disadvantaged backgrounds. They come there and we always say it's a football camp, but it's really a life skills camp disguised as a football camp. We play for the championship of the world and we have seven-on-seven games. We try to put amazing people from all walks of life in front of them, share inspirational messages with them, get great mentors for them to help them be their

best and to get them on a path where they can live out their dreams. The night before the camp, we have a dinner and leadership forum for all of our volunteer staff and coaches and we try to put great people in front of them as well – people from all walks of life to talk about leadership and how it applies to whatever you're doing. We can all benefit from that and the impact of that can be exponential. That's always been what we've tried to do.

Some of the other things we've done with our foundation is we've started a reading program in West Dallas, spearheaded by my wife Brill. And we also just started The Starfish Leadership Academy this past year. The idea behind that was, 4 or 5 years ago we said, "Hey. The camp is great, but let's try to have more touch points throughout the year with a group of these kids." So, we started doing that. We took them to the Princeton-Harvard game, we took them to West Point. Now, with Covid behind us, we reimagined the program and chose 40 student-athletes to be part of our Leadership Academy. We have group activities together throughout the year where we can keep a consistent curriculum and some common themes in front of them. One of the real positive aspects of The Academy has been the opportunity to work with is Freddie Santana and Jared Gourrier. Freddie was one of our best campers in the early years of doing the camp at Princeton. He was there for 3 years and always got an award. He ended up going to Holy Cross, was a very good player there, graduated with honors, did Teach for America, and he always came back and coached. Now, he's spearheading this Leadership Academy. He and his good friend Jared, who he met at Teach For America, are in charge of the curriculum and they've done a fantastic job.

That's what we're trying to do. We're trying to empower them to take charge of it. We try to provide consistent messaging for the kids, just like you would with a football team. A lot of it has to do with their academics and their character development so they can achieve as much as they can. For a lot of them, it's about overcoming adversity, overcoming some challenges in their environment. That's the idea. It's been something we really enjoy doing. Like a lot of things, many of the adults will say the same thing, "You're involved in this, you're trying to help the kids, but you as an adult benefit just as much." It's been something that we've really enjoyed doing and a lot of people in our lives have embraced it with us. It's been fun.

Lindsay: 21 years is a long time to do that. It has got to be neat to see that impact. Because it's not about necessarily saying, "Hey, all of these kids are going to go and play in the NFL," right? Because we know that's not realistic just from a number standpoint. But to go on and be successful in life, like you said, the life skills, teach them how to overcome adversity, be in their communities, what they can do, how to be leaders of their family and their communities and that they can be successful and have impact, right?

Garrett: It's so interesting to say that because we have this program called the Make a Difference Challenge. We've been doing it for probably 10 years. That came from our desire to create a scholarship within all of this. We did some essays, and we did some different things but we were kind of missing a little bit. So, we went to Freddie, this guy who was a camper who now was working with us, and said, "Freddie, what do you think about this? What do you think is a better vehicle for us to create a scholarship for some of the kids?" He said, "Give me 24 hours, I'll get back with you."

He calls us back the next night and he says, "Here's what I think we should do. We should have the kids create a policy that addresses a problem in their community. So many of these kids, because they're in this environment, have a lot of people who try to come in and help them." He's like, "We're trying to build leaders, aren't we?" So, he said, "Let's flip it around. Let's challenge them to say, 'Hey. In your community, what's a big issue? And identify it'. And that's what leaders do.

You identify an issue and you put a plan in place to solve it. Let's have them do that." Get them thinking about things like here's the issue and what is the mission statement. Who are you doing it with? What is your plan of attack? What are your strategies? What is your first action? How are you going to do it?

For us, it was eye-opening because we were those people who say, "Oh. We're trying to help them." He was able to flip it around and said, "No. No. No. You have to challenge them to be change agents and leaders in their community. That's what you need to do." We've done that. As a result, every year we get these amazing proposals. As an example, one person said, "Hey. The community that I live in is a food desert. There's no place to eat. So, this is our plan to put in place." Or, as another example, "There are no mentors here. We should have a mentoring system where the kids from the high school are mentoring the junior high kids." Or, "There's a drug issue here." "There's a homelessness issue here." They put these plans in place, and it's been amazing and eye-opening for us to watch this and to read these submissions year after year.

Now, what we're doing with the leadership academy is, collectively with that group of 40 kids, we're saying, "Okay. Let's attack an issue in this community of Staten Island that you guys identify and that we can actually make a tangible difference with." We can't go too big here. We can't say we're going to solve the public school system in New York City, right? We can't do that. But what can we do? Let's be real practical with trying to advance something. We also have a fun run that we do as part of our camp. So, we're going to take the money we raised from that to put it to addressing that problem. It's a fun thing for us to be a part of, to see the perspective that they bring, and then how we can collectively do something to have an impact.

Lindsay: I love that idea of flipping the script and letting them be the change agent. Because people might come in and try to help and go, "Oh. You need help with X, Y, and Z." But in reality, they are thinking, "It's not X, Y, and Z, it is A, B, and C." Then, you're scaffolding their learning to be able to say, "Okay. What is the A, B, and C all about? Where do you want to get involved? What can you do?" Just helping them build agency in the whole process. What a great opportunity.

Garrett: It really is. You mentioned something before that connects to all of this. One of the things that I'm most proud of about coaching is, a number of our players, pro players from the Cowboys and elsewhere, have gotten into coaching, and many of them at the high school level. To me, that's always been something that for those guys to be drawn to it in a very positive way makes you feel like the environment we created was one that they want to replicate, you know? Hopefully they'll do it their own way, and they'll take from us and from other places to create their own culture. But that's something that, I don't want to use the word proud, but that's something that makes you feel really good as a coach. Hopefully, they feel empowered to do that. That's really kind of what you're trying to do with these kids too. You're trying to create an environment where they see it. Okay, now they want to do something. To me, that's what you aspire to as a leader. When you can empower people to blaze their own trail on the things that they think are important. I think that that's really a fun byproduct of all this.

Lindsay: It fits back to that whole idea of flipping the script. Some of these people have had a lot of opportunity, like being a professional athlete, and now, how can they use that as a platform to go and serve and help others to do that? When I think about the Dallas organization, it's a culture and it's a way of thinking, right? Jerry Jones is the owner, but he's not just a silent owner. He is involved, he is invested. It's just part of the identity of, "We're not just passive here, we're going to be involved, we're going to be active in that way." That's always been one of those things that's resonated about that organization. That goes from way back all the way up till now. If you look at one of the greats, Roger Staubach. Had success on the field, but then

turned that toward business afterward and became successful in that domain because he took what he learned as his time there and then utilized in another domain. For some people it's in broadcasting and for some it is in coaching. But I think if you look across, even within sports, Dallas seems to have a disproportionate number of folks that succeed in endeavors after football. That's not by accident, I don't think. I think it's part of that culture like you talked about. The culture you tried to set up, the engagement, the meeting people, meeting them at their need, and the development. It sets them up on a course that they can go out and be successful. You don't see that with a lot of organizations. It just seems a little bit different from Dallas.

Garrett: I think you just said it. It started a long time ago, way before I ever showed up. But I do think that's been part of the DNA of this place. A lot of it has to do with the high-profile nature of the organization. But I think there are opportunities, when you are playing, to be connected in the community, to serve in the community, and to get to know people in the community. Hopefully guys take advantage of that because when you're playing professional football, even if you have an incredibly successful career, there's a lot of life left once you stop playing football.

Take Troy Aikman, for example, he retired when he was 33 or 34, and you couldn't have had a much better career than that. For a guy like that to be able to transition like he has, and so many others, just being mindful and being aware of the opportunities that are around you and to take advantage of them. You mentioned Roger Staubach and he is probably the best example. The career that he had as a player and then to be able to transition to a businessman and what he's done in the community, those are great examples. Hopefully, guys have their eyes open and their ears open to those opportunities so they can take advantage of them.

Lindsay: It has got to feel good too to know that you contributed in a positive way to the longevity of that culture. You had mentioned in a previous conversation that in the Dallas facility there is a statue that has the saying on it, "It's a privilege, not a right to play, coach and work for the Dallas Cowboys." That speaks to what you are talking about in appreciating the moment. I don't think everybody gets the significance of the moment and what that is, but what you are talking about is the impact. It's about the legacy. So, what's next for you then, as you look forward?

Garrett: I think right now it's continue doing what I'm doing. I really enjoy working for NBC and it's been a good opportunity for me doing Sunday Night Football, the Football Night in America show with Coach Dungy and everybody there. They are incredible. Also being able to be the analyst for the Notre Dame games. It's a great combination of NFL and college, and studio and game analyst. I'm learning a lot from really smart people. It gives me an opportunity to do some other things, and to dig into the foundation a little bit more. The coaching lifestyle is you get there early, you stay late, and you're there every day. When I stopped playing, I only took 2 weeks off and then I became a coach, and did that for a number of years. For now, this is a great opportunity to do something in broadcasting that I'm trying to get good at it, embrace it, and really live each day fully. It's been a fun transition for me and we'll see what the future holds.

Lindsay: You have certainly earned that pace and earned that time. Thank you for your time and sharing your thoughts.

Garrett: My pleasure. I'm so inspired by you guys. Being up at West Point this past weekend, it is just amazing. For years we always tried to use military examples, have different people speak to our team. I used to always say, "Hey. These guys are on a different planet than we are, but we can learn some things from them." I'd love to come up there and visit at some point.

Lindsay: Absolutely. The offer is always open. Best of luck in your endeavors.

PROGRAM/INTERVENTION

Examining the Impact of Leadership Coaching Designed for Public Educators: Does the Investment Enhance Teacher Engagement Levels and Their Ability to Lead Their Students?

Zachary Shutler, Union Local School District & West Liberty University

ABSTRACT

As the leader of a school district, I wanted to study and focus on the impact that leadership coaching could have on educators. To focus on developing the leadership capacity of our teachers, not on enhancing their already strong knowledge of subject related content. I truly believed we could help teachers by offering coaching focused on developing their unique leadership skills and their understanding of leadership theory. The author Ryan Holiday's quote stood out to me, "Perfecting the personal regularly leads to success as a professional, but rarely the other way around" (2017). Unbeknownst to me, I would be conducting my re-

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search during one of the most tumultuous times in the history of leadership and education. The COVID-19 pandemic was lurking right around the corner and would attack the morale of every profession. Exacting a heavy toll on educators' mental health and their engagement levels.

In 2019, I began my doctoral studies and left my role as superintendent to take a high school principal position at a neighboring district. Early on I focused on the work by Bass and Riggio on transformational leadership (2006; Bass & Avolio, 1994). I saw an immediate connection to the coaching that I wanted to provide my teachers. Bass and Avolio developed the Full Range Model of Leadership. This model is a continuum from transactional to transformational. Transactional strategies include consequences and rewards. The transformational components include idealized influence, individual consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. Bass cited that transactional leadership is not inherently wrong. In fact, it is necessary. However, if a leader doesn't move past the transactional components, they are only seeking compliance, not developing leaders.

This theory resonated with me for one major reason. What type of leadership do most classrooms focus on? What if we shifted that paradigm? What if we coached our teachers to know themselves better? What if we helped them understand leadership theory and the importance of culture? Could personalized leadership coaching for educators lead to better outcomes for our students and our teachers? That was the thinking that guided my research.

I combined Bass's (2006) work with a few other sources to create a comprehensive framework for my study. Simon Sinek's book, *The Infinite Game* (2019) inspired me to educate our teachers on self-improvement having no finish line. Daniel Coyle's work, *The Culture Code* (2018) offered research that leaders who build psychological safety, create cooperation through shared vulnerability, and use stories to establish a shared purpose, have the highest rate of employee retention and career satisfaction. Finally, the work of Dr. Michael Gervais was impactful. Gervais stated, "How do we perform in an environment where mistakes are costly? By training the mind to live in the present, so you can deal with stress and help others" (2019). If this type of coaching is important for professional athletes performing in front of 80,000 fans, shouldn't leadership coaching be a critical component of performing in front of 30 students?

This research study was conducted in the Fall of 2021 at a rural district in Southeastern Ohio. The study was designed to determine how a leadership coaching program built on Bass's Full Range Model of Leadership impacted professional engagement levels (as determined by the Gallup Q12 Survey and teacher interviews) of teachers. This was designed as a mixed method study.

Our district was largely spared the initial COVID-19 wave in 2020. However, we were not as fortunate during the Fall of 2021 when this study commenced. We experienced high rates of student absences, teacher absences, and a severe lack of substitute teachers. To compound the matter, our superintendent took a personal leave of absence. I was appointed interim superintendent (a role I now currently hold on a fulltime basis). District morale was low. I viewed this as an opportune time to study the benefits of leadership coaching.

I built a 10-week Transformational Leadership coaching program built on the principles of The Full Range Model of Leadership (Bass, 2006), Infinite Game

Theory (Carse, 1986), and the key components of a strong culture (Coyle, 2018). Thirty high school teachers agreed to participate in the research study. The treatment group of seven teachers who received the coaching were selected through a stratified random sample (one from each content area). One student of each treatment group teacher was selected through a stratified random sample to participate in an interview at the conclusion of the coaching. All participating teachers completed the Gallup Q12 survey in September and again in December. The coaching sessions were led by a principal from another district with no employment history at our district. This was done to reduce bias. Coaching sessions 1 and 10 were conducted in person, while sessions 2–9 were conducted via Zoom. The coach conducted the pre- and post-coaching interviews with the treatment group of teachers. The student interviews were conducted by me. The results of the quantitative data were encouraging, while the qualitative data were inspiring.

The Gallup Organization analyzed the results of the surveys and provided summary data. Due to the proprietary nature of the Q12 Survey, I could not obtain access to the raw data. The control group of teachers' level of engagement dropped "significantly" according to Gallup (–0.28) from September to December (Table 1). The treatment group's level of engagement remained stable over the same timeframe (–0.05; Table 2). Gallup quantified that change as "not significant." The largest gain of either group, was the treatment group's response to Item 11, "Someone talks to me about my progress." That jumped (+0.69) from September to December, which Gallup deemed as "significant." An increase linked to the 10-week leadership coaching program.

For the qualitative data, codes were created to organize the treatment group's interview responses. The first code focused on transactional versus transformational language, the second centered on the three components

Table 1
Changes in Control Group's Q12 Employee Engagement Surveys

Q12 Items	Table 1	Post-Coaching–Control Group	±Change
Know what's expected	4.56	4.11	– 0.45
Materials and equipment	4.00	3.59	– 0.41
Opportunity to do best	3.94	3.67	– 0.27
Recognition or praise	3.59	3.53	– 0.06
Someone cares about me	4.28	3.94	– 0.34
Encourages my development	4.44	4.12	– 0.32
My opinions seem to count	3.33	2.94	– 0.39
Purpose makes work matter	3.78	3.39	– 0.39
Committed to quality	4.00	4.17	+ 0.17
I have a best friend at work	3.78	3.89	+ 0.11
Talks to me about progress	4.17	3.82	– 0.35
Opportunities to learn/grow	4.44	3.89	– 0.55
Average Score of 12 Answers	4.03	3.75	– 0.28

Table 2

Changes in Treatment Group's Q12 Employee Engagement Surveys

Q12 Items	Pre-Coaching–Treatment Group	Post-Coaching–Treatment Group	±Change
Know what's expected	4.29	4.00	– 0.29
Materials and equipment	4.00	4.00	0.0
Opportunity to do best	4.00	3.50	– 0.50
Recognition or praise	3.71	3.83	+ 0.12
Someone cares about me	4.14	3.83	– 0.31
Encourages my development	4.14	4.00	– 0.14
My opinions seem to count	2.86	2.83	– 0.03
Purpose makes work matter	3.86	3.50	– 0.36
Committed to quality	4.43	4.50	+ 0.07
I have a best friend at work	3.71	3.80	+ 0.09
Talks to me about progress	3.14	3.83	+ 0.69
Opportunities to learn/grow	4.43	4.50	+ 0.07
Average Score of 12 Answers	3.89	3.84	– 0.05

of a strong culture according to Coyle (2018), finally the responses were ran through a finite and infinite language code based on Sinek (2019) and Carse's (1986) work.[1]

The interview responses from the treatment group of teachers indicated that the Transformational Leadership Coaching Program was a positive experience. Treatment group members believed that the coaching program increased their level of professional engagement and increased their understanding of Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 2006). Their responses indicated the treatment group of teachers decreased their use of transactional language and significantly increased their use of transformational language.

Below are quotes from the treatment group prior to the transformational leadership coaching program. When asked about the qualities of a strong classroom leader, Teacher A stated, "Demands the floor with their presence, with their demeanor." The word choice of "demand," is transactional. When presented with the word "coaching," Teacher B shared, "Coaching is not effective because of the barriers it creates." The term "barriers" indicates a lack of trust in the coaching process. Teacher C was asked to state what came to mind when they heard the word "leadership." Their response was, "Superintendent, principal." This is reflective of a top-down leadership mindset associated with Transactional Leadership Theory. Teacher D was asked about leadership training and their knowledge of the process. They stated, "I do not think of myself as a leader. Leaders are teachers who have been here longer." Teacher E was asked to state their thoughts on the term "coaching." They stated, "Not my favorite term. People don't like hearing it."

1 For more detailed information on the coding or other factors related to this study, please contact the author.

Analysis of the post-treatment interviews details how the treatment group's language shifted over the course of the 10 coaching sessions. Teacher A stated a strong educational leader must be, "Empathetic, have a personality others can relate to. They must be compassionate to a variety of feelings. Every kid has their own set of problems." Teacher B was asked about their coaching experience. "There were times when it was exactly what I needed to hear. Times we needed to change our mindset." During the first interview, Teacher C thought of the administration as the leadership. After the coaching program, they stated, "By sharing the information (we learned), we were looked to as leaders. Not only as colleagues, but as someone looking out for them (other teachers)." Teacher E didn't like the term "coaching." After the 10 weeks of coaching Teacher E shared this in reference to their current engagement level, "Night and day. The (coaching) helped me to handle my personal issues too. It (the coaching) helped give me a whole new lease on life." Teacher F went into this not knowing much about leadership coaching. After the sessions, Teacher F stated, "When I started this, I saw myself as a leader for my students, not of my colleagues. We do have influence in how we model for others and how we respond."

Based on the data, there is initial evidence to suggest the Transformational Leadership Coaching Program positively impacted teacher engagement. The program provided a potential protective effect against engagement deterioration and increased their use of transformational language while decreasing their use of transactional language. The Gallup Q12 Employee Engagement survey data indicated a significant drop in the control group's mean engagement levels and no significant change to the treatment group's mean engagement levels. The student information indicated that students, with no coaching related to Transformational Leadership Theory, are engaged by teachers who exhibit transformational qualities. While the qualitative data is stronger than the quantitative evidence, this does suggest that there was a positive impact on the treatment group's level of professional engagement.

It is important to point out that a limitation regarding the study would center on the ability to replicate these results at other school districts. The study was dependent on the efforts of the researcher and coach. Social experiments are inherently difficult to replicate due to the nature of the treatment administered being dependent on the effectiveness of the specific coach(es). Not all coaches are going to bring the same leadership strengths to the table and that will impact the consistency of the program.

While that could be considered a weakness, this limitation could also be viewed as an opportunity for district leaders. The relationship between the coach and the educator is crucial to the growth process. Discerning district leaders should consider selecting a coach that fits with the personalities and interests of the educators that they will be coaching. The research across the board indicates that the relationship between a coach and those who they are coaching is an essential component to successful partnership. The fact that not every coaching program will be identical could also serve as an excellent reason to integrate leadership coaching within a school district.

Our school district is currently using the data from this study to support our expansion of coaching and leadership programs. We created an onboarding program for new teachers in their 1st–4th years. The primary focus is on leadership and mindset coaching. We also created a leadership coaching program for all athletic coaches. To take the pulse of our team, we administer our version of an engagement survey across the district. Anecdotally, our engagement numbers have increased over the course of the 22–23 school year.

Why should school districts invest in leadership coaching? Evidence from this study paints a compelling case for district superintendents to consider this potentially high leverage practice. If we look at other successful organizations, from corporations to professional sports teams, the majority of them make investments to support leadership and performance coaching to strengthen their organizations. Public education has historically been slow to adopt new methods for strengthening their professional talent. We are witnessing increasing teacher shortages across the United States and less students entering college teacher preparation programs. Investing in teachers as leaders from their first day on our campuses could lead to stronger educators who are in a better position to assist our students on their own leadership journeys. As Dr. Michael Gervais stated on the importance of personal growth, "Your responsibility is for you to be great so that you can be there for other people. It's like you are the pebble in the pond, and if you want to create great ripples, be a heavy pebble. Build something internally so that you can be there and create waves in the places you go" (2023). We must help our teachers build themselves into large pebbles, so they can create great ripples for our students. Leadership coaching is a means to building those large pebbles.

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PROFILE IN LEADERSHIP

Profile in Leadership: General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.

Charles D. Dusch, Jr, United States Space Force

Editor's note: We published the first half of this biographical piece in our Spring 2022 issue (Volume 9: Number 1) at URL: https://jcldusafa.org/index.php/jcld/issue/view/1. The author highlights several themes that emerge from Davis's experience as a leader, including turning challenges into opportunities, focusing on unit morale and culture, and winning over detractors through humility and demonstrating competence. The story picks up with his elevation to command of the 332nd Fighter Group.

The 332nd FG embarked for Europe in January 1944. Lt Col Davis had become the first Black fighter group commander when he assumed command of the 332nd Fighter Group at Selfridge Field, Michigan, on October 8, 1943. Davis discovered that unlike his former unit, the 99th FS, the pilots and ground crew of the 332nd lacked unit cohesion, purpose, and identity as a result of the segregationist policies of its last commander, Col Robert Selway, Jr. Lt Col Davis now faced one of the most challenging problems of his command, since he had to mold his Airmen into a cohesive combat unit ready to deploy to Europe. Having only a few months to prepare what he termed a "gaggle" for combat, Lt Col Davis called upon all of his leadership and airmanship expertise to bond his Airmen into a proud, disciplined, and effective fighting force (Davis, 1991).

In early February 1944, the 332nd Fighter Group disembarked in Italy at last and by the third of the month had arrived at their first operational overseas bases. The group was assigned to fly coastal patrol missions in worn out P-39 Airacobra aircraft, a mission Davis considered "a slap in the face" (Davis, 1991, pp. 77–78). Still, he kept his feelings to himself and embraced the new mission with enthusiasm and commitment to build the morale of his unit. He also

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used this time to create cohesion and esprit de corps. Although a relatively stable gun platform, the P-39 had unreliable flight characteristics and the rundown aircraft proved to be more lethal to the unit than enemy aircraft. Several pilots died in crashes. Once again, Davis' leadership and airmanship skills were tested, but his reputation attracted the attention of the commander of the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces, Lt Gen Ira C. Eaker (Bergerud, 2001; Bucholtz, 2007; Gropman, 1990).

In early March, Lt Col Davis met with Eaker at the latter's headquarters at Caserta. Eaker had a problem that spring of 1944: his 15th Air Force that led his strategic bombing effort against Nazi Germany had just 21 bombardment groups with only six fighter groups to protect them, unlike his previous command the "Mighty Eighth" Air Force flying out of Britain that at its peak had 40 bombardment groups and 15 fighter groups to provide protection. Eaker had lost 114 heavy bombers carrying 1,140 Airmen in February. He was facing even greater losses as the 15th Air Force intensified its attacks against the Nazi's "Fortress Europe" in the coming months. Eaker wanted to complement the 332nd FG with the 99th FS so that he could add a "heavy" fighter group of four squadrons to his escorts; at the time, most fighter groups consisted of only three squadrons (Davis, 1991; Gropman, 1990). Was Davis interested?

Davis jumped at the chance and in May the 332nd moved for the last time to a new air base at Ramitelli, where they received hand-me-down P-47 fighter aircraft. These aircraft had belonged to a group that used a checker tail paint scheme for identification, and the 332nd painted over that design with a distinctive, solid red paint scheme forever identifying themselves as the "Red Tails." In addition, Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. was promoted to colonel. For the time being, the 99th FS remained with Twelfth Air Force supporting a critical offensive—Operation Strangle (Bucholtz, 2007; Gropman, 1990).

Col Davis led the 332nd FG on its first 15th Air Force mission on June 7, 1944 in a fighter sweep of the Ferrara-Bologna area. The next day he led the group on its first bomber escort mission, protecting the B-17s of the 5th Bombardment Wing and beginning the group's storied history of shepherding bombers. Unlike other fighter groups that departed from escort duties over the target area in favor of seeking their own targets of opportunity, Davis' innovation to group tactics was simple: stay with the bombers as "top cover" through the target area; stay with them on the way home. He also continued to dispatch flights or elements to stay close to the "wounded birds" that were stripped away from the bomber stream due to battle damage (Bucholtz, 2007; Haulman-Escorts n.d.a).

Col Davis earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for skillfully leading the group's first mission to Germany on June 9, when the 332nd helped escort B-24 and B-17 aircraft of the 5th, 47th, 49th, 55th, and 304th bombardment wings on a difficult mission to Munich. Despite the lack of enough fighter escorts, which resulted in the loss of two B-24s of the 459th Bombardment Group, the first bombers lost under the protection of the 332nd FG, the Red Tails downed five enemy aircraft (Bucholtz, 2007).

On 4 July 1944, the 332nd FG flew its first mission in the P-51 Mustang. Although its first mounts were "hand-me-downs" like the P-47 that they were replacing, the "Mustang" allowed the Red Tail pilots to soar above the high-flying B-17 bombers and provide a proper top cover while flying escort. It proved to be one of the best piston-engine fighters of the war and allowed the Red Tails to increase their number of aerial victories. The 99th FS joined the group on July 6. While other fighter groups boasted of the number of aerial victories they achieved, the 332nd celebrated the number of bombers they protected. During operations with 15th Air Force, the Red Tails flew 179 escort missions and suffered bomber losses on only seven of those missions—a

total of 27 bombers shot down by enemy aircraft compared with the average of other fighter groups of 15th Air Force of 46. The Red Tails accounted for 112 confirmed aerial victories over Axis aircraft during the war, including three Messerschmitt Me-262 jet fighters on the March 24, 1945 mission to Berlin—the longest 15th Air Force mission of the war. Besides bomber escort, they also escorted reconnaissance and transport aircraft, flew fighter sweeps as well as strafing missions and ground attack missions. Many a locomotive and Axis airfield found themselves under the guns of the 332nd FG (Broadnax, 2007; Davis, 1991; Haulman, 2011; Jablonski, 1965).

Because of the inability of the training pipeline to provide adequate numbers of replacement pilots, Red Tail pilots often flew 75 missions before rotating stateside whereas their white counterparts rotated after 50 missions. Despite the added burden of the personnel system and the addition of a fourth squadron to the group, Col Davis rose to meet each challenge. When 20 B-24s were forced to divert to Ramitelli because of bad weather in December 1944, Col Davis used the occasion as an opportunity to bridge the racial divide. The 332nd welcomed some 200 white aircrew who lived with the Red Tails for 5 days and afforded them warm hospitality. It was the first time many of the bomber crews learned that their "Red Tail angels" were Black, and although a few still retained racial bigotry, most were very grateful and came away with a new perspective (Davis, 1991; Gropman, 1990).

On June 8, 1945, Col Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. was presented the Silver Star for gallantry in action. Other Red Tails received five Distinguished Flying Crosses, five Air Medals, and one Bronze Star in an impressive ceremony. The group paraded in review to say farewell to Col Davis, who was returning to the United States to assume command of the 477th Composite Group at Godman Field, Kentucky (Bucholtz, 2007; Davis, 1991).

It seemed that with each return to the United States to assume command of a combat group, Col Davis found an even more precipitous obstacle to overcome. Such was the case with the 477th Bombardment Group at Godman Field, Kentucky. Firstly, Godman Field lacked the space to adequately train and prepare the bombardment squadrons for combat. Secondly, the unit lacked cohesion, in part because it had moved around to various airfields disrupting training. Ground personnel as well as aircrews were also switched, which prevented cohesiveness. Other causes included inadequate gunnery training and a lack of navigators and bombardiers. In addition, the group was changing from a bombardment group of four squadrons with B-25Js to a composite group of two bomb squadrons and one fighter squadron, the old 99th FS that was being rotated back to the United States in preparation for the Pacific War. Finally, the unit's morale was at a low ebb. Davis later described the situation as "just disgraceful." (Gropman, 1990, p. 158).

In April of 1945, Black officers at Freeman Field, Indiana, where the 477th was then assigned attempted to again non-violently desegregate the white officers' club, challenging the segregationist policies of Col Selway and his predecessors, which contradicted War Department regulations. This so-called "Freeman Field Mutiny" saw the mass arrest of Black officers and brought unfavorable, national attention on the Army Air Forces as well as foreshadowed the mass protests of the 1950s and 1960s. Eventually, the War Department ordered the release of most of the 120 African American officers who had been arrested. Training had been curtailed. Segregation consumed the entire unit (Moye, 2010).

This was the situation Col Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. walked into when he assumed command of the group from Selway on June 21, 1945. The next day, the group was redesignated as the 477th Composite Group with two bombardment squadrons and one fighter squadron.

Davis had 3 months before the unit was supposed to deploy to Okinawa, so he got to work re-motivating and preparing the unit for war in his measured, disciplined fashion. Fortunately, he also brought 30 personnel from the 332nd FG in Italy with him to assist him in this task. On July 1, Col Davis became the first Black officer to command a major air base when he assumed command of Godman Field and shortly thereafter the 99th FS began receiving brand new long-range P-47N fighters (Davis, 1991). The following month, the Empire of Japan announced its intention to surrender, which it did on September 2, 1945 aboard the battleship USS *Missouri*, ending World War II.

One might argue that Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. made his biggest impact on the Air Force in the second half of his career after World War II. In March 1946, the 477th Composite Group moved to Lockbourne Army Air Base, outside of Columbus, Ohio. Although local residents were initially distressed at the arrival of this African American unit on their back porch, Col Davis used the opportunity to again bridge the racial divide and cultivate warm relations between the base and the local community. Many of the white employees on the base, such as firefighters, were also in fear of losing their jobs. Davis put them at ease and assured them that they could stay as long as they did their jobs. He won "very great allies" with the local community (Davis, 1991; Gropman, 1990, pp. 164–167).

Col Davis insisted upon doing the things that base commanders in the military traditionally did with the local community. In preparation for the 1948 Olympics, Lockbourne was designated as a reception base for the eastern US One of the 477th CG's Airmen won a gold medal, putting Columbus on the sports pages across the nation and earning the esteem of the local community. Local dignitaries came out for Armed Forces Day ceremonies, proud to be invited to "their base." Davis promised to make the base the best in the Air Force, and a 1948 Tactical Air Command inspection report called it a model for other Air Force bases. In addition, esteemed WWII generals such as Emmet "Rosie" O'Donnell and Elwood "Pete" Quesada added their plaudits to Col Davis and his team at Lockbourne (Davis, 1991; Gropman, 1990).

Changes were in store for the group. In July 1947, the 477th Composite Group was inactivated and the 332nd Fighter Group was reactivated at Lockbourne, with the 99th, 100th, and 301st fighter squadrons comprising the unit. On July 28, Col Davis became the commander of the 332nd Fighter Wing, the first Black commander of a wing, although his tenure was short (Bucholtz, 2007).

The Air Force was seriously investigating integration, in part due to Col Noel Parrish's paper describing segregation as "inefficient" and "expensive." Col Davis was invited to serve as an advisor to the Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel at the Pentagon, who was conducting a study on USAF racial policies and practices. Col Davis was also invited to work with the Fahy Committee to establish the formal Air Force integration policy and in that role reported to the Assistance Secretary of the Air Force. His work in this regard was vital to the Air Force, which became the first branch of the Armed Forces to integrate—even before President Harry Truman's famous Executive Order 9,981 went into effect. Both white and African American pilots were soon training together at Williams Air Force Base in Arizona (Davis, 1991; Moye, 2010).

In recognition of Col Davis' great leadership potential, Air Force leaders selected him to be the first Black officer to attend Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, in 1949. He found the experience very rewarding, both professionally and socially before moving on to the Air Staff assigned to the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, where he continued to put his Airmanship skills to use. In an interview, Davis described how as Chief of the Fighter Branch his office became "the authority on the Korean War" developing doctrine for fighter aviation across the entire Air Force,

learned from the wartime experience of USAF fighter units. Col Davis took his team to the theater of war in Korea to discuss operations with the combatants themselves, earning tremendous respect. He remarked that "our word carried a lot of weight" (Davis, 1991, pp. 159–165). Davis later commanded in Wing in Korea, was promoted to general officer, and served in senior staff positions in Europe, Washington, DC, and Korea, making important contributions in each assignment.

Lt Gen Davis became the commander of the 13th Air Force at Clark Air Base, Republic of the Philippines, in August 1967. It was another laurel in his string of "firsts" and he continued his excellent service, supporting his fellow numbered air force commanders who were fighting the War in Southeast Asia (Gropman, 1990). The next year, Lt Gen Davis was called upon to serve as the Deputy Commander in Chief, US Strike Command with headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. He was also named as Commander in Chief, Middle-East, Southern Asia, and Africa and became heavily involved in humanitarian operations in Pakistan, India, and Africa. However, due to the intensification of the War in Southeast Asia, operations at Strike Command were being curtailed and its senior leaders opted for retirement. This included Lt Gen Davis, who officially retired from Active Duty on February 1, 1970 (Davis, 1991).

Even in retirement, Gen Davis continued to serve our Nation. He held several government posts beginning in 1970. In response to a surge in airline hijackings, he was named head of the Federal Sky Marshal Program, and in 1971 he was made Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety, and Consumer Affairs of the US Department of Transportation (Davis, 1991).

Perhaps Gen Davis' most important contribution to the Air Force was his work for the United States Air Force Academy. He was elected to both the Board of Visitors of the Academy as well as the Board of Trustees of the Association of Graduates in 1971. The early 1970s were a very turbulent era of the Air Force Academy as it was for the rest of the Nation. It was a period of anti-war protests, violence, and drug use that spilled over to the Academy and the Cadet Wing. Attrition soared—reaching 43.77% for the Class of 1974. Minority cadets were among the hardest hit, and when the Equal Rights Amendment seemed on the verge of passing in 1972, the admission of women to the military service academies seemed to be inevitable (HQ USAFA, 1973, 1974, 1975).

Lt Gen A.P. Clark, the Academy Superintendent, turned to the West Point classmate he had silenced in 1932 for help, asking Gen Davis to assist the USAF Academy in its time of need. Gen Davis enthusiastically applied the same resolve and integrity to these challenges as he had on Active Duty. He was personally involved with cadets, faculty, and staff, speaking to classes and in small groups. As President of the Board of Visitors, he collaborated with Clark and his staff, and OPLAN 7-73, a contingency plan to integrate women into the Cadet Wing, was produced. As a result, attrition was curbed and when the Class of 1978 arrived it saw the largest admission of minority cadets of all kinds that the Air Force Academy had ever received up to that time. Two years later, USAFA became the first military service academy to admit women (Clark, 2002).

The Academy's Falcon Foundation paid tribute to him with a scholarship named in his honor, and Gen Davis served as a member of the Foundation from 1982 to 1991. In 1995, Gen Davis was honored by the Cadet Wing when he was presented the Thomas D. White National Defense Award. His indispensable work for the Air Force Academy secured its mission of creating Leaders of Character for our Nation for many generations to come (Davis Biography, 1995).

On December 9, 1998, President William Jefferson Clinton recalled him to Active Duty and advanced him

to the rank of General, US Air Force (four-star rank). General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. then returned to the roll of retired officers. General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. passed away on July 4, 2002 and was buried with full military honors on July 17, 2002 at Arlington National Cemetery.

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BOOK REVIEW

A Review of "Mastering the Art of Command: Admiral Chester W. Nimitz and Victory in the Pacific"

Trent Hone, Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press (2022)

Review By: John J. Abbatiello

Trent Hone brings an interesting set of perspectives to this recent military biography of Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet and Commander in Chief of the Pacific Ocean Areas during World War II. Hone is an expert on the history of the US Navy in the early Twentieth Century, with several excellent books and articles covering doctrine and leadership during this era. He is also an organizational learning consultant, advising organizations about improving their processes and techniques. In *Mastering the Art of Command*, Hone applies management theory and ideas about organizational leadership to investigate Nimitz's performance as a fleet and theater commander.

Hone focuses his analysis on Nimitz's World War II experience, with very little discussion about his pre-war or post-war career. This limited scope allows a laser-like focus on how the Admiral made decisions, how he organized his headquarters, and most importantly how he built relationships with his key subordinates and staff members. From his arrival as Pacific Fleet commander on Christmas Day 1941, to the signing of the Japanese surrender aboard the *USS Missouri* on 02 September 1945, Nimitz clearly excelled as a strategic leader. Hone highlights several reasons for this success throughout the book.

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Firstly, Nimitz fostered a team environment with his subordinate commanders and staff members. He did this through regular meetings, which the Navy at the time called "the conference method," to promote collaborative problem solving and sense making (p. 342). Nimitz had a knack for encouraging open debate and ensuring psychological safety, through humility, inquisitiveness, and open-mindedness. Secondly, Hone highlights Nimitz's decentralized approach to command, pushing authority and decision-making responsibility to the lowest levels possible in order to maintain the initiative against the Japanese and seize opportunities as soon as they became evident. Thirdly, Nimitz built his headquarters staffs by putting the right people in the right roles, knowledge he developed from relationships he had nurtured. For example, he placed two very aggressive senior officers in his plans and operations sections in order to meet his intent for staying ahead of the Japanese decision cycle, while giving logistical responsibilities to subordinates who were highly competent but methodical leaders.

The final organizational leadership techniques dealt with what Hone calls "continual reorientation," "relentless pursuit of options," and "strategic artistry." Here, Nimitz reorganized and reoriented forces to meet immediate circumstances whenever needed, explored all courses of action suggested by his subordinates before making a final decision, and sustained a rapid pace and sequencing of major operations, respectively. The latter technique was a key feature of the island-hopping campaigns of 1942 through 1945, whereby each offensive sequentially meshed with others to schedule logistical buildups, force reconstitution, training, air and naval attacks to soften defenses, and finally the assault itself. Using these techniques, Nimitz was able to maintain an aggressive posture that stole the initiative from the Japanese in mid-1942 and continued to the final successful campaigns against Iwo Jima and Okinawa in 1945.

The author makes use of archival sources—such as meeting minutes, correspondence between commanders, and after-action reports—to dig into the details of Nimitz's leadership style as well as important decisions he made collaboratively with the Joint Chiefs in Washington, DC and with his key subordinates. The book's chronological narrative takes the reader from the dangerous days after the Pearl Harbor attack, through the "calculated risk" and key victory at Midway, and then on to the major campaigns of the Solomons, Gilberts, Marianas, Philippines, and final assaults in 1945. It is a story of American aggressiveness, innovation, and organizational competence under Nimitz's collaborative leadership style.

Hone's background as a management consultant contributes to the value of this book in two important ways. Firstly, he includes modern management terminology to describe what Nimitz accomplished as an organizational leader. Many will find "complex adaptive system," "dispositionality," and "flow" somewhat familiar. Secondly, Hone backs up his analysis with recent leadership scholarship. For example, he references Amy Edmondson's work on psychological safety, David Epstein's research on generalists, Mary Uhl-Bien's work on complexity leadership theory, and other important theoretical concepts to relate Nimitz's approach to leadership in light of these ideas.

An interesting blend of biography, naval history, and management theory, *Mastering the Art of Command* provides a unique approach to studying organizational leadership. Several other excellent biographies of Nimitz—such as E.B. Potter's classic *Nimitz* (1976) and Craig Symond's recent *Nimitz at War* (2022)—also examine the genius of this important leader. Nevertheless, Hone's approach will be especially appealing to readers interested in the study of organizations and how they are effectively led.

BOOK REVIEW

A Review of "Airpower Pioneers: From Billy Mitchell to Dave Deptula"

John Andreas Olsen, ed., Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press (2023)

Review By: Douglas Kennedy

> "Those who serve know how important a single, galvanizing officer of vision and integrity can be in motivating a person's career. But how confident are we that such an officer will survive, when the slightest divergence can derail a career?" – Lt Col Timothy Kline (1982, p. 31)

John Andreas Olsen, a Royal Norwegian Air Force colonel, once again gathers a strong cast of airpower historians and other airpower intellectuals for his third contribution to Naval Institute Press's "The History of Military Aviation" series with *Airpower Pioneers: From Billy Mitchell to Dave Deptula*. This latest edited volume completes his trilogy to P.J. Springer's series and effectively complements Olsen's other two works in the series: *Airpower Reborn: The Strategic Concepts of John Warden and John Boyd* (2015) and *Airpower Applied: U.S., NATO, and Israeli Combat Experience* (2023). *Airpower Pioneers* investigates 12 American airpower leaders who cover the more than a century of American airpower history and the 75 years of US Air Force history. Olsen and his fellow authors chronologically guide the reader through airpower history by reflecting on these various personalities who bridge this span of time while illustrating their visionary ideas and steadfastness of purpose to see these ideas through. As Olsen states in his concluding chapter, "Reflections: The Importance of Vision," these 12 pioneers "demanded new systems, new organizations, and new doctrines" and understood the "distinctive characteristics of airpower—speed, range, flexibility, precision, and lethality" (pp. 402–403). More importantly, Olsen reminds us, "The future of aerospace power requires airmen not only to push the limits in combat but also to emphasize, publicly and frequently, what is special and vital about airpower" (p. 402). This study profiles 12 airmen who gave—and in some cases continue to give—all for the benefit of a more secure national defense via air and space power.

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Olsen's assemblage of authors includes some high-profile contributors to airpower history who share their insights about some well-known and often-discussed airpower advocates, as well as some biographies on lesser-known, but no less significant, airpower promoters. Former Air Force historian Richard Hallion presents the "visionary firebrand," Brigadier General William "Billy" Mitchell; Dik Daso reconnects with the "airpower architect," General of the Air Force Henry "Hap" Arnold; Richard Muller revitalizes the "planner, commander, and historian," Major General Haywood "Possum" Hansell, Jr.; Phillip Meilinger reengages with General Hoyt S. Vandenberg—"building the Air Force"; Paul J. Springer reminds us about the "operator, organizer, and commander," General Curtis E. LeMay; Karl Mueller discusses "guiding the Air Force to new frontiers" through examining General Bernard A. Schriever; David Ochmanek introduces the "analyst who put rubber on the ramp," Lieutenant General Glenn A. Kent; Brian Laslie discovers the "modernizer and reformer," General David C. Jones; Benjamin Lambeth considers "transforming the combat air forces" through General Wilbur L. Creech; Olsen reconnects with the "strategist, innovator, and educator," Colonel John A. Warden; Heather Venable champions General Merrill A. McPeak's "reorganizing the Air Force"; while finally, Christopher Bowie hails the "airpower advocate and visionary," Lieutenant General David A. Deptula. All chapters are consistently well-written and researched.

Besides a solid look into an understanding and development of airpower as an impressive tool of national power, the book provides insightful lessons on leadership and character. This ensures that the book is a must read for young military professionals, especially officer candidates. The reader learns not only about many of the brave, individual combat exploits and certainly the courageous commitment to advancing programs and ideas but also gets a real sense of General Creech's adage that "the single most important imperative for a leader is to produce more leaders," and to apply "a simple rule: A mistake is not a crime, and a crime is not a mistake"—to boost innovation, initiative, and ingenuity in a force where "integrity first" matters (p. 292). Creech's outlook was a result of the mentorship that he received from General Jones, who learned this lesson while an aide to General LeMay. Whether done intentionally, a thread weaves through these 12 warriors connecting them to one another and binding them to an insightful legacy of US airpower history.

The challenge and fear revealed in this work is whether US air, space, and cyberspace power will continue to produce the leaders necessary to advance the technological, doctrinal, organizational requirements to dominate the future. This has been the lament since then-Lt Col Tim Kline queried, "Where have all the Mitchell's gone?"—an article that shows up in print every so often. Olsen's compilation offers a retort to this question, by demonstrating that we have continued to produce those leaders ... and that we can have confidence that the force is developing future air and space power advocates.

Kline, T. (1982) Where Have All the Mitchell's Gone. *Air University Review*, 33(4), *31*.

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