DISSERTATION

COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI) SKILLS

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Spring 2011

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ABSTRACT

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According to American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), community college leaders who are able to master the skills that are related to organizational strategies, resource management, communication, collaboration, and professionalism, are most likely to succeed. According to Goleman (1998), acquiring these technical skills is important to achieve the job, yet a leader still needs other skills to become complete. In order to become effective leaders, according to Goleman, a person has to acquire the abilities which help him/her contribute positively to groups and institutions and sustain a balanced relationship with others on a daily basis. For Goleman (1995), in order for a leader to acquire the stated abilities, a leader has to implement emotional intelligence (EI) skills which include: showing responsibility, handling stress, being aware of self- emotions and those of others, being able to understand others, and are optimistic.

This phenomenological study examined the reflections, values, challenges, and skills of community college leaders who try to promote leadership quality development using qualitative research methods to explore community college leaders lived experiences. The phenomenon in this study was examined through data collected by interviews with nine leaders who had at least 5 years of leadership at community colleges, and have a PhD in community college leadership. Many leaders demonstrated the need to create an environment where

competition, disagreement, and conflict, could be resolved in a better way. Each of the nine leaders participated in a 60 to 90 minute phone interview, and a follow up email. Data analysis included the detailed data from participants and produced two emergent themes: EI skills are not yet fully understood enough to be implemented, and community college leaders rely on other varied approaches and skills.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My deepest and most sincere gratitude to the many people who helped make this dissertation possible, particularly Dr Tim Davies, Chairman of the committee, for his support guidance, time, and faith in me. Gratitude is extended to Dr. Jim Bannings, Dr Nat Kees, Dr. Susan MacQuiddy, for their support and willingness to share their expertise and serve on the committee.

Heartfelt thanks expressed to my family and friends for their encouragement. Sincere thanks are extended to those who have not been acknowledged but inspired the researcher in this completion of this dissertation.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my lovely beautiful daughters, Nadine and Farah. Your strength and patience served as a catalyst between my personal and professional goals. Your words of encouragement gave me the strength to complete this dissertation. Let this major accomplishment serve as a reminder, that if your mom can do it, you can too!

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Personal Vignette

In 1982, I watched the warplanes. Nights and days were very long and when the darkness fell each night, the warplanes and the worst escalation enmity bombing in every direction, sent a daily signal of death. Through this evil chaos, my sister would ask me if we were going to survive and get up tomorrow. Through the darkness of the nights, when there was no strength to continue, when there became no way out, my mother's prayer was our only hope. During that period of time, I did not know that there was another world where children go to school, to the park, to the library-- a "real" world where children have never seen warplanes.

In 1996, I got married. I wanted to find a safe place to live before having children. It would be too painful to have my children see what I had seen. I wanted my children to live the life as children who live without the threat of war. I wanted my children to play in their own back yard. So, my husband and I came to Colorado where my brother resides. In 1997 I had my first child, Nadine, and in 2000 I had Farah. Nadine and Farah certainly are living a normal Colorado childhood, the kind of world I knew existed from the TV shows. They have had the chance to see Disney World and Disneyland, to travel around the United States, and to see many different sites and attractions that I didn't even know existed. In America I had the chance to find a safe place for my kids and an opportunity to continue my education.

Continuing my education was a major goal for many reasons. During the war time in my country, I could not continue my education. When I came to the United States in 1997, I went back to school; my goal was to receive a bachelor's degree. The reason I wanted to continue my education was because in the Arab world, society is dominated by males. Culturally, where I have been raised, a woman's job is to serve the family. Society's norms and beliefs didn't treat women as equal to men. My goal is not to fight society's norms and beliefs. My goal is to reject beliefs that women are inferior to men, because they do not fit me. I have been able to grow against my society's norms and beliefs, partly because I was born to a family who believed in education and believed that women were equal to men. My father was well educated; he was the mayor of the town where we were living. He read books written by women; he listened to great lectures presented by women. My father met successful female politicians. He used to tell stories about successful women. He never told me a story that mentioned women as men's servants. His stories confused me, because his stories were different than reality. In reality I had seen women in other families who were not allowed to continue their education, women who spent their lives serving their families. In telling me these stories, my father had a purpose. The purpose was for me to become a successful woman. From my father's stories I learned to refuse a man's abuse, to refuse to be inferior to a man, and to continue my education so that I would have status in our society. Coming to the United States was an opportunity to continue my education and obtain status in my Arab society.

Another reason it became important for me to receive a doctorate was because in 2004 I decided to divorce my husband and become an independent woman. In Arab society at large, it is only education that allows a woman to have a voice and independence. In

Arabic culture women are dependent on their husbands; if a man abuses his wife, she stays with him for economic reasons. Women have to leave their feelings and emotions out of any decision and keep silent because they are dependent. I decided not to take that road. I believe that the Quran gave us the freedom to choose the way we decide to live our lives as women, and God gave us the freedom to choose. The Quran gave women the right to education, to choose and divorce a husband, to be equal to the man. Unfortunately, in some Arab countries, rules are made by men, not the Quran, and women are treated as inferior and have no status.

By divorcing a husband who wanted me to be dependent on him and by continuing my education, I broke my cultural rules. By divorcing I set off along a harsh road to gain social status. I call it the harsh road, because the transition from being a dependent woman to an independent woman was difficult. Financially I had to suffer. I had to have a full-time job in addition to being a full-time mother and full-time student. I had to sacrifice emotionally to get a higher degree, to become a woman with status and a voice. I had to suffer emotionally because I had to put my personal life on hold in order to finish my education and raise my two daughters. Earning a higher degree, however, will help me succeed without the need to find a partner for financial purposes. Earning my doctorate will help me provide my children with a better life and will allow me to be a role model for my children, because I want them to refuse the man-made rules as well.

Besides these sacrifices, I faced difficulties as a foreign student as well. My biases, based in culture and religion, influence me as a student, parent, and researcher. It is important for me to acknowledge these biases to aid in reducing their impact in the research process. One important bias I hold is my perception of how I was treated by some teachers as I sought

to advance my education. As a foreign student, a Muslim woman, I often felt humiliated and treated as if I did not belong. For example, one teacher at the English Department treated me unfairly. This teacher gave me an "F" grade for a reason that I have never understood. I felt that there was prejudice against me because her son was in Iraq and I am a Muslim woman. I still have all my work from her class, and I have shown my work to many teachers and students. All were surprised I received an "F" based on this academic work. I was a foreign student who was new to the system, so I did not know where to go and what to do. So the "F" stayed on my transcript as a scar. On many occasions I considered going back to my country, Lebanon, and not continuing my education, but because of my strong desire to advance my education, I continued on.

There were other difficulties as well such as raising two children alone in a culture so different from which I was raised. By raising my children in America, I am raising "American" children. Raising my children who have a different culture from me is not easy. I cannot teach them both cultures, American and Lebanese. It is hard to deal with children who view life differently than I do. I cannot teach American culture because I am Lebanese, and they are American and not interested in my culture. For example, in Lebanon we celebrate Eid al-Adha or "Festival of Sacrifice," a Muslim religious festival celebrated during pilgrimage to Mecca. Family members gather together, wear their finest clothes, and have a feast. Eid Alftr is another Islamic holiday that marks the end of fasting of Ramadan. It is celebrated exactly as Eid al-Adha. In America, my family will not do this, even though I taught them about both Eids. They still care more about Christmas and Thanksgiving than about the two Eids because at school their friends talk about what they do during Christmas and Thanksgiving holidays. So I am obligated to celebrate Christmas and Thanksgiving with my girls, so that they

don’t feel different from their friends. Feeling different is not easy for children. I try my best to help them feel they belong. To move beyond these setbacks I had to work to control my emotions and reactions and to better understand the perspectives of others and especially my children. To be able to cope with a new culture, with bias, and with divorce while supporting my children and my needs as a single mother, and to have a better way of dealing with problems, I took counseling classes.

The counseling courses taught me the importance of understanding human-to-human relations. I learned from counseling that my life is a journey that is continually being created by me. I can create my reality through dreams, experiences, and life stories. Through counseling I have learned skills that have helped me better understand myself and others. My background in counseling has helped me solve my personal problems in a positive way. It has prepared me to help others seeking to find a solution, to change, and to adopt positive attitudes. For example, in counseling, clients are the only people who know what they want. By listening to them without judging, the counselor can help clients: know their needs, learn to trust, understand the problem, find a solution, adopt a positive attitude, and deal with stress. These skills have revealed to me that we as human beings have the ability to manage our behaviors and attitudes.

Another factor that influenced my thinking and convinced me of the importance of human-to-human relations was the impact of another war in my country. During the Israeli army’s 2006 invasion of Lebanon, I lost contact with my dearest mother and family. For a while I felt the pain of losing my dearest ones. This caused me to ask many questions that did not have good answers. I asked: why did the United Nations adopt the Human Rights Law in 1966 and other human rights treaties? Are these human rights treaties prohibited from being

used in countries with less power and less authority, such as Lebanon? It was ironic to me to see some countries develop policies that protect animals, while other countries developed no protection for human beings. Empowered leaders use non-violent conflict resolution to solve problems and these approaches preserve humanity. I thought that if all leaders involved with conflicts practiced a harmless way to solve world problems, the world would be a better place. Given my personal experiences where I felt misinterpreted, misrepresented, and misled, I believe in solving all problems peacefully, rather than using harm and aggression. Consequently, I believe that the ability to manage emotions and understand emotions will help us become more effective in solving problems.

Since I am interested in understanding others' emotions and have a background in counseling, and am interested in higher education, I chose to study Community College Leadership for my PhD. In this program I have been introduced to the concept of Emotional intelligence (EI) and EI Theory as a pathway to problem solving. Emotionally intelligent individuals have a better understanding of others and are more sensitive to the emotions of others. After taking a class that included EI theory, I realized that using EI skills is the most effective way to clarify the misperception of others' actions and reactions. Before I was exposed to the EI theory, the subject itself intrigued me, because I knew that human-to-human relationships were what interested me. Understanding and controlling my own emotions and learning to react positively in specific situations always has been my goal. The same feelings that drove me to understand my emotions also challenged me to understand the emotions and reactions of others. I believe that most tensions among people come from a misunderstanding or miscommunication; therefore, the opportunity to better understand how EI is practiced will aid in improving human relations.

Similarly, I believe the effective practice of EI in higher educational institutions could reduce some misunderstandings that lead to unfair treatment and hard feelings. Because of this, I see EI as critical to communication and critical to community college leader success.

Introduction

I am interested in educational institutions' leadership reform because this effort helps leaders re-consider the classical leadership style which is based on hierarchy and authority. Leadership reforms help leaders improve their educational institution's performance. Leaders' creativity appears through performance in daily activities such as communicating with others; organizing their time and events; facing challenges; solving problems; and working toward improvement of self, others, and the organization (Collins, 2001). Traditional leadership styles, which involve the use of power and authority, are designed to achieve institutional missions. Leadership styles that involve the use of EI skills help achieve quality teamwork, quality relationships, productivity, improvement, commitment, morale, and outcomes (Cherniss & Goleman, 1981). According to Goleman, EI is the main factor for success; in fact, it is 90% factor for success (Wall, 2008). I believe that the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs leaders bring to an organization affect the whole environment. Therefore, I chose to study EI style because its positive effect leads to success in work and in life (Wall, 2008).

This study will interview experienced community college leaders to gain an understanding of how they view their leadership duties and responsibilities and what skills they use. To better understand my motivation for this work I shared a brief overview of my story. I will next cover background, and leadership and EI, which includes leadership, transformational leadership, EI, followed by the study's purpose, the research questions, and the significance of the study.

Background

Leaders view the act of leading as a duty and responsibility to serve others. Furthermore, effective leaders are creative (Gardner, 2007). According to Goleman (2004), acquiring qualities such as intelligence, toughness, determination, and vision are crucial for success. Being a leader without acquiring such qualities can even be damaging for colleagues and organizations. Dealing with people requires leaders to acquire adequate skills to maintain appropriate performance, healthy relationships, and meaningful social interaction (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). For example, some leaders do not have the ability to address the unique experiences each individual brings to a situation. This inability to acknowledge differences limits human potential. Goleman (1998) states that an effective leader is aware of self-regulation; therefore, he or she picks his or her words carefully, acknowledging a team's poor performance without rushing to any hasty judgment. Effective leaders are distinguished by the leadership style they implement in their professional role.

One of the most effective leadership styles is the one that applies EI skills. According to Goleman (2004), truly effective leaders also are distinguished by a high degree of EI, which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill. EI skills carry more significance now than ever in work and in life (Goleman, 1998). Therefore, a need to identify practical ways to improve EI skills implementation and application, and to learn to identify these skills among community college leaders, is crucial. Effective practice of EI skills in leadership could reduce misunderstanding and could nurture healthier relationships among individuals. By implementing EI skills, leaders would have a better understanding of their own and others' emotions. Implementing EI skills will help leaders benefit from effective skills in understanding their own and others' emotions (Ginsberg & Davies, 2007).

There are, however, some barriers that prevent leaders from adopting or practicing EI skills. Two reasons that could prevent leaders from fully implementing EI skills are: (a) the fear that others will not follow, and (b) leaders with high positions tend to follow a classical leadership style (hierarchy style) that uses authority to dominate and control. EI theory addresses these concerns. Despite these barriers, the implementation of EI holds potential to benefit students, instructors, and administrators in community college environments.

Leadership

Leaders with authority tend to practice power and hierarchy; they tend to set aside emotions and feelings. Those leaders are called traditional leaders. Traditional leaders usually need to acquire practical skills and experiences that are related to their field. They need to acquire management skills that lead to achieving institutional goals. These leadership skills are related to managing, solving, guiding, and nurturing others. For leaders to be more effective, they need to acquire the skills that enable them to adopt the human-to-human relationships instead of dealing with others based on authority and power (Goleman, 2004).

According to Costley and Howell (2001), "effective leaders also develop good communication skills, competence, and experience, and they work to develop their own legitimate power, expert power, and resource/connection power" (p.103). According to Goleman (1998), relationship management provides inspiration, potential to influence, and ability to help leaders grow in managing conflict. Furthermore, Jaworski (1998) believes that "one of the central requirements for good leadership is the capacity to inspire the people in the group: to move them and encourage them and pull them into the activity" (p.60). According to Jaworski, leaders should be able to develop the wisdom and the power to serve others. He also believes that leadership is about human-to-human relationships. An effective leadership style

that includes human-to-human relationship that deals with the understanding of the self and others' emotions, and leads to the success of individuals in life and at work is called EI style.

Emotional intelligence and leadership

Leadership capabilities are grouped, according to Goleman (1998), into three categories: technical skills, such as business planning; cognitive abilities, such as reasoning; and EI, such as the ability to understand others' emotions (Henry, 2008). According to Forgas and Mayer (2001), "EI refers to an ability to recognize the meanings of emotions and their relationships, and to reason and problem solve on the basis of them. EI is the capacity to perceive emotions, assimilate emotion-related feelings, understand the information of those emotions, and manage them" (p. 9). EI includes skills that focus on personality, human development, emotions, achievements, self-esteem, self-mastery, and self-efficacy. These skills are called emotional competencies.

Goleman (1998) created five EI domains, which include twenty-five competencies. According to Goleman, emotional competencies consist of personal competence and social competence and include a framework of EI that reflects how an individual's potential for mastering the skills of Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, and Relationship Management translates into on-the-job success. Furthermore, David McClelland, a psychologist at Harvard University, claims that leaders who acquire six or more EI competencies are more effective than individuals who lack such skills (Goleman, 2000).

Another EI model that has been created by Mayer and Salovey (1997) consists of four EI tiers. The first tier focuses on the mental ability skills that allow the person to identify one's own and others' emotions. The second tier focuses on understanding and managing emotions. The third tier focuses on distinguishing among emotions. The fourth tier focuses

on mastering these emotions to achieve personal and social goals. Leaders who acquire EI skills have the ability to face challenges, improve performance, and adopt a positive attitude along with understanding and managing emotions. “EI proved to be not only the key ingredients for outstanding leaders; it was also linked to better performance in organizations” (Henry, 2008, p. 348). These skills are not inborn talents, but developed through life experiences, both formal and informal (Goleman,1995). These skills can be learned, and learning these skills takes time and commitment (Goleman,1998).

Leadership and the Community College

Traditional higher education institutions seek leaders with specific technical skills and experiences to achieve goals. Basic skills that traditional community college leaders might need to acquire are communication, institutional planning and development, management, research methodologies, legal knowledge, finance, technology, development of programs and curriculum, and leadership (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Traditional community college leaders are implementing the traditional leadership style for many reasons: (a) they do not have the knowledge about alternative leadership styles that are effective, (b) they fear the loss of authority, or (c) they do not have the courage to change. The need to adopt a leadership style that helps educational institutions become more effective is crucial. There are different kinds of effective leadership styles, and community college leaders should be able to decide which leadership style is best for their educational institution.

There is a need for community college leaders to implement a leadership style that brings out the best in individuals to become effective leaders who have a direct impact on higher institutional productivity; performance is vital. According to traditional educational institutions, acquiring specific technical skills and related experience are enough to become a

successful leader. While according to Goleman (1998), technical skills and experiences are the entry level requirements for leadership positions with excellent performance. A leader's motivation will be useless if they cannot communicate their passion to the organization. Social skills allow leaders to put their EI to work (Goleman, 1998). Researchers have confirmed that a leadership style that implements EI skills helps create a healthier environment. According to Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2001), high levels of EI create climates in which information sharing, trust, healthy risk-taking, and learning flourish.

Furthermore, according to Jaworski (1998), "if one is leading, teaching, dealing with young people, or engaged in any other activity that involves influencing, directing, guiding, helping, or nurturing, the whole tone of the relationship is conditioned by one's faith in human possibilities. That is the generative element, the source of the current that gives life to the relationship" (p. 66). It is not known yet whether community college doctoral students acquired EI skills, and whether or not they learned or applied these skills in their professional leadership role.

Purpose of the Study

My purpose in conducting this study was to understand community college leaders' experiences in leadership and to discern whether they implement EI skills during their lived professional leadership experiences. This study focused on deepening understanding about community college leaders' experiences to learn the leadership skills they are using in their professional roles. For those that use EI skills, this study helped me understand how they acquired these skills. If they did not use EI skills, this study helped me see what skills and theories they do adhere to. To accomplish this, I formulated three research questions:

(1) Are community college leaders aware of the theory of EI?

(2) Do community college leaders practice EI in their professional leadership experience?

(3) If community college leaders are not implementing the skills incorporated within EI, what skills and values are they using and to what leadership theories do they relate?

This study helps community college leaders better understand the importance of implementing EI skills in their professional role. Community college leaders who are interested in this study will be more conscious of the factors that can positively influence the improvement of their performance through the implementation of the leadership style that includes EI skills. My general approach to this research study will be to develop greater understanding about the implementation of EI skills among community college leaders.

Significance of the Study

The challenge of educational reform is now in the hands of community college leaders. The reason educational reform is in the hands of community college leaders is because they are policy makers and curriculum creators. So, those leaders have the capabilities to decide which leadership style should be implemented at their educational institution. Community college leaders have a noble mission; this mission should be accompanied with mastering leadership skills that help them achieve the desired outcomes. Fortunately, some higher educational institutions are undergoing significant changes in leadership philosophy and in the way they are exploring professional development for effectiveness. Some of those educational institutions have created community college leadership programs to introduce new leadership styles, which include EI skills.

Mastering leadership skills could be achieved by implementing EI skills that affect performance. In his book, *Working with EI,* Goleman (1998) defined a theory of performance and guidelines for achieving excellent performance at the work place. Goleman claims that EI skills are the main ingredients of excellent performance and outstanding leaders. By understanding the importance of employing EI skills, leaders construct working and learning environments that allow everyone to improve and succeed. Williams (1994) argues that there is a relationship among EI skills strength in leaders, performance of the organization, and the overall climate (Williams, 1994).

Even though researchers have suggested that EI skills improve professional performance, the literature review has revealed that few studies have been done that are relevant to the area of community college leaders and EI skills. The literature review revealed that most researchers focused on leadership and EI skills at work places in general. Some studies include recommendations for future research that relates to EI leadership, but are not related directly to community college leaders. For example, Mayer and Geher (1996) recommended creating training programs to educate individuals acquiring EI skills to help them grow in the interpersonal relation area (Mayer & Geher, 1996). Salovey and Mayer (1990) recommended that for better understanding of the connection between EI and leadership, researchers might examine self-emotions — how emotions are regulated, adapted, and promoted — identifying emotions through the use of a conventional scale. Also, researchers might need to examine the role EI plays in enhancing relationships and in maintaining actual social behavior. Lopes et al. (2004) recommended more research on the validity of EI, consistency of EI as a theory, and the effect of EI skills training on social relationships. Other researchers recommended

training programs to help individuals acquire EI skills to better succeed in different areas of life.

I found that most of the research related to EI focused on defining the EI theory and implementing EI skills at work and in life in general. Because there is a lack of research that is related directly to community college leaders and EI skills implementation, there is a need for research that improves the performance of community college leaders through the use of EI skills. Therefore, the primary motivation for this study is to fill the gap left by the absence of literature available on the implementation of EI skills in educational institutions.

This research is of significance to the domain of leadership as it extends the knowledge that currently exists in the EI theory and skills, and adds to the related field as it focuses on community college leaders and their implementation of EI skills. The significance of this study is primarily to provide a deeper understanding of the importance of EI skills. Additionally, the purpose is to give community college leaders a practical view of the importance of implementing EI skills to support community college leaders who are looking to implement EI skills within their institutions and develop programs related to EI skills.

Furthermore, the findings of this study help community college leaders have a better understanding of EI skills and may help them understand the importance of differentiating between learning EI skills and implementing those skills. Chapter 4 provides, in the participants' voices, a comparison between learning EI skills and implementing these skills.

Studies suggest that emotionally intelligent leadership is key to creating working climates that encourage individuals to give their best (Goleman, 1998; McClellan, 1998; Williams, 1994). Community college leaders at every level must be involved in exercising a transformative leadership style that includes EI skills.

Organization of the Study

Chapter One includes the personal vignette, introduction, background, purpose of the study, research question, significance of the study, and the organization of the study. Chapter Two includes the literature review. Chapter Three outlines the methodology. Chapter Four reports the data obtained in this phenomenological approach using general and unique themes. Chapter Five presents the findings, conclusion, implications, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Most leaders are able to acquire the practical skills and the required experiences of traditional leadership. However, few leaders have the ability to effectively utilize EI skills. According to Goleman (2001), leaders' attitudes and behavior affect the performance of everyone else. Two different statements can send the same message. For instance one can say, "These are the rules and I expect you to follow the rules." But one could also explain, "These are the rules, so how can we work together to ensure we maintain them?" These two scenarios mark the difference between traditional models and an EI model in working toward a desired outcome.

Emotional Intelligence: History, Theory, and Definition

Intelligence is an old term that has been used by Greek philosophers such as Aristotle marked by cognitive aspects, like memory and solving problems. Another philosopher, Descartes, defined intelligence as the ability to judge true from false. In the early twentieth century, E. L. Thorndike (1920) introduced three types of intelligences: mechanical, social, and abstract, saying, "a man has not some amount of intelligence, but varying amounts of different intelligences" (p. 228). Thorndike was the first to identify EI in the 1920s as social intelligence. In the 1930s, Thorndike defined *social intelligence* as an ability to get along with others. Theorists and researchers suggest that EI skills are useful and essential in almost all areas of our life (Salovey & Grewal, 2005). Thorndike further defined social intelligence

as “ the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls to act wisely in human relations” (Thorndike, 1920, p. 228).

Ten years later, in 1940, David Wechsler wrote about EI and focused on non-intellective abilities (Bar-On, Maree, & Elias, 2007, p. 160). Wechsler suggested that intelligence is essential to success in life. According to Wechsler, EI is the ability to act, think, and deal with others effectively (as cited in Salovey, 1990).

Howard Gardner (1975), in his book *The Shattered Mind,* introduced multiple intelligences. Gardner (1983) created a model of seven multiple intelligences, which defined social intelligence as a combination of intrapersonal “development of the internal aspects of a person” (p. 239) and interpersonal intelligence, the intelligence of human interaction. Interpersonal intelligence is an ability to monitor personal feelings and emotions, as well as those of others. Intrapersonal intelligence includes the ability to control and distinguish among feelings and then to benefit from this information by applying it to personal actions, thoughts, and behaviors (Gardner, 1990; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Mayer and Salovey (1990) incorporated Gardner’s multiple intelligence theory in their work. They created an EI model focusing on perceiving and regulating feelings (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001). According to Mayer and Salovey (1990), EI is “the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide ones’ thinking and actions” (p. 189). The five domains of Mayer and Salovey’s (1990) EI are knowing one’s emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others, and handling relationships. According to Mayer and Salovey, individuals with EI skills are equipped with a vast capability of positive mental health, are open to positive

and negative aspects, contribute to well being, are aware of and understand their own and others' emotions, have empathy, and are pleasant to be around.

In 1990, Daniel Goleman, a psychologist at Harvard, adopted and expanded the work of Maye, Gardner and Salovey by introducing the importance of EI at work. Daniel Goleman's (1995) bestselling book *EI* continues to explore the idea of EI. Goleman states that EI "refers to the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships" (p. 317).

Relationship management provides inspiration, potential to influence, and the ability to help leaders grow in managing conflict, and emotional competency. In 1995, Goleman identified four EI concepts that are related to relationship management: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002).

In 1998 Goleman created an EI-based theory of performance containing a set of guidelines for effectiveness and competencies for individual worker development. He claims EI is the capability to understand and control our emotions and feelings, and that this capability helps create effective, persuasive leaders. He also created five EI domains, which include self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills, and empathy. The five domains include twenty-five competencies and consist of personal competence and social competence. *Self-awareness* is the ability to recognize and understand our moods and emotions and the effect of these emotions on others. *Self-management* is the ability to control emotions and reactions of oneself. *Social skills* are the ability to maintain good relationships and build a network. *Motivation* is the ability to face challenges and be optimistic (Goleman, 1998). *Em-*

pathy was introduced into English from the Greek word *empatheia*, “feeling into,” a term used initially by theoreticians of aesthetics to describe the ability to perceive the subjective experience of another person (Goleman, 1995, p. 98). Emotional competence is a learned ability based on EI that leads to effective performance at the work place (Goleman, 1998).

Hong’s (2005) research focused on the role of EI and leadership cognitive ability and personality as a way to predict college students’ motivation to lead. Hong (2005) used Chan and Drasgow’s (2001) Motivation to Lead (MTL) model and the Intrapersonal EI scale, which was developed by Wong and Law (2002), and Wesinger’s (1998) Interpersonal EI scale for the study. As EI theory became more established, EI assessment tools were developed (Bar-On et al., 2007), though in 1988 Bar-On created the first assessment tool, which was called Emotional Quotient (EQ).

Goleman believes that EI skills are both inborn and learned and can be developed through both formal and informal life experiences (Goleman, 1995). While some researchers have found a genetic link to these skills (Goleman, 1995), nurture plays a role in EI development (Goleman, 1998a).

The Emotional and Rational Mind

Horace Walpole said, “Life is a comedy for those who think and a tragedy for those who feel.” Harvard psychiatrist Peter Sifneos believes that there is a disconnect between the human brain’s limbic system and the neocortex. Emotions are associated with the limbic system. The limbic system is the center of learning, memory, and processing emotions and has been called the “emotional generator” (Goleman, 1995). The neocortex is the center of rational thought and does not communicate or interpret emotions and feelings (Goleman, 1995, p. 51–52).

Goleman tends to expand our understanding of the influence of the limbic system. The limbic system is at the center of the EI competencies that are associated with EI traits such as empathy and collaboration (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001), while the neocortex is responsible for the rational part of the brain and aids in grasping concepts and logic. The limbic system is responsible for controlling emotions, emotional responses, mood, motivation, and pain and pleasure sensations. According to Goleman (1995), the limbic brain contains two powerful tools, learning and memory. Based on this understanding of the brain, Goleman claims that we have two kinds of intelligence: emotional and rational (p. 28).

The emotional mind is quicker than the rational mind because the human body reacts first to the brain's signal and thinks later. For example, anger, fear, and sadness create negative reactions. The rational mind works in a robotic way. Leaders who think rationally rather than emotionally make decisions based on logic alone. For instance, when people are afraid or in a panic (e.g., fear of losing a job), they might make decisions that might cause harm to others. Goleman (1995) contends that both the rational and emotional mind must work together for a person to have EI. Balancing emotions with reason helps people generate more thoughtful responses (Thompson, 2002). Research in the newly emerging field of affective neuroscience offers a fine-grained view of the neutral substrates of the EI-based range of behavior and allows us to see a bridge between brain function and the behaviors described in the EI models of performance. (Cherniss & Goleman, 1981, p. 30). Because the limbic system is the EI center, EI curriculum developers should create training programs that are based on the engagement of both the limbic system and the neo-cortex.

Emotional Intelligence Training Programs and the Emotional Brain

In his 1998 work, Goleman introduced the belief that acquiring EI skills is possible through a desire to learn and an opportunity to practice. He believes training programs are essential. Some educators have created training programs and curriculum without much sensitivity to the idea that there is a connection between learning and the brain, specifically the limbic system. However training can be damaging if not delivered properly. Conventional training methods that reinforce memorization and regurgitation of information are not as effective when working with EI development and adoption of EI skills (Bar-On et al., 2007; Goleman, 1998a; Goleman et al., 2002). "Intellectual abilities like verbal fluency, spatial logic, and abstract reasoning—in other words, the components of IQ—are based primarily in the specific areas of the neocortex" (Chernish & Goleman, 2001, p. 30). As part of training programs, extended practice and feedback are critical. Practice is therefore essential to application. This is because two parts of the brain are related to EI. The limbic system learns through motivation, extended practice, and feedback. The neocortex, which aids in grasping concepts and logic, is the part of the brain targeted by most training programs.

To enhance EI skills training programs, developers must consider helping people break old habits and acquire new ones. Unfortunately, in seeking to identify formal resources on training and implementation, none have yet been found that relate to effectively addressing the limbic system. Effective EI training programs engage both the limbic system and the neocortex and will succeed when trainees have opportunities for practice and feedback of EI skills.

Emotional Intelligence Training Models and Traits

Many EI training models have been created to enhance EI understanding. EI program creators should learn about EI models to know how and when to teach each one of them. Leaders who are looking to apply EI at their institutions should match the model that helps them improve EI skills. Current models (Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1998; Lynn, Bar-On, Mayer & Cobb, 2000; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Wells & Matthews, 1999) attempt to teach EI skills that range from the simple to the complex. The simple EI skills are awareness, evaluation, and understanding of basic emotions— for instance, learning and reacting to facial expressions, such as smiling or frowning faces. Intermediate skills are understanding and reasoning emotions. The complex level of EI is the ability to manage and regulate emotions in self and others. When emotions are regulated and managed, EI skills will be improved and performance of complex tasks will be achieved. Having the ability to calm down while angry, and the ability to help others control anxiety, will result in a stronger mind and positive energy that helps creativity (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000). Skills that help better performance at the work place are flexible planning, creative thinking, mood-redirected attention, and motivating emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). To improve EI skills, researchers have created tools to measure individuals' abilities to create improvement.

Lynn, Goleman, Wells and Matthews (1999), Mayer and Salovey (1990), Mayer and Cobb (2000), and Bar-On (1997) are theorists and researchers in the EI field who have created training models to provide a better understanding of how EI can help individuals succeed in life and work. The basic EI skills include resilience, influence, assertiveness, integrity, and leadership (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001). One of the models that has been developed is the EQ (Emotional Quotient) Difference, created by Adele B. Lynn. Lynn is the owner of an in-

ternational consulting and training firm whose clients include many Fortune 500 companies. Her model contains the following elements:

1. Self-Awareness and Self-Control: The ability to use and manage emotions effectively. Managing emotions will not happen without knowing what triggered these emotions. Self- awareness enables people to understand the cause of the action to better manage their reaction. Techniques to increase self-awareness include: (a) exploring the way we react to people and events in our life, (b) assessing the way we react or interact with our senses, (c) getting in touch with our feelings, (d) exploring our intentions, (e) paying attention to both action and reaction, (f) seeking feedback, and (g) keeping a "feelings" journal. (Weisinger, 1998)

2. Empathy: the ability to listen without judgment and to understand what others think, feel, and need. Also, empathy is the ability to make people feel important, build trust, and deepen relationships (Mersino, 2007). According to Goleman (1995), empathetic people care about others' needs. Furthermore, empathy is the ability to see the world as it looks to others.

3. Personal Influence: Masters of purpose envision the ability to live a life based on meaning and values, and be genuine. (Wall & Wall, 2006)

Another option, called the self-regulation executive function (S-REF), is a model of negative emotions and cognition that was created by Wells and Mathews in 1999. This model works on accessing self-relevant knowledge and providing a general method to deal with immediate problems, including choices of coping and styles of self-regulation (Mathews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2004). This model requires awareness of what to say and to do while emotions or feelings are aroused (Mortiboys, 2005).

The mental ability model of EI is cognition based. It focuses on how emotions affect thinking, adaptive behavior, and decision-making. This model focuses on skills such as non-verbal perception (Buck, 1984; Rosenthal et al., 1978) or empathy accuracy (Ickes, 1997). Mental ability helps identify and deal effectively with emotions (Mayer & Cobb, 2000). The mental ability model predicts that people who are EI skilled are more likely to

> (a) have grown up in bio-socially adaptive households, (b) be non-defensive, (c) be able to reframe emotions effectively, (d) choose good emotional role models, (e) be able to communicate and discuss feelings, and (f) develop expert knowledge in a particular emotional area such as aesthetics, moral or ethical feeling, social problem solving, leadership, or spiritual feeling. (Mayer & Salovey, 1995)

The mixed model, developed by Cobb and Mayer (2000), includes a multitude of traits that deal with leadership effectiveness. These traits are "service orientation, diversity, commitment, political awareness, and being a change catalyst" (p. 62). The model also provides techniques that help reduce anxiety and depression. The mixed model is a set of skills that have been provided as lessons (Mayer & Cobb, 2000). This model distinguishes people who are authentic and sensitive from those who are ignorant and rude. Individuals with EI skills tend to have future plans, are determined, have positive attitudes, and are optimists. Such traits are important for effectiveness at work and in life (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

Mayer et al. (2000) introduced the four-branch model of EI: perceiving emotions, facilitating thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions. Perceiving emotions is the ability to perceive emotions in oneself and others as well as in objects, art stories, music, and stimuli. Facilitating thought is the ability to generate, use, and feel emotions as necessary to communicate feelings or use them in other cognitive processes. Understanding emotions is

the ability to understand emotional information, how emotions combine and progress through relationship transitions, and to appreciate such emotional meanings. Managing emotions is the ability to be open to feelings and to modulate them in oneself and others so as to promote personal understanding and growth.

The model of emotional-social intelligence by Bar-On (1997) defines EI as a set of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influences one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressure. Bar-On's model explains why individuals with EI tend to succeed in life and at work more than others. It also discusses personality characteristics that are directly related to life success. These characteristics include intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, stress management, and general mood (Bar-On, 1997, p. 19). This model predicts success at home, at school, and at work. Among youth this model has helped lessen aggressiveness and rudeness, and leads to better decisions regarding sex, drugs, and alcohol. Among adults, it assists in effective teamwork (Goleman, 1995a, p. 163).

The competency model was created by Goleman in 1995. It is also called a mixed model. It explains the importance of leadership, discusses the EI model, provides a list of EI skills, and displays EI skills that are important to leadership (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001). This model was developed from the five domains that Goleman discussed in his EI theory: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. He also created two measurement tools for his model: The Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI) created in 1999, and the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) created in 2007. Both assessments can be used for self-report and as an assessment tool of emotional and social interaction. The model (ESCI) gives an estimate of an individual's social intelligence. Goleman's

mixed model includes five areas of EI: (a) knowing one's emotions, (b) managing emotions, (c) motivating oneself, (d) recognizing emotions in others, and (e) handling relationships (Goleman, 1995a, p. 43).

> Another effective inventory that has been recently developed is the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso EI Test (MSCEIT. This tool helps collect data related to issues concerning EI skills and is used as a part of EI training. According to Peter Salovey,MSCEIT is a 40-minute battery that may be completed either on paper or computer. It includes a 141-item assessment created to measure EI skills such as: (a) perceiving emotions, (b) using emotions to facilitate thoughts, (c) understanding emotions, and (d) managing emotions" (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2003, p. 99). Emotional recognition is measured with faces and pictures. Individuals who participated in the program are shown pictures of faces and are asked to respond to the faces. Their responses are based on emotions and sensations. Thus, this tool is more culturally reliable than other EI assessment tools because reading and writing skills are not required. For example, participants may look at a picture of a grimacing face that generates a feeling of anger and then decide how cold or hot is it. The MSCEIT assesses five tasks: sensations, facilitation, changes, and emotion management and emotional relationship tasks. This tool scores participants' experiential and strategic skills. By testing a person's ability on each on the four branches of EI, it generates scores for each of the branches as well as a total score. (Salovey & Grewal, 2005)

MSCEIT helps identify emotions that involve thinking and decision-making, provides scenarios and examples for individuals about how to deal with such situations, and provides suggestions about how to achieve a desired outcome. It also provides participants with a cri-

tique of EI, identifies where problems exist, and makes recommendations on how they can solve these problems (Murphy, 2006). At the full-scale level MSCEIT V2.0, *r* is between .64 to .88 (Mayer et al., 2001). MSCEIT helps assess the quality of EI skills among individuals and predicts EI abilities and outcomes. MSCEIT is an effective tool that measures EI areas such as: perceiving emotions, using emotions to facilitate thoughts, understanding emotions, and managing emotions (Brackett, Mayer, & Warner, 2003).

These models help educational institutions, businesses, and work place leaders measure their staff's EI ability and skills and create curriculums, tools, or programs to improve EI abilities and skills. Leaders who are interested in creating a program to teach EI skills and to assess staff might find these assessment tools helpful to be used as a pre- and post-program.

The Benefits of Using EI Skills in Life and Work

Theorists suggest that EI skills play a crucial role in overall performance at work and in life. According to Salovey and Mayer (1999, 1997, 2002), there are four important EI abilities that help people achieve goals in life and at work. First is the ability to identify one's own and others' emotions. This involves obtaining information through tone of voice, gestures, and body postures. The second is the ability to use emotions to facilitate thinking. This involves the use of emotions to pay attention, solve problems, and communicate. Third is the ability to understand the emotional process and how it works. This involves a deep understanding of one's own and others' emotions, and an ability to predict how others might respond to a specific situation. The fourth is the ability to manage emotions during challenging situations. The fourth ability involves, for example, reframing a bad experience as a positive one such as using a sense of humor to change someone's mood. These four EI abilities help leaders deal effectively in different situations and, consequently, determine success in rela-

tionships and at work. Character traits such as responsibility, consideration, assertiveness, commitment to work, technical skills, mental abilities, aspirations, change orientation, and career goals will lead to more success at work. EI skills, when combined with self care qualities, lead to a balance at work and in life, which leads to better performance. Self care qualities signify physical fitness, physical appearance, and positive energy. These qualities lead to a positive attitude, which leads to an active and happy lifestyle. Individuals with a positive attitude tend to make people feel comfortable around them (Simmons & Simmons, 1997).

The Benefits of Using EI Skills in Leadership

Studies about leadership and organizational attitudes have only recently begun to include EI skills (Badaracco, 2006; Bennis, 2004; Ciarrochi & Forgas, 2001; Collins, 2001; Covey, 1989; DuPree, 2004; Gardner, 1995; Goleman, 1998, 2000, 2002; Greenleaf, 1998; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 1995). In this body of work, researchers described EI characteristics of leaders in many different ways. For example, DePree (2004) refers to leadership as an art. DePree discusses the importance of communication. He believes that the art of leadership requires good communication and that communication is important in relaying a vision to subordinates. He uses terms such as *intimacy* to explain the concept mirrored by Greenleaf (1998) of putting oneself in another's shoes to seek knowledge, wisdom, and justice. Communication is one of the keys to a better collaborative relationship, which encourages colleagues to look at situations through the eyes of others in the organization. DePree (2004) and Covey (1989) are in agreement about many of the principles related to leadership theory.

Covey (1998), in his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, states that to succeed leaders should seek to understand and be understood. Covey defines the importance

and the power of empathic listening. Covey associates empathic listening with effective people and how empathic listening is developed and grows within the individual. Additionally, he believes that active listening and reflective listening are both essential leadership traits. He also calls empathic listening "effective listening." Covey says that by using empathetic, active, and reflective listening skills, a reciprocal relationship is developed in which one is able to understand another and to be understood. By listening in this manner a leader can look at the world through others' eyes while also inspiring others to see his or her worldview (Covey, 1989).

In *Leading Minds*, Gardner (1995) also talks about the traits that make a good leader. One of these traits relates to values and how values are developed less by formal instruction and more by personal associations. Gardner believes that a true leader acknowledges these personal associations and thus works to create an empowered environment where workers can make their own decisions.

Theorists like Greenleaf (1998) defined leadership as "Servant Leadership." He suggests that effective leaders have an "inner security," are able to foster awareness, and understand others. He assumes that people need acceptance and recognition. Greenleaf considers the process of leading as serving others. Greenleaf believes leadership requires the desire and ability to serve others, as he says leadership requires foresight, vision and empathy.

Weisinger (1998) explains the necessity of a good attitude because positive emotions are contagious. Alternately, emotions such as anxiety or anger can be contagious. People tend to imitate certain behaviors. A positive attitude tends to spread the positive "vibe" in the atmosphere such that we interact better with others, influence others in a positive way, obtain positive responses from others, and create a happy environment. Negative attitudes create an

atmosphere in which there is hostility, pessimism, and lack of productivity. Howell and Costley (2001) also suggest that leaders should develop a positive work atmosphere. Obtaining effective skills that have been identified by theorists helps create such an atmosphere. Most of these skills are foundational to EI and it would follow that they are necessary in any organization or institution.

Knowing EI skills enables leaders to establish better relationships and maintain emotional balance, consequently succeeding at work and in life (Salovey, Mayer, & Caruso, 2002). Many people find that EI leaders are fun to be around because they tend to inspire, motivate, and influence others by their effective communication. Obtaining EI skills is the keystone to better performance and great success at work and in life (Salovey et al., 2002).

EI and social interaction, along with positive emotions, help with the ability to think clearly, effectively, quickly, and adaptively (Casey, Garret, Brackett, & Rivers, 2007). Good leaders are recognized through their performance. Their success depends on the way they do things and the way they act and react. Leaders should balance their emotions positively to provide collaborative teams at work (Goleman et al., 2002).

According to Goleman (2002), people with high EI skills and abilities tend to: (a) label feelings rather than label people; (b) distinguish between feelings; (c) take responsibility for their feelings; (d) respect others' feelings; (e) get positive value from negative emotions; (f) do not advise, command, control, judge, or try to minimize communicating with people who invalidate feelings. People with EI skills could be recognized through words, attitudes, and performance. Effective leaders are the ones who have the ability to promote good feelings in those they lead. This happens when a leader creates resonance and a reservoir of positivity that frees the best in people. Therefore, the primal job of leadership is emotional.

For leaders to be effective, they should be able to master leadership skills (Goleman, 2000). Studies and research have linked the relationship between effective leaders and successful organizations. Goleman's theory closely associates leadership with EI, connecting EI and leadership with a long list of traits. Leadership goes beyond task completion; it requires numerous skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Goleman, 1998). Goleman believes that successful leaders might have skills that help them manage varieties of situations and issues at work. Skills that are recommended by Goleman help leaders succeed and manage self and others. Leaders with self-awareness are confident about their self and their abilities. Those who have effective self-management skills have the ability to control self, adapt to change, handle challenging tasks, and be optimistic. Those who strive toward personal competency are involved in ongoing self and social improvement. Social-awareness helps leaders succeed with diversity, by having the ability to understand others, and express themselves freely. Relationship management helps leaders develop others and succeed in building collaboration. These characteristics are considered EI qualities according to Goleman and are essential to good leadership.

George (2004) is in agreement with Goleman when he says, "It is only through a deep self-awareness that you can find your inner voice and listen to it" (p.141). According to Goleman, authentic leadership is associated with self-awareness. Self-awareness is not a trait one is born with, but a capacity developed throughout one's lifetime (George, 2004, p. 140). Some would call the latter "collaboration" (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Changing-Minds, 2007), but both essentially examine the importance of empowering employees to share ideas, and by doing so the leader is further empowered to lead in an empathetic manner.

Contrasting Domination and Partnership Leadership Models

The "domination model," in contrast to EI leadership models, is called a partnership model by some (Caruso & Salovy, 2004; Goleman, 1995) and requires more positioning of power, which does not require the utilization of EI skills.

Skills that are discussed here in theory are essential in developing more foundational leadership traits. According to Goleman, leaders who are able to succeed without acquiring EI qualifications are lucky (Bennis, 2004). Leading with EI helps with understanding the self and others, and also with understanding each person's specific needs and respond to those needs (Beltz & Mayer, 1998), just as positive emotions are associated with positive relationships (Lopes et al., 2004). Good collaboration skills are the key to better relationships with colleagues (Coughlin, Wingard, & Hollihan, 2005). Eisler (2005), in her article on enlightened power, shares two basic types of social organization models, one of domination and one of partnership. Eisler's domination model consists of high degree of fear and violence, ranking male over female, authoritative top-to-bottom structure, and stories and myths that idealize domination and violence as normal. Meanwhile, the partnership model consists of mutual trust and a low degree of fear, equality between male and female, hierarchies of actualization, and myths and stories that honor partnership (Eisler, 2002, p. 213). Dominant leadership style creates imbalanced relationships among colleagues. Partnership is about sharing of growth and achievement.

In seeking to understand EI theory and its applicability, it is essential to have a foundational understanding of leadership theory and the many facets that go into making a leader, because an individual does not become a leader due to education or by reading a book. Becoming a leader can happen by acquiring some important EI characteristics. According to

Mayer and Ciarrochi (2001), EI characteristics are personality traits, and they include emotional self-efficacy, stylistic emotional intellect, socio-emotional effectiveness, and non-cognitive capacities (Ciarrochi, Forgas, & Mayer, 2001). Many leadership styles and theories require skills associated with EI. Wheatley (2006), for instance, shares that the greater the EI level, the greater the ability of the leader to process information, which leads directly to the ability to self-regulate.

The set of values that a leader adopts are called moral codes, according to Badaracco (2006). In *Questions of Characters*, Badaracco suggests successful leaders use life experiences to create a personal set of values and principles, sometimes referred to as a moral code. The moral code is then foundational to the leader because it requires utilizing the leader's own values and principles. Leaders should also be talented, focused, determined, and reliable. Badaracco believes that values and principles must be nurtured to reflect the needs of the organization and others, not just one's self. Additionaly, according to Hellmich (2007), behaving properly and wisely is ethical behavior, which relates to the leaders' personal moral code.

Leaders demonstrate desired responses to individuals with whom they work, because they see the act of leading as a duty and responsibility to serve others. Effective leaders are creative (Gardner, 2007). Leaders' creativity appears through performance in daily activities such as communicating with others, organization of time and events, facing challenges, solving problems, and working toward improvement of self, others, and the organization (Collins, 2001). Reaching the leader's chair without acquiring such qualities can be damaging for colleagues and organizations. A leader who leads with selfishness and greed is misusing his or

her power and authority, lacks self-control, has bad judgment, and is difficult to work with (Ciarrochi, Forgas, & Mayer, 2001).

Community College Leaders and EI

Effectiveness in higher education is important because community colleges are essential for the community. Students prefer to attend community colleges because they are affordable and more accessible than four-year universities. They are important because they provide an intermediate level of education for those seeking career training and those who are potentially interested in further education. Because the institution's and the student's success are dependent on the community college leaders to achieve success, community colleges value the role of an effective leader, who have the qualities and the skills to ensure success. Community college success is achieved by having effective leaders who are able to face challenges and make appropriate decisions. According to Paulsen and Smart (2001), community college leaders are policy makers, and policy implementators. They have to be creative and must hold institutions accountable for quality education.

According to Hellmich (2007), in his book *Ethical Leadership in the Community College*, the community college has a set of cultural norms. Faculty, staff, and students create these norms. Leaders in a community college setting are the ones who have the power to manage and lead others to reach institutional goals. These leaders have a tremendous impact on the success of the institution. Because the success of the institution is their responsibility, acting or behaving properly and wisely is critical. According to Goleman (2000), leaders in higher education set strategies, motivate followers, create the mission, model the values, and build culture. They also have a powerful impact on the overall college climate (Goleman, 2000, p. 82)

Studies and research have focused on the importance of EI skills at the work place in general. Theorists have created EI training models and assessment tools. Little research, however, has been conducted about community college leaders and EI. A study that specifies community college leaders and the importance of acquiring EI skills might help educational leaders who are interested in preparing training programs and curriculum. Individuals whose leadership style is inspired by EI skills will have the opportunity to help educational institutions meet high expectations. According to Sparrow and Knight (2006),

> Emotionally intelligent leadership, which is effective leadership, does not necessarily mean being all touchy and feely all the time. Rather, it means being aware of yourself and others and the situation, knowing your strengths and relative weaknesses, being flexible and managing effectively your relationships with those you lead, while always staying goal directed. (p. 206)

Developing community college leaders is as much of an issue as creating affordable institutions. Educational institutions rely on leaders who have the qualities and the skills to ensure high performance, productivity, and outcomes. Leaders should be able to provide an environment that encourages improvement and success. Therefore, community college leaders should be able to create a system that calls for a better professional knowledge and create a suitable environment to ensure commitment and productivity (Liethwood & Hallinger, 2002, p. 823).

EI Leadership and Spirituality

Spirituality has been tied to leadership by some researchers. Richard Benner is interested in learning how different religious and spiritual traditions inspire organizational leadership (Hellmich, 2007). Benner summarizes the leadership traits defined by Aristotle as cour-

age, gentleness, modesty, proper pride, truthfulness, etc. (p. 5). His work includes the teachings of Aristotle, *The Analects of Confucius*, the Taoist *I Ching*, *Tao Te Ching*, and Buddhist thought.

In *The Analects of Confucius*, the traits are: the virtuous leader is the one who is "trustworthy, loyal, respectful, sincere, modest, and cautious in speech." From the *I Ching*, "the superior man exhibits patience, inner strength, unselfishness, harmony, and openness" (Hellmich, 2007, p. 5). The *Tao Te Ching* is similar to *I Ching* and adds, "justness, and competence" (Hellmich, 2007). In Buddhism these traits are: right action, right effort, right speech, right mindfulness, and the practice of concentration and meditation (Hellmich, 2007). All these traits and models conclude that a leader should be able to be a role model who acts "beyond self interest for the good of the group and making personal sacrifices for the benefits of others" (Hellmich, 2007, p. 11).

Fry is an instructor at Tarleton State University's management department. His theory of spiritual leadership links leadership to vision, faith, and altruistic love. The importance of spiritual leadership is that it balances the relationship between leaders and followers or staff. Both the leader and the staff work together to improve qualities to achieve a higher level of commitment and productivity at the institution. Spiritual leadership theory includes ethical and spiritual well-being and social responsibility (Fry, 2004). Spiritual leaders tend to acquire values, attitudes, and behaviors that improve and motivate the self and others. They have appreciation for the self and others to establish a culture that is based on altruistic love. This subject is worthy of further expansion and discussion.

Conducting EI Training

For leaders to be able to create a training program that enhances the implementation of EI skills, they have to know the institutional, and the individual's needs, in terms of strengths and weaknesses. For leaders who are striving to help implement EI skills at educational institutions, Curaso and Wolf have identified the following principles for leaders to follow in creating EI training programs:

1. Determine the organization's goals.
2. Tie training to these goals.
3. Assess individuals to understand their baseline skills and individual needs.
4. Revise the plan to reflect the skills and weaknesses of the individuals.
5. Provide structure for the sessions.
6. Stress the use of experiential exercises, case studies, and role-plays.
7. Cases and examples should tie to the participants' real-world experiences.
8. Provide opportunities for practice.
9. Provide multiple opportunities for feedback.
10. Use the group setting to demonstrate, teach, and role-play social behavior.
11. Address the unique needs of each individual privately.
12. Provide a means for follow-up support and reinforcement. (Ciarrochi, Forgas, & Mayer, 2001, p.157)

Recommendations for Further Research

Salovey and Mayer (1990) recommended that for better understanding of the relationship between EI and leadership, researchers might examine self-emotions, how emotions are regulated, adapted, and promoted, and identify emotions through the use of a conventional

scale. Also, researchers might examine the role EI plays in enhancing relationships and in maintaining an actual social behavior. Mayer and Geher (1996) suggested that future research might study the advantages of having EI skills in areas such as: psychotherapy, social work, teaching, and business careers. They also recommended creating training programs to educate individuals on acquiring EI skills to help them grow in interpersonal relations. Lopes et al. (2004) recommended more research on the validity of EI, consistency of EI as a theory, and the effect of EI skills training on social relationships. Most of the researchers recommend training programs that help individuals acquire EI skills to better succeed in all areas at work and in life. There is a lack of literature, however, on ways to help community college leaders improve EI skills and there is a need for research that explores the relationship between EI and community college leaders.

Summary

After reviewing the literature and reading theories, research, and scholarly articles, I have noticed a lack of literature on EI in the context of community college leadership. Most of the available literature describes EI and leadership qualities and identifies different types of leadership models. Completing research that focuses on community college leadership and EI skills will help community college leaders improve their qualities and skills. Also, this study might encourage community college leaders to create a program that focuses on the implementations of EI skills.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND RATIONALE

Qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experience of people (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). According to Cresswell (1998), a qualitative study helps the researcher in understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. The main goal of the data in a qualitative phenomenological study is to explore the perceptions and experiences of the participants. Marshall and Rossman (1995) suggest that the purpose of using qualitative research and specifically a phenomenological approach, is to understand an obscured phenomena. According to Moustakas (1997), the purpose of a phenomenological approach is to explore the essence of individuals' experiences and to obtain a comprehensive description of it.

The purpose of this study is to understand and explore the chosen phenomenon of community college leaders' experiences in leadership and to discern whether those leaders are implementing EI skills in their professional roles, whether or not they realize it, and what other leadership models they follow. Using the phenomenological approach was the most appropriate for my study because it helped me access the information needed to explore these areas of interest.

Research Design

My site for this study was the community college campus. These educational institutions attract students from the local community because they are affordable compared to

universities. Community colleges are affordable because in many states they are supported by local tax revenue. Community colleges provide students with vocational and technical skills to prepare them to enter the workforce or course work allowing them to transfer to a four-year university to pursue a bachelor's degree.

The nine selected participants have at least 5 years of leadership experience at various community colleges. The final number of participants in the sample was determined by the outcome of the interviews, when data became repetitive and reached saturation. Each leader has his/her ultimate vision and perception about implementing leadership skills. Grounded in phenomenological inquiry, this study explored and deepened the understanding of whether community college leaders implement EI skills during their practice; if they do not, this study examined what skills and values they are using, and to what leadership theory they relate. If community college leaders are using EI skills, the central concept of these skills was clarified through their words in chapter 4 and 5. The study provided a rich description of the leaders' experiences at community colleges.

There are different kinds of data sources in qualitative research. According to Miles and Huberman, 1994), qualitative data are gathered from observations, interviews, and or documents. In this study the primary data source was one-to-one, semi-structured, and in-depth interviews. In a phenomenological approach, one-on-one, in-depth interviews were the most useful and effective in gathering data because they encouraged participants to reveal personal thoughts. In this study I used semi-structured interviews that began with broad, open-ended questions that were focused on the topic.

The interviews served as data collection. Open-ended questions were more effective because my participants could freely describe their experiences without interruption;

therefore I had minimal control over the participants while they talked about their experiences. The questions were created throughout the interview based on the participants' answers. Semi-structured interviews provided a general sense of direction and allowed the respondents to tell their story (Marvasti, 2004, p. 21). Interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, and reviewed. Once transcribed and reviewed, data were ready for final analysis and interpretation.

The Data Analysis section describes how the data from the interviews were interpreted. Data analysis included condensing the data by coding, summarizing, and clustering. I adopted Hycner's (1999) data analysis design, which is an explication process that had five steps or phases: bracketing and phenomenological reduction, delineating units of meaning, clustering of units of meaning to form themes, summarizing each interview, validating the data and, where necessary, modifying it, and extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a composite summary, which is presented in Chapter Five.

Trustworthiness was my final section. The Trustworthiness section was included to ensure credibility. In order to ensure credibility and signify correct representation and interpretation of the original data that the participants provided, I used peer examination. I also used member checking by participants for self-report and to obtain their feedback concerning my interpretation of their data.

This study focused on deepening my understanding of whether or not community college leaders implemented EI skills in their professional role as leaders. The study assisted in articulating and amplifying community college leaders' experiences. My general approach to this research study was to develop a greater understanding of whether or not community college leaders used EI skills, and whether or not they realized that they were using these skills through an in-depth, phenomenological study.

Community College Site

The philosophy and mission of a community college is that everyone can benefit from higher education (Cohen & Brawn, 2008). Community colleges provide students with the first 2 years of collegiate academic study. The degrees are: general studies or liberal arts degrees, vocational, and technical skills. The associate of arts (AA) degree is typically 60 to 66 hours of academic work. The vocational curriculum includes associate of applied science (AAS). The two-year degree prepares students to enter the workforce or transfer to a four-year level to obtain a bachelor's degree. Many institutions offer one-year certificates in vocational fields such as: banking and finance, human services, and emergency medical technology.

Community college classrooms are relatively small, typically holding a maximum of 40 to 45 students. Usually, community college faculty, who hold full- and part-time positions, have at least a master's degree with a minimum of 18 graduate hours in the field in which they teach. Community college professionals who are in leadership positions, such as presidents, vice presidents, and deans, need to acquire at least a master's degree and many years of experience in such areas. These leaders must have skills in communication, institutional planning and development, management, policy, research methodologies, legal, finance, technology, curriculum, and leadership (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). The leaders who participated in my study are practicing leadership in different areas of community college expertise.

Participants

In a qualitative study, the researcher tends to understand the meaning of the phenomenon from the perception of the participants, so it is vital to select participants who have information that is central and important to the purpose of the research. This is called purposeful sampling and it includes snowball or chain sampling, and criterion sampling (Patton, 2002, pp. 230–242). Purposeful sampling in my study included a homogenous group that shared the experience of leadership responsibilities at various community colleges. Participants are community college leaders identified as PhD graduate who have at least 5 years of leadership experience at community colleges. They participated in tape-recorded interviews, and consented that their information be included in my dissertation. According to Patton (1990), researchers should "identify cases of interest from sampling people who know people who know people who know that cases are information rich, that are good examples for study, good interview participants" (p. 243). The snowball process begins by asking well-situated leaders to ask leaders they know from different regions, and who might be interested in this kind of study, to participate.

Grounded in phenomenological inquiry, this study explored and deepened the understanding of the implementation of leadership skills for nine community college leaders who are living in different regions of the United States and are leaders at community colleges around the country. The final number of participants in the sample was determined when the outcome of the interviews became repetitive and no new themes emerged, or, in other words, when the research became saturated with information (Carson et al., 2001; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The study resulted in rich descriptions through stories of the-

se leaders with leadership skills. Leadership concepts were clarified through participants' words.

Data Collection

The primary data gathering method was in-depth interviews, which helped answer the three research questions: (a) Are community college leaders aware of the theory of EI? (b) Do community college leaders practice EI in their professional leadership experience? (c) If community college leaders are not implementing the skills and values incorporated within EI, what skills and values are they using and to what leadership theories do they relate?

To answer the three questions, unstructured, in-depth interviews were used. The questions were "directed to the participant's experiences, feelings, beliefs and convictions about the theme in question" (Welman & Kruger, 1999, p. 196). Because I implemented Hycner's (1999) data analysis model, I used bracketing (Caelli, 2001; Davidson, 2000; King, 1994; Kruger, 1988; Kvale, 1996) in this study, which entails setting aside my knowledge, judgments, and experiences about EI skills and letting participants share their reflections on the way they practice leadership at community colleges. Data includes the way participants "think and feel in the most direct ways" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 96). I focused on the participants' lived experiences. Also, according to Miller and Crabtree (1992), the researchers "must 'bracket' their preconceptions and enter into the individual's world and use the self as an experiencing interpreter" (p. 24). According to Bailey (1996, p. 72) an "informal interview is a conscious attempt by the researcher to find out more information about the setting of the person." Because my participants are in different areas in the United States, I used phone rather than face-to-face interviews.

Questions focused on the implementation of leadership skills at community colleges. Kvale (1996) remarks with regard to data capturing during the qualitative interview that, " it is literally an interview, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest," where the researcher attempts to "understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold meaning of peoples' experiences" (Kvale, 1996, pp. 1–2). At the root of phenomenology, "the intent is to understand the phenomena in their own terms – to provide a description of human experience as it is experienced by the person herself" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 96) and to allow the essence to emerge (Cameron, Schaffer, & Hyeon-Ae, 2001). The maxim of Edmund Husserl was "back to things themselves!" (Kruger, 1988, p. 28).

By exploring the meaning of the experience for leaders who are living in different parts of the country, and working in different community colleges, I completed individual interviews by phone and the duration of these interviews were 45 to 60 minutes long. Questions were asked broadly as open-ended questions, which allowed the participants to venture in various directions as they told their story. Participants were asked to describe their everyday lived leadership experiences with questions that were articulated around the leadership philosophies and qualities. For example, some questions focused on how they faced challenges, made decisions, solved problems, and used skills and strategies (Creswell, 1998). The data gathering continued until I achieved theoretical saturation (Glasser, & Strauss, 1967). The proposed list of initial individual telephone interview questions follows:

1. How did you become a leader at a community college?
2. What is your philosophy of leadership in the community college?

3. What do you feel are the most important values and skills an effective community college leader needs to possess and use?

4. Describe a situation in which you had to make a decision in a moment of crisis?

5. Try to remember a scenario where you were in disagreement with a colleague. Tell me about the situation, how you felt and acted, and what you said?

6. What skills do you use to manage your feelings?

7. What skills do you use to manage other's feelings?

8. Describe a situation that occurred within the past month in which you successfully identified and managed your own feelings and those of others?

9. Describe a situation that occurred lately, in which it was critical for you to identify and manage you own feelings and others?

10. What skills would you like to have to help you manage your feelings effectively?

11. Given all that you have told me about your philosophy and experiences in leadership, would you say that you are following any particular leadership approach or theory?

According to Lincoln and Guba (1995), the validity of the study is provided by applying member check. Member check was achieved by giving each participant a copy of his or her interview transcript to review. Peer review was achieved by committee members' revisions and approval.

Data Analysis

The researcher in a phenomenological study is responsible for "digesting the narrative and distilling it into a meaningful representation of a phenomenon based on those whose experiences are shared" (Spezial & Rinaldi, 2006, pp. 50–51). Data are in different forms

including interview transcripts. Each participant's transcript was studied on its own. Collected data were analyzed in depth.

My data analysis process was inductive and emergent rather than deductive. Themes were created from the participants' data. The data analysis process followed this order — I condensed the data by coding, summarizing, and clustering. Then, I used data display to organize a layout of data to help me create themes which are presented in Chapter Four, and a conclusion or a summary of the study that is presented in Chapter Five. Chapter Four contains interpreting, drawing meaning from data, and Chapter Five includes the summary of the data . Before processing the given data, and to affirm validity, as Holloway (1997) and Hycner (1999) recommend, I listened repeatedly to the audio recording of each interview to become familiar with the words of the interviewee in order to develop a holistic sense, the gestalt. I read the interview transcripts many times to find the units of meaning to form clusters that serve as the themes; during the reading, I did the coding by highlighting units of meaning from the participants' transcripts. I also took notes and I omitted the repetitive units. Themes were created from clusters or units of meaning based on the explication of data using Hycner's (1999) model. Explication of data instead of data analysis is proposed because the term *analysis*, according to Hycner (1999),

> has dangerous connotations for phenomenology. The meaning of the word analysis means to break data into parts, and therefore, breaking data into parts will lessen the value of the wholeness of the phenomenon, while explication means examination of the constituents of a phenomenon while keeping the context of the whole. (p. 161)

According to Hycner, it is a mistake to reduce the essence of shared experiences and phenomena to cause and effect. Phenomenological reduction "to pure subjectivity" (Lauer, 1958, p. 50) is a purposeful opening by the researcher to the phenomenon (Fouche, 1993; Hycner, 1999). It is a way of transforming the data through interpretation. According to Hycner (1999), the explication process has five steps or phases: (a) Bracketing and phenomenological reduction, (b) delineating units of meaning, (c) clustering of units of meaning to form themes, (d) summarizing each interview, and (e) validating it and where necessary modifying it. The purpose of following this order is to extract general and unique themes from all the interviews to make a composite summary.

The first step in Hycner's (1999) model, bracketing or the process of epoche, means that I set aside my own personal attitudes, beliefs, and judgments "in a sense that in its regard no position is taken either for or against" (Lauer, 1958, p. 49). Participants' experiences were bracketed, explicated, and compared in this study to provide a better understanding of the phenomena. Bracketing was maintained in this study to avoid the researcher's interpretations or theoretical concepts entering the unique world of the participant (Creswell, 1998, pp. 54 & 113; Moustakas, 1994, p. 90; Sadala & Adorno, 2001). Additionally, this allowed me as a researcher to see the fundamental nature of the phenomenon.

The second step is delineating units of meaning. This is a critical phase of explicating the data, in that those statements that are seen to illuminate the researched phenomenon are extracted or isolated (Creswell, 1998; Holloway, 1997; Hycner, 1999). The list of units of relevant meaning extracted from each interview was examined carefully and the clearly repetitive units or themes eliminated (Moustakas, 1994). I did this by considering the literal content, and the number (the significance) of times a meaning was mentioned. The actual

meaning of two seemingly similar units of meaning might be different in terms of weight or chronology of events (Hycner, 1999). During this step, themes were created from the participants' lived stories.

The third step is clustering units of meaning as a technique to form themes. I created a list of non-repetitive units from the transcripts. By precisely examining the list created, I tried to draw out the essence of meaning of units within the holistic context. Hycner (1999) argues that this part requires the researchers to be non-judgmental and familiar with the chosen methodology. In the clustering process the researcher's judgment is called artistic: "Particularly in this step is the phenomenological researcher engaged in something which cannot be precisely delineated, for here he is involved in that ineffable thing known as creative insight" (Hycner, 1999, pp. 150–151). Clusters of themes were formed by grouping units of meaning together (Creswell, 1998; King, 1994; Moustakas, 1994). Both Holloway (1997) and Hycner (1999) emphasize the importance of the researcher going back to the recorded interview (the gestalt) and forth to the list of non-repetitive units of meaning to derive clusters of appropriate meaning. By examining the meaning of the various clusters, central themes are determined, "which expresses the essence of these clusters" (Hycner, 1999, p. 153).

In the fourth step, I summarized each interview. A summary of general and unique units of meaning that were taken from all the interviews were drawn from the transcripts to obtain a holistic context. Once the process was outlined and completed, I created themes, "for the themes common to most or all of the interviews as well as the individual variations" (Hycner, 1999, p. 154). Some unique ideas about leadership skills in community colleges that have been mentioned by participants were considered to support the phenomenon studied.

According to Kabat-Zinn, “Inquiry doesn’t mean looking for answers” (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 39), rather it is drawing a conclusion of lived experiences.

In the final step I validated and modified the data by giving a draft of the transcript to the participants to determine if the essence of the interviews had been clearly and accurately ”captured” (Hycner, 1999, p. 154). Furthermore, to confirm validity and credibility, trustworthiness was implemented in this study.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is an important component in qualitative research to support the study. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness helped me confirm credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity.

Credibility is one component of trustworthiness. Credibility of my study was achieved through the use of member check. A member check technique was used to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings of the original data that will be provided by participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member check helped me as a researcher to make sure the findings reflect the community college leaders’ own experiences and perceptions of leadership. This involved taking the findings or the analysis data back to the participants to ensure it represents a reasonable account of their experience. Credibility assesses whether the research findings signify correct interpretation of the original data that the participants provided (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296). A “member checking” strategy was used; transcripts were sent to each participant for revision to ensure that the participants’ viewpoints, thoughts, intentions, and experiences are presented correctly. Another strategy that was used to ensure credibility is debriefing, which is done for the sake of participant and mentor feedback. I received ongoing feedback and supervision from my dissertation advisor throughout the research process.

Another component of trustworthiness is transferability. This strategy was used to ensure that the data analysis answered the main research questions. This procedure happened during the data analysis.

Dependability is the evaluation of the quality of data collection, data analysis, and theory generation. Dependability is a strategy that was used to ensure accuracy of data. To ensure correct representations of thoughts, words, and ideas of participants, transcripts were sent to the participants for revision. This process helped ensure the precision of the data.

Confirmability is used to determine that the data analysis and findings are supported by the collected data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this inquiry, trustworthiness enhanced the quality of the data collection, data analysis, and the outcome of the research. According to Lincoln and Guba, confirmablity findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not of the biases of the researcher. During the analysis of data, I ensured the analyzed data was supported by the collected data by matching what the participants have provided with the final outcome.

Reflexivity considers the researcher's relationship to the research, such as sharing his or her ideas, experiences, thoughts, and knowledge about the study (Willig, 2001). "From a phenomenology, reflexivity is about understanding oneself and one's impact on the research experience" (Fox, Green, & Martin, 2007, p. 186). In qualitative research, reflexivity is important. According to Gough and Finlay (2003), "Reflexivity is signaled by the researcher's incorporation of information relating to the research context and to the relevant personal thoughts and feelings into the research report" (p. 22). Reflexivity includes personal and epistemological reflexivity. In this study, the personal reflexivity strategy was included in

chapter five after the data analysis, which discussed how my own beliefs, values, reflections, and experiences have shaped the research.

In qualitative research it is important that the researcher ensures certain ethical considerations regarding participants. As researcher, I paid close attention to the participants' voices, reactions, interactions, experiences, and written transcripts. The data was transcribed exactly as it was provided, with approval from the participant. There are also ethical considerations involved such as privacy and consent (Punch, 1994). From a confidentiality perspective, and ethical consideration, my participants gave consent to their responses being analyzed by several people. In my study, a written consent was obtained prior to the interviews, followed by a verbal consent at the beginning of the interview to ensure awareness of the assumptions and practices. I informed my participants prior to interviews that they had the right to withdraw at any time from the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

My study explored the lived experiences of nine community college leaders with at least 5 years of experience at various community colleges, and who also had participated and completed the community college leadership program. Chapter Four presents my findings as heard through the voices of the participants. This phenomenological study examined roles, values, philosophies and approaches of leadership skills. The interviews captured the community college leaders' understanding of leadership approaches in terms of the use of EI skills. The first section of this chapter will cover participants' backgrounds; the second section will cover the core themes. Two major themes emerged from the data. Theme One illustrates that EI (EI) leadership is on the horizon of community college leadership practice, but not yet fully understood or developed. This theme includes several subthemes: community college leaders' knowledge of the EI theory and skills, self-awareness, their understanding of EI skills, and their desire to learn EI skills. The second core theme illustrates that within the culture of the institution, community college leaders often identify with alternative leadership approaches and skills outside of the EI model, including several subthemes: stated leadership philosophies, values and skills, conflict resolution, self-care, adaptation, and the reliance on mentors.

Both core themes focus on answering my research questions which revolve around whether community college leaders are aware of the theory of EI and whether the practice EI skills in their professional leadership roles. For those who do not implement the skills and

Values incorporated within EI, this study focuses on exploring the philosophies, values, skills and theories that are more relatable.

Participants' Background

My study includes an overview of the nine community college leaders (CCLs) whose lived experiences are explored in this chapter. Each of the nine CCLs has at least 5 years of experience at community college institutions and has completed the community college leadership program.

Participant 1 (P1). With a background in health wellness and kinesiology, Participant #1 has been a community college leader in some capacity for 10 years. He started his academic career as an Arts and Sciences faculty member, and then moved on to direct the Community Leadership Institute before settling into his current role as Dean of Experiential Learning.

Participant 2 (P2). Participant #2 was an instructor of biology for 20 years, with 17 of those years devoted to the position of department chair. This position opened up the opportunity to act as Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences, a position that lasted for 6 years as he pursued his PhD in Educational Leadership. A year before he graduated with a PhD, he applied for the same position as the Dean of Arts and Sciences, was awarded that job, and has been at this current position since January of 2007 (roughly 2.5 years).

Participant 3 (P3). Participant #3 has been working at a community college since 1992 where she began as a 12-hour per week part time employee in the student services department. She was hired after having stayed home for about 8 years to raise her children. Eventually the college was funded to develop the center and Participant #3 was hired as a full-time counselor. Even though the position was as counselor, a lot of work was delegated

to P#3 because the college faced a small staff and turnover. She advanced into the role of Dean of Instruction and Student Services, a role that allowed her to experience more aspects of administration and management. From there, she became the Director of Student Services, serving two campuses. After a reorganization effort at the college, she was selected to be the Vice President of Student Services, where she has remained for 5 years. She holds a PhD in community college leadership.

Participant 4 (P4). This is the 39th year that Participant #4 has been involved in education. He taught at the secondary level for 13 years, taught at the community college level for 18 years, and for the last 8, he's been an administrator, and a Dean of Academic Services. From there, he became a division chair, then the Academic Center President. After 4 years as the Academic Center President, he moved into the role of an administrator. Additionally, he served as the President for the Association of Agriculture Instructors, chairing a variety of leadership activities. He holds a PhD in community college leadership.

Participant 5 (P5). Participant #5 taught adjunct for 5 years, waiting for an opportunity to become a full-time faculty member and, when that opportunity arose, she immediately became the department chair. So, she took on that role before advancing to the Dean of Business and Professional Studies. When a college-wide dean position opened, Participant #5 took the opportunity to move forward. This is the position she has held for 4.5 years. She holds a PhD in community college leadership.

Participant 6 (P6). This participant is currently the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at a small liberal arts college that focuses on the environment and social responsibility. Before taking this position, she worked for 9 years at a community college as the director

of the writing center and an English faculty. She has recently finished a PhD in higher educational leadership.

Participant 7 (P7). Participant #7 is the Dean of External Relations and the Director of the Work Force Training Program. Of the 20 total years in service, she has had an opportunity in many different positions, working herself up to an executive cabinet position. She holds a PhD in community college leadership.

Participant 8 (P8). This participant serves as the Dean of Academic Development and Learning Resources. She has been a faculty and administrative staff member at the college since 1986, starting as an adjunct faculty member and working as a librarian before acquiring a full-time position in 1988. She was appointed to the position of assistant dean in 2000 and became a dean in 2002, with the responsibilities of managing the library and the Center for Teaching and Learning, which includes all the faculty development and staff development programming, technology training for faculty and staff and training and support for distance learning. She additionally serves on the dean's council with the other academic affairs deans as well as the administrative council that reports to the president. Her credentials include: college representative to the league for innovation, out of 19 colleges and community colleges in the United States; member on the board of the Metropolitan Library System; and college representative to Illinois Community College Administrator group. She recently completed her doctorate work in 2008 in Community College Leadership.

Participant 9 (P9). Participant #9 has been affiliated with community colleges since 1987 in a number of different positions. She is currently the Vice President of Instruction, just one more step on the ladder of positions within the community college. She also finished her PhD in community college leadership program.

Core Theme One: Emotional Intelligence on the Horizon

Leadership qualities for community college leaders are often measured by the knowledge, skills, and values that leaders acquire and practice. According to the data, community colleges require their leaders to master skills that are related to: organizational strategies, resource management, communication, collaboration, community college advocacy, and professionalism. All these skills should be developed in terms of applying the values, the mission, and the policy of the college. Yet, further skills that help community college leaders succeed in areas like managing relationships among colleagues is also important to acquire in order to reduce the daily challenges when making a decision or dealing with colleagues who have different opinions. According to Goleman (1998), EI is defined as a person's self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control, commitment and integrity, and abilities to communicate, influence, initiate change and accept change. He also states that EI is the ability to recognize a feeling as it happens, to accurately perform self assessments, and have self-confidence. It is the ability to keep disruptive emotions under control. Studies have shown that EI impacts a leader's ability to be effective. Furthermore, Goleman concluded that leaders who do not develop their EI have difficulty in building good relationships with peers, subordinates, superiors, and clients.

EI leadership is on the horizon of community college leadership practice, but not yet fully understood or developed, according to the data. Some community college leaders mentioned that they learned about EI skills through community college leadership programs, while some had read about EI. Still, most didn't fully understand the theory and could not implement the skills. Those who fully understood the theory and the skills related to EI were able to implement only some of the skills. For those leaders, implementing these skills was

worth while in that they helped them understand their own feelings as well as the feelings of others, and how to manage these feelings. Although not a majority, some leaders sought solace in the strategies of leadership that EI provides. A few participants, though, summed up that no one or two or three theories of leadership would suffice. Instead, their discussions illustrated that there are different philosophies for different situations. So, the majority of the leaders interviewed have adopted multiple theories and skills to address a variety of situations.

This section covers four elements of EI in the data: how community college leaders learned about EI theory and skills, what strategies for acquiring self-awareness they employed, what skills being utilized seem to indicate that EI is on the horizon, and, finally, what their desires were to learn leadership skills related to EI to help them perform more effectively.

Knowledge of EI Theory and Skills

While many leaders relate to experiences in their leadership role rather than theories, most community college leaders seem to develop their leadership skills around a model which supports the influence of different philosophies for different situations. One of those philosophies lies in Goleman's work, which includes the EI model. The model of multiple philosophies and how the leaders became aware of this leadership model and incorporate this model into their approach is included in their own words.

> I don't really have any specific leadership philosophy that I'm necessarily following (P5)

> I believe in having a set of philosophies. I understand that there are different philosophies for different situations. I believe in always evolving or refining my philosophy, because it helps me grow and learn as a leader. Our leadership programs are good because they attract people who want to learn and want to become more in tune with how they are as leaders and how they think they can create better leaders around their

> institution. According to Bolman and Deals *Four Frames of Leadership* I always go back to that book and read (P1).
>
> The leadership program made me aware of the emotional aspect of leadership and even to the point where I almost did my dissertation on EI and its relation to teaching. Part of my dissertation is sort of my personal but also professional quest to understand how academic leaders can achieve or manage wellness in their life, part of that being the emotional component. I don't know if without the leadership program if I would have been able to articulate or formalize EI (P1).
>
> EI, when I was going through the program, we had a couple of my cohorts did a paper on EI. I don't think I follow it to the letter, I know of the theory, but I think that's a good one to follow. I know that a lot of work has been done on EI (P4).
> I don't think we talked enough about EI and some of the components and how a person could implement those skills into their daily lives. I think training on those kinds of things is a little bit difficult, but I think being a role model and implementing EI in your actions, in your thoughts and in what you say is a great way to help others learn how to integrate that into what they do (P9).
>
> We read a couple books about it. Our community college leadership program, but I'm not sure how you're defining EI skills…(P7).
>
> I have read material about EI. One of my colleagues at the college said it would be very nice for us to look at how we can base all of our workshops and our conversations in EI. It's more like looking at it from a positive light, rather than a negative light. I think that's my understanding of it anyway (P8).
>
> EI is the key to success and in any leadership role. Professional development around EI is a very important thing to consider and of incorporating into a program, because I believe if a person wants to, they can develop EI (P3).
>
> I read in *Primal Leadership* about the four dimensions of EI: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. I spent a lot of time focusing on relationship management, which helps me develop positive relationship among my team members. So, I brought in an inspirational book called *Simple Truths* and DVDs to build a program around this area (P3).

Leaders came across the EI model in a variety of ways. Some read books such as *Primal Leadership* and *Simple Truths*. Some learned about the EI theory through writing papers about the subject. Among those community college leaders who were aware of the EI theory, their visions of the EI theory and skills varied from one individual to another. Some leaders were unable to define this theory. Some others identified Bolman's work in detail,

including the four frames of the EI skills. Few leaders could articulate the definition and the elements of the EI skills: to be able to understand the self and others' emotions and be able to manage these emotions, motivating the self, and managing relationships. Some leaders saw the far-reaching possibilities of EI; others were not sure if these skills could be taught or learned, although they believe that some of the best leaders might have implemented these skills. Some believe that these skills could be implemented, not through learning or training, but through making a culture that reinforces these skills. Although some believe that EI is a good theory to follow, it seems to exist only as a supplement to many other theories of leadership.

EI Skills on the Horizon

According to participants, personality assessments are a good method for self-evaluation. Self-evaluation assists leaders to estimate their abilities, qualities, and character. Personality assessment is a tool to figure out the strengths and weaknesses of a person. Identifying weakness can help a leader focus on seeking improvements. Participants utilized personality testing tools such as Meyer-Briggs Type Indicator and Strength Quest to test strengths and abilities. These testing tools reveal if a person is extroverted or introverted, or a feeler, among many other traits. The data that sow that leaders are interested in using self-evaluation tools illustrates that leaders intend to understand the self; understanding the self assists leaders to have self-awareness, and self awareness is one of the important EI skills.

> As a leader it is important to know what strengths and weaknesses those individuals may have and so you need to cater how you're going to handle those individuals based on what your knowledge of them is, that, that takes time and experience to know who you're working with (P4).

> I feel like I'm an introvert, I internalize emotions a lot and I process, so I think through in my own mind when I'm in the shower, I'll think through late at night, I'll think through when I'm driving to work or driving home. So, as an introvert I cannot

> just talk openly about things that concerns me. Whereas my colleagues who are extroverts, they talk a lot about things. I internalize it and I don't often talk to my wife about these sorts of things until it gets to a point where I really need to talk to somebody, but realizing that she doesn't have a good perspective about what the situation is. I do have a few colleagues who I am careful about sharing some things with. I rely on colleagues and friends at work or within the institution that I can share some things with (P1).
>
> I apply the skill of self-awareness; I understand my own feelings as well as the feelings of others. As I always try to understand my boss's feelings and where she's coming from…(P1).
>
> Because I'm a feeler on the Myers-Briggs, the challenge with that is controlling my feelings. A feeler is someone who is astute at managing emotions (P5).
>
> From the community college leadership program we learned about servant leadership and knowing yourself, it is incredibly important to know thyself because then you know how you're going to react and I think that is brilliant. It helps in knowing what we're good at, we know what our weaknesses are and then we can work on that and then you can forgive yourself because you can't be perfect all the time (P5).
>
> I recently took a test called the Strength Quest to see what your strengths are. My strengths were in communication, working effectively with people, arranging things, and relationship building, which all add to making an effective leadership team. I believe that no one person can do this job so you need all those different types of strengths added together to make something go forward (P8).

Leaders claimed that knowing the self has helped them know their own and others' weaknesses and strengths, and what areas they need to focus on to grow as leaders. For example, one leader who took a Strength Quest test discovered her strengths were in communication, the ability to work with people, organization, and relationship building. This knowledge helped her recognize her abilities as an effective leader. Another leader stated that Myers-Briggs helped in finding out that she is a feeler. Another participant found out that he is an introvert, and that self-awareness helped him understand others. For example, he understood that from his boss's actions and reactions, that his boss is an extrovert. For each of them, knowing the self, their weaknesses and the strengths is a step towards effectively utilizing EI skills.

Implementation of EI Skills

According to the EI theory, gathering input from experienced and honest people will enhance the quality of a decision. This means that success involves others in the process, so that a leader is creating an environment that encourages collaboration. Community college leaders who implemented some of the EI skills in their role as leaders stated that they value others' opinions and strive to understand those opinions more thoroughly. During their leadership role, leaders deal with individuals who have different opinions, who operate differently. As participants stated, when dealing with colleagues with "stylistic differences," leaders have to be as inclusive as possible in the decision making process. They tend to use different strategies to be able to understand such skills like writing facts down, taking emotions out, avoiding drama, asking questions, being assertive, respecting and appreciating others, listening and understanding the perspectives of others by collecting information. They use these different strategies to gain a clear view of the issue before they run into judgment or make a decision.

> My philosophy is to get as much information as possible, to gain as much background and history and perspective from a variety of people in order to be informed as possible about whatever the issue is, or what the situation is…..[but] at some point I have to make a decision. I have to be as inclusive as possible, as often as possible, but then I put all the collected data, all together in a way that hopefully makes some sense for as many people as possible…(P1).

> I have a new supervisor. We had some stylistic differences. I am trying to understand where this person is coming from. Although, I do understand what her goals are and what she's trying to accomplish. She hasn't taken the time to understand where I'm coming from; this has created tension between us (P1).

> I am trying to talk to this person in a way that's non-judgmental. But every time I have a conversation with this person she is very defensive and angry. This makes it hard to have a rational conversation. I've had to write down the facts and the points that I need to make when I have a conversation with her. I also, try to take my emotions out of it and totally be not emotional, and try not get sucked into the emotional drama that she's going to bring (P1).

A leader understands that people have emotions and feelings and that people have a life outside of work, and that should be recognized. I strongly believe in humanistic value. I prefer to work with people who understand that and although we might have very busy schedules and intense and stressful projects, but there's that sort of understanding that you're a person, you might have a family, you have a life, you have all these other priorities and we're trying to balance work and life together…(P1).

Well that's something I've learned and I'm still learning. I have learned to ask some questions before rushing into judgment with others and assume that I know how they're feeling. I try and I'm getting better at asking them, "tell me your perspective…tell me about the situation from your perspective…" And often I find that what I know about the situation and what the person is telling me often are different. Earlier on as a leader, I made many mistakes where I rushed in to judgment with other people and I made a judgment about them or their work based on what I had heard and not so much as to what I had observed…and then I wouldn't give them a chance to show their perspective. So I learned to do that…I'm starting to get better at asking questions about, "tell me how you feel?" "Tell me how this makes you feel?" if we were to implement this solution what would that mean for you and your department…what would the implications be (P1)

My boss has different philosophy about doing things. I am a person that likes to process information. And this person is very action-oriented, and very quick to make decisions. I feel like I can't disagree with ten things all in a row in the first month of working with this person. I tried to shake my head and go with it. I have to pick and choose which items I'm going to debate and which ones I'm just going to let go and deal with emotionally later. Sometimes, I've spoken up to assert my position and in other cases I've kept quiet. I try to be strategic. Politically I'm not putting myself in a position, a negative political situation (P1).

I think EI includes the importance of understanding and appreciating people's feelings in their work and their decisions (P2).

It has elements of relationship management or self-awareness, all those components of EI. I think that the best teachers, faculty advisors, career advisors, financial advisors, probably have a higher EI, or at least higher in some components. Can EI be trained or taught or learned? That probably could be debated. I think it can be implemented when you make it a culture versus just a program (P2).

As an academic dean, I value my employees, especially the people that report to me. I view the people that I supervise as professional who have advanced degrees. They also, have valuable things to add. So, I value their opinion and make sure that I include them (P2).

Although some leaders dealt with others who disagreed with them, they still valued and respected their opinions and encouraged them to be a valuable part of the process. By putting emotions aside, leaders were trying to foster a culture that values people. They didn't view people as robots who were assigned to do the job only. They viewed people as humans, who have feelings, and they recognized their feelings. Good leaders are the ones who have the ability to appreciate diversity in their workplace—culturally, physically, and emotionally. This kind of application of EI theory has helped leaders create a healthy and productive environment where people respect each other.

Humanistic value is a very important aspect of leadership. The leaders interviewed in this study stated that a good leader is one who is able to understand others' emotions and recognize them. They reported understanding that colleagues have busy schedules, stressful projects, and believed they shouldn't be treated as machines who are supposed to finish the job and go home. Therefore, they should be treated as valued people, with emotions and feelings. These leaders intend to respect and appreciate others. The strategies they used to obtain this purpose were to ask questions to understand others and write facts down so they don't rush into a decision. While listening to others, they pick and choose what to acknowledge, however, in order to avoid being drawn into the drama of the situation. They tried to listen to understand others' perspectives and to collect information to gain a clear view of the issue and avoid rushing into a judgment. They also claimed that valuing others is essential because those individuals have important things to add to the institution.

Some of the leaders, before learning about EI skills, claimed that they used to assume they knew how others were feeling and used to make judgments based on what they had heard or observed. Implementing EI skills helped them change, as they started to realize that

rushing into judgments of others was ineffective; therefore, they asked lots of questions before they made any judgment. They found out that they were often making the wrong judgments about others. They started to ask others about their perspectives and how they felt. They believed that it was a huge mistake to make judgments based solely on what they personally heard, felt, or thought, because this proved to be wrong. Some leaders, when dealing with difficult colleagues, got very defensive easily and sought calming skills in order to have a rational conversation to create collaboration; some even wrote reflectively to find a way to communicate peacefully—all important aspects of an emerging EI approach to leadership.

Therefore, some of the community college leaders indicated that EI skills are clearly on the horizon for community college leaders. The EI approach provided effective skills to help leaders deal with their colleagues' feelings.

Desire to Learn EI Skills

Several leaders desired more information on ways to include EI in their daily leadership strategies. Roughly five participants were interested in learning skills that help them deal with daily challenges, and have the desire to implement these skills. Still, they experienced barriers, which included not being introduced to subjects related to these skills, and seeing contradictions to what they had already learned during their practice at the community college. They learned through years of experience at the college to apply the values, mission statement, and policy of the college to serve students' needs and help the institution succeed. For many leaders, their habitual leadership practices worked well, so they had no impetus to change their leadership style. Only one participant explicitly implemented EI skills because he learned these skills from a program he attended. He liked the skills, read about the subject, and implemented this model in his leadership role.

Most particularly, community college leaders want to learn the skills that: (a) help them control their feelings and reactions, (b) increase effective verbal skills to help control conversations from escalating, and (c) acquire the skills that help them understand their strengths and weaknesses. Many of the participants desired to have a mentor or a trusted colleague to provide honest constructive feedback to develop as leaders. They wanted the opportunity to expand other leadership competencies. Others wanted to learn additional skills to help them handle individuals dealing with problems or stress.

Another skill that some leaders expressed an interest in acquiring is the capacity for empathy, as they like to grow as leaders and improve skills that are related to reflection, active listening, coping skills, and ways to empathetically deal with stressful situations. These individuals strive to have supportive leaders or colleagues to help them improve and succeed. Leaders crave to learn the skills that help them create a supportive team, because unsupportive colleagues could create a hostile environment. The data illustrate a strong desire to learn skills to help leaders face their many challenges.

> I'm not sure what I'm missing. Some people have good verbal expressions that they use that can stop a conversation from escalating…I'm not sure that I have those, that collection of verbal ways to kind of control a conversation…(P2).
>
> I ask for constructive criticism so that I can improve (P3).
>
> I have an article I read that helps me improve my leadership competencies skills for community college leaders (P3).
>
> If I had additional skills it might be to just kind of figure out more on personality, how to best handle certain situations for individuals, whether it's their personal problems or work related problems or their stress or those kind of things so…additional skills that I may have might be I might be a little more empathetic of what their concerns are (P4).
>
> The skills will just be continuing to improve on my reflection and my active listening and making sure that I am hearing everything that's being said…about the other person. I like to improve coping skills and continually looking at ways to deal with

> stressful situations or situations where there's disagreement or lack of understanding. All those coping skills … (P9).

> I just try to maintain a cool head, I could point out on five fingers over the 15 years or however long I've worked at this institution since I've been at the community college, I don't even know if there will be a situation where I got angry about something…I could probably specifically remember what those were because I don't let that happen, I try to have an attitude, I'm not a surgeon and this is not a hospital and most of the things that occur here they're not life and death situations and I just try to maintain perspective (P3).

> What I try to do in that situation first of all is you know, I don't want to be caught up in saying any negative things about my boss. So, I tried to listen and understand her frustrations. But I try to keep myself from triangulation and getting mixed up in between people. I say to her I appreciate your expressing your concerns but you need to respect that I'm not going to allow myself to be pulled in to negativity about the situation (P3).

Leaders who did not fully understand EI theory still expressed a need for skills that align with EI theory. They expressed a need in their leadership that is clearly addressed in the EI model. For example, community college leaders illustrated the need for the skills that help them have effective verbal expression to help them manage their own feelings and others', and ultimately have better relationships with colleagues. They also expressed the need for the skills that help them handle varieties of situations, especially their personal problems, and work-related problems. They need the skills related to active listening, reflection, and empathy to understand self and others' frustrations, and to help them deal with difficult people. Also they need the skills that help them cope with stress. According to the theory, EI skills help individuals acquire self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control, commitment and integrity, and improve a person's ability to communicate. The skills these community college leaders expressed a desire to learn are clearly connected to these EI skills.

Core Theme Two: Alternative Leadership Approaches

Community college leaders have learned about several different leadership theories and approaches from the community college leadership program, such as servant leadership, positional leadership, and situational leadership. Learning all these approaches helps them shape their leadership styles to give them a framework for dealing with challenges and conflicts. Although all these approaches are important to acquire and implement, years of experience at the community college is significant because it helps leaders know the values, the mission, the history, and the culture of the institution. Learning and implementing varieties of approaches and skills have to be merged with the values and mission of the institution because the decisions they are making need to be consistent with the mission and the policy of the institution.

The first part of this section includes leadership philosophies, approaches, and values. Such approaches they have learned from the community college leadership program are servant leadership, situational, and positional leadership. The second part of this section includes the skills they implement in their leadership role. The skills that reflect these leadership styles include mediators and mentors, dealing with personal life issues, confronting economic crises at the college, and making key decisions.

Leadership Philosophies, Approaches, and Values

The most common thread in the data is that most leaders report learning a blend of leadership approaches. While servant leadership was commonly reported, the data showed that, more commonly, leaders chose to pick from several leadership approaches rather than stick to one. For example, some leaders reported a strong connection to the servant leadership model along with a collaboration model. Other leaders maintained an alliance with a servant

leadership philosophy, alongside a situational approach. Yet, they also adhered to transformational leadership. Clearly, leaders feel the need to mix multiple models to find the right balance in their philosophies of leadership, as reported in the following data:

> I have a philosophy that l learned from community college leadership program. We did some work with the servant leadership. The whole thing is to empower everybody on campus, whether it's a custodian, a gardener, a vice president, r a president. And I give them the tools and resources they need to be successful (P4).
>
> I have strong connections to a servant leadership philosophy with Robert Greenleaf. I think when you lead by example you gain trust. And people come to understand that you do practice what you preach and that helps people trust you and put their faith in you. I also like transformational leadership, especially elements of it that have to do with humor. I'm not going to say I know everything about it and practice it but it does inform what I do (P6).
>
> I learned from the *Web of Inclusion* to operate very collaboratively with people. Characteristic of my leadership is servant leadership. I'm not afraid to get down in the trenches and work with people. My staff are required to teach a college success skills class and I believe that it's extremely important that I set the example and also teach one, although my schedule doesn't always allow for a lot of time to do so, so I end up having to use my personal time to make sure I'm doing the course service…I assist with the new student orientations and I'll help register. I covered the office for 15 minutes while we all cycled through, I've had a supervisor would criticize me for doing that kind of thing. I would never ask anybody to do anything that I'm not willing to do myself (P3).
>
> I lead by example. I'm a fan of Robert Greenleaf's *Servant Leadership* and I think more than any other leadership philosophy that's probably what I practice (P6).
>
> I subscribe to Jung theory of personality preferences. I believe in behavioral influences in personality and leadership and that's where I got my mentoring and my teaching, and my experiences. I subscribe also to the situational leadership model, which is Blanchard… (P6).
>
> The servant leadership model and empowering individuals, I think that's the most important thing (P4).
>
> I really have a variety of leadership approaches or theories, but I'm most heavily based in servant leadership and so the whole philosophy that Greenleaf coined and put together is one that I subscribe to and I try to live by not only in my work life, and in my own personal life (P9).

> I'm a bit impatient and I can be more of a coach and with the situational leadership model, especially the four readiness quadrants, because I like to work with people autonomous. So I use that model a lot, and I've used it for myself and in helping directors lead their people. I also used the servant leadership theory as far as: they know thyself, control thyself, give thyself piece. I am a very giving person and I trust people first and I get burned sometimes, although you can't always trust people. Because as a leader you have to know when, when to trust and when to be suspicious, and when to recognize when someone is taking advantage of you and trying to hurt you. I've had a lot of experiences of people trying to hurt me as a leader (P5).

> I did a lot of reading about servant leadership. I adapted two leadership approaches that have affected the way I do my job. I try to be a servant leader. So, I don't want to tell faculty how to do their job, I want them to decide what they want to do, and I want to help them do that to the best of their abilities. I want to help them find resources, and get professional development. I also read George Baker book about a woman who took over a presidency at one time and she spent the first six months of her job walking around and getting to know people before she started to make any decisions. I learned from this book to include people in decisions, so people understand that I have their best interests in mind (P2).

> I've studied a lot of different leadership theories. We talked about positional leadership or situational leadership, depending on what the situation is at the time or where you fit in the organization, I think you have to have a very nurturing leadership style. When I have new people coming into the organization, I spend a lot of time talking about experiences, talking about history of the institution, talking about culture of the institution. I recommend working with peers who have as many years of experience as I have or even more (P8).

Strikingly, participants note that the servant leadership philosophy is a consistently powerful tool for leaders in the community college setting. This philosophy helps leaders empower others on campus and maintain a focus on providing the tools and resources to help staff succeed. The servant leadership approach also clearly helped some leaders deal with colleagues in a way that allowed co-workers to feel comfortable.

Yet, philosophies of leadership are best served as a blend of various elements, it seems from the participants' viewpoint. For some, that blend includes a situational philosophy that allowed leaders to approach situations according to the circumstances. Many leaders also believe that, to be effective, you need to have a nurturing leadership style. Clearly, no

one leadership style is perfect, so these leaders stay in tune with other philosophies to maintain a variety of approaches that help them shape their leadership skills.

The Implemented Skills

This next segment of data addresses the skills of leadership that have been employed to improve performance. For example, decision making is part of the community college leaders' daily responsibilities. Leaders make decisions that impact the community college operations and success, which affects student satisfaction and success. Community college leaders have learned how to deal with conflict resolution by being mediators and by the use of reflection skills. They also described the critical skill of adaptation, particularly during times of economic crisis. Self care was a skill that was consistently important to community college leaders, and finally, the importance of having a mentor and being a mentor to other new leaders presented itself as a common skill set that leaders relied on.

Decision Making

The essence of the daily life of a community college leader involves making decisions. Sometimes they need to make decisions that seem small; other times they are required to make decisions that clearly play an important role in the success of students, the community, or that affect staff, operational procedures, resource availability, growth success, and financial issues. No matter the impact of the decision, leaders used a fairly consistent set of skills and resources to help them make the many decisions they face.

The following quotes describe the way community college leaders make decisions during disagreements on a daily basis, and explain the process and skills they use to make decisions during major conflicts. During normal situations, when they have to provide extra services for students, such as adding courses on campus, or keeping a student center operat-

ing in the same place, participants feel they have to ensure they are doing what is best for the college and the students while they use collaboration and communication skills. In normal situations, participants report including almost everyone involved in the decision making process, reporting that they made an effort to reach a solution where everyone was in agreement. However, in many cases, participants made the decision even though some staff were not happy; they claimed that they had to follow the mission of the community college in making decisions where they consider students first, regardless of having an unhappy staff. Data from transcripts show how community college leaders have made decisions while dealing with different people and different circumstances.

The data presented first show how leaders viewed the decision making process in terms of being held accountable to the community college mission to support students and create an environment where students feel supported, while being able to make those decisions calmly and without regard for dissent among colleagues.

> When you make decisions, you have people who are not supportive of you. And you may make some enemies. Because when you have to do the right thing and you're in a situation where you have to hold people accountable and some people don't want to be accountable, you don't make friends. As a leader you're not doing your job to make friends, it's about doing what's best for the college and for the student. Sometimes you're attacked, you're personally attacked and I hope someday I get to the point where doesn't that bother me (P5).

> We keep the conversation or the questioning, or disagreeing with a decision that we make, in terms of what our mission is, what's our purpose of being here, that's the only reason why we come here every day is to be able to create a college where our students feel welcomed, were our students feel supported, where our students can be successful. So, I like to keep the disagreement terms, of our purpose of being here. It is not a personal decision; it is a decision that is based on the mission of the institution (P8).

> When I make decisions on a daily basis I always consider students first, and so whatever decision I make is how it impacts students and so that's always been really important for me…(P4).

Making decisions in an environment full of questions and disagreement is not easy. Leaders defined the goals of decision making in terms of considering students first and doing what is right for the institution. So, they believe to make the best decisions for the institution, leaders have to be held accountable to the community college mission. Their accountability is focused on creating an environment where students feel welcome and supported. They illustrated that being held accountable is one of their purposes of being at the community college. So, their responsibility as leaders at the community college is to provide an environment that ensures student success. They have to make decisions that are right for the students and the institution, even at the cost of what colleagues at the institution need and at the cost of harmony among the staff. During the decision making process, they do not always consider having happy or unhappy colleagues, because their decisions are not personal. Their decisions are based on a higher mission to serve the values and goals of the institution they serve.

Dealing with decisions regarding the management of personnel is certainly a challenge for any leader, including those who serve a community college. According to my data, community college leaders note that personnel and managerial decisions must be made regarding the submission of reports, the evaluation of an individual's performance, and the encouragement for personnel to thrive. While maintaining a strong focus on the institutional goals, the main strategy reported during these decision making processes was the use of the communication skills in a form of conversation.

> I deal with a grants office. We have very tight deadlines and usually there is a team working on a proposal, each of us doing different pieces of that. I had an executive director that was in charge of that proposal. It was getting ready to submit the grant and she kept holding on to it. I had to step in and I had to say, you need to make the decision which action we take, and the deadline is here, you need to submit it (P9).

> We offer a course at the high school that helps students receive high school credits and college credits at the same time. I had a colleague who was in disagreement. I asked the person to help me understand why not. I asked her to help me think through some other alternative solutions. I brought in another expert. I tried to find compromise and ways of doing things differently. We still disagreed. But ultimately in this situation I had to make a decision that was probably different than what she wanted. So there were feelings of anger, feelings of lack of trust, there were feelings that I didn't believe in her expertise. I appreciated her perspective and then I ultimately made a decision (P9).
>
> I had requested information from a colleague who reports to me. This colleague was not carrying out my requests. We had a very frank conversation and I asked why those things had not been done, gave them a chance to interact and converse with me and at the end of that communication asked that certain things be done by a certain time and as it turned out with this situation, I had a resignation the next day (P6).
>
> I have a staff member; she is a front line person dealing with the public all the time, and I noticed that this person's a little rough around the edges, but does a really good job. There was a period of time we were getting some complaints about how curt she was and short in responses. So, I called the person in and said, you generally do a good job and I know you would never want to come across this way, so how can I help you be aware of that and so we talked about some strategies (P3).
>
> I had a long time part time faculty member on the schedule for a course that he very much wanted to offer, and it turned out that I needed to replace him with a full time faculty member. I knew that this was not going to be well received. This is how I handled it; we have a director who has a very good relationship with this particular faculty member. So, rather than me breaking the news to him, I asked her to bridged the topic with him. So, she talked about the life issues he is dealing with, and helped him see that he really didn't need to teach that class given all the other things he had going on. So, by having her setting that framework in a friendly way, had helped me approach that I needed to take that class off the schedule. He was very receptive to that and I don't believe he would have been otherwise…(P6).

Community college leaders understand their responsibilities in terms of their role as decision makers. They have to accomplish tasks on time— they evaluate others, they submit reports to request grants, create new courses for students, they encourage others to change negative attitudes, among many other things. Sometimes, leaders had to work with staff members who were in disagreement with the decisions they made. Managerial decisions must be made to improve either the institution or others' performance; leaders felt like they

must make the decision despite dissent. They deal with disagreements using communication skills, sometimes even delegating that communication to explain to others their rationale behind making such decisions because they believe that making the decision the way they do will benefit the individuals and the institution in the long run. They believe that success is a product of making decisions that support the learning process, by being committed to the institution and doing what is best for the institution and dealing with managerial and personnel issues with a focus on communicating expectations clearly and communicating the rationale behind making decisions.

The focus on adhering to the community college mission and student success through the strategy of communication did not change when leaders were dealing with large scale institutional concerns that involved subordinates and the leaders' superiors. When leaders had to deal with bigger issues at the institution that required including other individuals in the decision making process, they again focused on the institutional mission and relied heavily on communication— explaining their rationale, defending their positions, convincing others, collaborating with others, and even at times deferring to a higher authority to make the decision to avoid conflicts. Once again, leaders sometimes faced dissent among colleagues and reported that the frustration of others cannot and should not impact decision making.

> We have a center at the college that is made up of two campuses. At the center we have about 200 students. We got notice that the landlord decided to double the rent. Because I serve as a cabinet administrator, I met with the vice president of finance to discuss the issue. The two of them decided to close down the center or look for another location because we can't pay. I wasn't happy with their decision. I scheduled another meeting of the key people in the town and the county, the president, the finance vice president to show them the importance of keeping the center operational at the same location. I discussed with them the amount of investment we put in this center, this made the town and the county people decide to pay the difference in the rent, and sign a lease for 5 years. It turned out to be a win-win situation (P3).

> The school district wanted to offer biology in high school. The dean over that area was reluctant to allow them to do that. So we let the issue sit for a while, until it came time to hire the faculty member and start planning for the fall. And there became this conflict where the dean did not agree. I told her that we're doing it for one class; the pilot is to figure out how we're going to do it. I was at a point where she and I couldn't find a compromise. I urged the vice president to make the decision because she and I were at a roadblock and I had tried everything (P5).

> My job was to manage the developmental writing program, so I worked with a lot of students who were not prepared for college level writing. I had a real strong commitment to this requirement. I'd seen it be very beneficial for students. There was a real push by one administrator in particular, and one department chair, to eliminate that requirement. So instead of being emotional, I defended my argument by gathering a lot of data about outcomes for development students, and best practices for developmental students, and how this requirement was a model of best practices according to the literature and I was successful. I framed my argument as a research-based one. I tried to create a research based argument rather than an emotional one (P6).

In some areas, according to the interviews, leaders could not simply step in and make a decision regarding bigger issues at the institution that required including other individuals. When leaders were dealing with bigger issues, like having to keep a student center operation in the same place when the landlord doubled the rent, or when the dean was reluctant, and rejecting the decision of eliminating the writing program, they involved others necessarily. These leaders communicated with key people to help with the decision making. In two examples, the leaders were careful to explain their rationale, defend their positions, and convince those in disagreement of the importance of the student center or the developmental writing program to the students, and to the institution. In another example, a leader tried communication skills to convince the dean to offer a biology course. When this failed, the leader asked a higher authority to make the decision instead of forcing the decision on the dean to avoid more conflict. Therefore, leaders in this case didn't apply the learned approaches. All these decisions were made based on the mission of the community college because these decisions ultimately benefited the students and the institution, and supported

the learning process. This shows leaders' dedication to accountability and how committed they are to the students, the institution, and the community in making important decisions, regardless of having happy or unhappy colleagues.

Large institutional decisions are certainly challenging, but the decisions leaders must sometimes make can be even more complicated, necessitating a more stringent criteria for decision making. The following data discuss making tough decisions in terms of high conflict, when leaders are required to use institutional policies such as the Student Code of Conduct. This Student Code of Conduct ensures the regulation of student behavior, educating students on their rights and responsibilities as members of the institution, and the promotion of students' understanding of the balance between their privileges and the college responsibilities. Also, the Code establishes and maintains a safe environment in the college community where students can learn and succeed. Other institutional policies are in place to help a leader focus on making decisions based on the departmental needs and financial issues in times of high conflict.

> The whole country's kind of in budget concerns right now. A meeting has been set up with two deans who to make a difficult decision about laying off five full employees. The academic council, and some of the faculty were upset about the decision. So, I had to explain to them that I used a master contract that is bargained between the faculty and the administration and within that there are five criteria that I use: if a person's going to reduce the staff, or lay someone off. I had to work down through each of those criteria and current state of the division and also looking at future needs for the division. It was a process where I couldn't be inclusive because it had to be a decision that had to be made quickly (P2).

According to the data, when dealing with conflicts and having to make difficult decisions, community college leaders rely heavily on the application of the community college policy. Laying off five full-time employees was not an easy decision to make, but one leader was faced with this difficult decision. This leader based the decision on the community

college policy or a “master contract,” as the leader called it. The decision was made to help the institution financially, as community college leaders were having budget concerns. Making the decision had some of the staff members unhappy because they were going to suffer financially, but this leader stepped in and made the decision without thinking of the financial consequences that those five full-time employees were going to face. This shows that this leader is committed first and foremost to the institution and its policies, regardless of what would happen to the five staff members. Leaders feel that they face the burden of choosing between the needs of the college and its students or the needs of their colleagues. Clearly, in these data, the needs of the college and its students come first.

Another issue that is infused with high conflict involves sexual harassment. With these types of concerns, following institutional policy becomes critical to ensure that leaders focus on the student safety on campus. Making the right decision in this area is critical, because if leaders ignore this area, they could cost the institution in terms of law suits and cost the institution its reputation as a champion for the rights of each individual. So these decisions of great magnitude are necessarily made based the institution’s Student Code of Conduct. In the following scenario, one leader was faced with a decision for handling sexual harassment:

> We received a complaint of a sexual harassment among some of our younger female students about a senior citizen student. I had taken the action of a temporary suspension for a student. I had a staff member, who is very opposed to my actions. I explained my rationale. I showed her documents. I explained our provision in our student code of conduct to allow us time to further investigate the matter and it also afforded us the opportunity to provide protection for our college community. By the end of the day I had a person sent me an email, apologizing for her reaction, and she was very supportive for my decisions (P3).
> After doing further investigation, we found court documents that showed that the senior student was not a convicted sex offender but he was an admitted one. I had to make a decision to protect the college and the students from any potential acts. So, my final decision was he was able to attend the classes that he wanted to attend, but limited in such a way that he can’t bother students. By making this decision some

> people were not happy. I realized that you couldn't make all of the people happy all of the time (P3).

Because sexual harassment is a sensitive issue, leaders have to make careful decisions and they have to follow the institutional policies and any court decisions that are related to the sexual harassment issue. After reading the court documents that showed the student had a history of sexual harassment, this particular leader made the decision to suspend the student who committed sexual harassment. The leader decided to allow the student to attend classes, while having limited access in a way that restricted his access to other students. Even with allowing the student to attend classes with limited access, some colleagues were still unhappy. So, the leader clearly made a decision regardless of having unhappy colleagues to avoid having to deal with bigger issues that could cause the institution to deal with a lawsuit, and a bad reputation in terms of safety. Therefore, in this matter, the leader chose to follow institutional policies rather than pleasing other staff members because their main purpose of being at the institution is to ensure students' safety on campus, to protect the institution from more damages, thereby following the Student Code of Conduct.

Participant community college leaders made their decisions—both small and large scale— based on a few consistent governing principles to help improve the learning process, student success, and student safety on campus. The scenarios provided by the participants confirmed that community college leaders had to make the decisions based on the institutional mission, and goals, and not based on making friends and pleasing staff members. They had to consider students first, and support the learning process along the way. Although they applied collaboration and communication skills in order to help others understand the decision making process, or to explain their rationale, or to defend their position, they still

maintained a strong focus on adhering to institutional policies and missions when making decisions, with a focus that saw beyond the immediate dissent of their colleagues.

Conflict Resolution through Mediation

Mediation is a powerful skill. Community college leaders reported employing this technique to navigate conflicts in a variety of circumstances. During mediation, leaders relied on communication, both listening and conversation skills. Community college leaders believed that a mediator should be a neutral person who helps people find a better way to solve problems in a friendly environment. A mediator helps people in conflict talk about concerns in a safe environment. Then, a mediator helps find a solution that fits both parties. The following data emerged from participants who described their leadership philosophy through their role as mediators. Participants shared their experiences as leaders who played the mediator role to bring groups who are in disagreement together, clearly working to serve subordinates.

> I had a student who felt that her instructor treated her unfairly. The student felt that the instructor maybe didn't like the boyfriend, and then didn't like the student. The student came to me and said: "If you're not going to help me, I'm going to go to the president. I explained to them that going to the president [wasn't] going to help any because the president isn't going to solve that problem. The president's going to bounce it back to me. So, my role is to get the student and the instructor talking. I'm not going to make a decision for neither instructor, nor for the student. I basically kind of needed to be a mediator (P7).

> In relation to budge cuts, [I] was laying off some instructors. One faculty member has blamed the president and the vice-president, thinking that they made wrong decisions. He was off campus and ran into one of our vice-presidents at a coffee shop. I thought that was very rude and very unprofessional. I had to deal with that faculty's feelings and make him understand that just because he was upset, it doesn't mean he can make personal attacks on other fellow employees. Finally, he did apologize for his actions (P2).

> I had to be the mediator between different departments; I wanted our department to have a good relationship with the student as well as the individual staff that was working with the student. Some people were perceiving the way the staff member

> dealt with the student was unfair, so I had to be the mediator to make sure that the situation was resolved and that our university president, and other deans were okay with the way that it was resolved. I had to rely on individual conversations, on the trust and the credibility that I had with each one of these different people to resolve it (P1).

> I had a couple faculty members, one came to my office and was complaining about the other…the other came to my office and was complaining about the other individual. I felt it was best that I got both of them in the same room at the same time and talked out their differences and basically resolved the issue. When faculty members express their concern, most [of] the issues would be resolved. I always take the time to give proper attention to listen carefully and not to interrupt (P4).

Some community college leaders focused on communication as a form of mediation for conflict resolution while solving a conflict between a student and an instructor by making both parties talk frankly about their concerns. One other community college leader used a conversational technique to make a faculty member who had been laid off because of budget issues apologize for being rude to the vice president. Another participant leader played the role of mediator to help the dean understand the procedure that his department uses with students and staff in order to foster a better relationship. Because of the high level of conflict in this situation, playing a mediator role was necessary in order to assuage the situation between the staff member from his department and the dean.

Other participants had a different idea about how to use the skill of mediation. They believed that being a mediator doesn't always involve having both parties in disagreement come together. Sometimes, mediating a situation by simply listening to people talk about their concerns and their feelings helped them fix the problem. The data below illustrate how leaders found listening to be a strong leadership skill:

> Just being kind of mediator and having people discuss their perceptions and their feelings and putting things out on the table…that helps me get it out…and so I let people tell me if that's helpful for them (P5).

> When somebody has a problem, a student or faculty, I'll listen and I will let them know that I care about what they're saying. I also really make a point of staying calm. I'll use humor. I can take a light-hearted approach, when it's appropriate, it lightens the mood overall. It helps to get things back to reality. So humor's also a good outlet to calm a situation (P6).

One of the effective skills that have proved to be helpful in mediation is listening, especially when a leader sought information from a colleague to understand an issue or a point of view or to learn. Some community college leaders believed that listening to people who have concerns and helping them feel heard is mediation enough in some circumstances. Being a good listener and giving proper attention to people's concerns helped solve issues. Another effective skill leaders used during mediation was humor to lighten the mood and calm a situation, allowing others to calm down enough to listen to each other more authentically. All of these skills improved leadership performance.

Community college leaders recognized that being a mediator is a challenging job, but facing conflicts with this set of skills ultimately helped them resolve the issues. Community college leaders believed that playing a mediator role helped them become a better leader because they not only played the go-between or referee role, but also listened to people's concerns and helped people resolve problems on their own.

Conflict Resolution through Reflection

Another large part of the conflict resolution skill set for community college leaders, as reported by the data, was reflection. Reflection means to take time to check the thoughts, ideas, and decisions of the self and others in order to have a better understanding of the issue and make better decisions. Also, for the participants in this study, reflection meant to take time as a leader to find meaning in experiences. Each person reflected in a different way, but the skill of reflection is expressed with multiple participant leaders in this study. In fact, near-

ly all of the participants reported using reflection in order to better understand others and make better decisions regarding conflict.

> When I am in an unpleasant situation, I take deep breaths, I talk to myself, think before I say things. I also, try to remember something that somebody told me a long time ago, that regardless of what you may encounter during the day, the sun comes up tomorrow morning (P7).
>
> When I was a younger leader, if I am upset with someone, I would fire off an email back, saying, you idiot and then it's like, oh crap…why did I do that, and so, I've learned not to write a quick response, instead I save a draft, I wait 24 hours and look at it in the morning. Sometimes I don't respond because the emotions are gone (P5).
>
> When I have employees that come to me and they're upset with somebody else, what I used to react as oh my gosh, I can't believe this, I'm going to step in and do something about that. What I do now is I let people vent. Let them express themselves in a safe environment. And then I ask them what they would like me to do, people who have worked with me for awhile, they'll say I don't want you to do anything, I say will you let me know when you would like me to step in (P5).
>
> Reflection helps me get back to that reasonable level. I get away from the situation by walking around campus, or by going bike riding, talking to someone I trust. So, that can allow me to get some fresh eyes on the situation and again bring me back to a rational level. And that can give a more kind of non-emotional response to the situation (P2).
>
> One of the lessons I've learned along that way is not to react immediately. I go home, I go for a walk, I listen, I write down factors. I reflect a little bit before I come back with any reaction. The next day I discuss things, then I act (P9).
>
> I am still working on that skill (P9).
>
> I have learned to give myself time to think about issues before I respond. So that would be reflection. I will consult others before I respond to a situation to know more and to get more insight. I use humor because it makes everybody feel better at times, when it's appropriate (P6).
>
> I write things down on paper with different ideas or potential solutions or plans to address it. So, I'm always trying to solve the problem or solve the frustration (P1).

Community college leaders believed that conflicts or problems are a necessary and common part of their professional lives. So, to them, resolution skills were essential. In these data, some leaders reported using reflection as a primary skill for resolving conflict, such as

taking a deep breath, using self talk, and delaying reactions before saying anything regardless of what the issue was. Other leaders reported that reflection means learning from your own mistakes. Reflection is a leadership skill that helped them deal with the situation appropriately. One leader, while listening actively, used a sense of humor in order to avoid the escalation of the issue, along with consulting others in order to have better insight.

In general, skills that helped participant leaders during reflection included talking their concerns out loud, listening to resolve a conflict, getting away from a stressful situation, allowing leaders to get some fresh ideas on an issue and bringing them back after a cool-down period. In all these cases, reflection helped leaders find a solution. Based on the data, reflection is clearly a skill that is needed in a variety of situations to help avoid the escalation of a problem.

Adaptation to Changing Environment

The challenges for these community college leaders were widespread, especially during times of economic crisis where they had to deal with budget cuts and adapt to a new environment where the responsibilities were far-reaching, and the resources were limited. As a result of economic challenges, schools were forced to cut classes and programs or faculty and staff because they didn't have the resources to cover all the programs. Leaders in these cases reported adapting to the changes as a powerful leadership skill that improved performance in tough times. In other words, leaders accepted the new situation where they had to carry more responsibilities in an environment with fewer resources and reduced benefits by adapting their leadership styles and adapting their leadership skills:

> The opportunities are becoming more limited, with all the budget cut backs, it is getting more difficult to find individuals who are willing to take the role of an administrative leader, faculty want to come and teach and go home (P4).

> Also, because of the economy crisis, we have a ton of re-entry students that have lost their jobs, are looking for new careers and new skills. So more of classes are full with huge waiting list. (Technical education and industrial maintenance shop is full, our automotive program is full, and conditioning program is full.) Career technical skills (P4).
>
> So, we need to increase the funding, to increase the number of full-time faculty. Because full time faculty can build programs, adjunct faculty doesn't (P4).
>
> The community college need[s] to shift that philosophy of we are a degree transfer institution, we need to shift that to work force training, career technical education, so we can take the masses of students looking for occupational skills and be able to put more dollars toward career technical education. Students need to complete their work force training as well as their general education training so that they not only get a certificate in industrial maintenance, but also a degree, an AA or an AS degree. So, students come back to college to learn more skills, our mission is to get them in, and then let them realize that, they're going to need more skills. They might be able to fix the air conditioner but they can't fill out their time card or they can't read the directions. They should be able to do both. Especially during the economy crisis because employers can be more choosy (P4).
>
> The challenges in the economy have proved to be almost beneficial for community colleges in the sense that their enrollments are multiplying. So, colleges need to diversify the people who work in the institutions to meet and manage the needs of the diverse populations. Community colleges have white male history in terms of leadership and surprisingly it hasn't changed much in the last 25 years (P6).
>
> So leaders through economy crisis are supposed to have new responsibility is to have the ability to do more in an environment with limited resources and budget. Through economy crisis, leaders should be able to lead and manage the resources that they have at the same time prioritizing those resources (P7).

So, leaders during budget cuts were better focused on managing and prioritizing resources, arguing that a leader's priorities change as the circumstances change. For example, students going back to school felt the need to learn skills only; they did not want to focus on general education. So, one leader adapted and recommended that they let the students in the program choose their own paths, and then they convinced them to study general education, because while they have to understand technical skills, they also need strong verbal and written skills. Another participant leader, after noticing that community colleges disproportion-

ately employ White male faculty, recommended that during an economic crisis, where student enrollments are diversifying, they should have more diverse faculty members to meet the need of diverse populations. Others recognized that the economic crisis had forced new responsibilities on leaders, staff, and faculty. During budget cuts, leaders and faculty members are supposed to be able to do more in an environment that has limited resources. Those who can adapt to the changing environment experience improve leadership skills.

Self-care

Busy schedules can be stressful for leaders. Leaders cannot always control the amount of work that has been assigned to them, but they can control how well they take care of themselves in order to stay in good shape to handle the stress and keep functioning. A good leader needs to be able to balance personal life and work. This balance will help the leader perform better at work, and enjoy life at home, which, in turn, improves the quality of life in multiple ways. Taking work problems home will prevent leaders from enjoying their personal lives, and that will ultimately affect work. Each participant had a different view of the way they care for themselves, but all participants agreed that caring for the self is a critical leadership skill. Here is how participant leaders in this study described these self-care skills:

> I'm careful of what I share with people because I've seen it happen where, you know, personal things that are shared do get inadvertently shared with others. Somebody finding out what you've said or professionally where it's going to come back to bother you. I try to separate my work life and my personal life and I have a lot of friends at work but I don't spend time with them outside of work (P1).

> If there are things going on in my home life that are bothersome to me I try to check them at the door. That's a matter of being attuned to stressors that you might have. Being able to compartmentalize so I think that do use emotional self-awareness quite a bit (P3).

> If something would happen at work and it would affect my whole day and I would go home and I would dwell on it, and I don't do that anymore, it's like, what happens at work happens at work and I do my best to participate and manage the situation but I don't carry it with me when I go home. I have a separate life where I relax and I do things I enjoy and that just makes me a better employee ultimately (P6).

> I ran the dairy here on the college for 18 years so I'm an early riser so I go to the gym five days a week at 4:30 in the morning, work out for about 45 minutes, go home, drink my coffee, read my paper. I'm here on campus about six, between 6 and 6:30 and I'm usually between 6 and 6:30 that night. I think that exercise basically gets me into the right frame of mind before I start my day EI is the key to success and in any leadership role. Professional development around EI is a very important thing to consider and of incorporating into a program, because I believe if a person wants to, they can develop EI (P3).

> …I strive for balance in my life and my job is not my whole life, so I put things in perspective by doing some activities such as: go ride my bike, go to the health club, go climb a mountain and pray. Also, I have my husband hold me, or hang out with my kids so that I can balance and be rational the next day. I just need to recharge. I think it's really important as a leader to find whatever it is that helps you recharge (P5).

Self-care meant something different to each leader, but the skill was important to them all. Some community college leaders believed that having to share personal information with a colleague was not a good idea. They believed a professional leader should be able to keep his personal life away from work. Some community college leaders recommended that separating their personal and professional lives was important. A few community college leaders reported exercising as a means of getting into the right frame of mind before they started the daily responsibilities. Many of them took care of themselves by doing some activities that helped them balance their lives and stay rational, such as going to a health club, riding a bike, climbing mountains, praying, and spending time with family to recharge. No matter how the balance was achieved, the data clearly indicate that community college leaders need to find ways to help recharge in order to function each day.

Mentors

A mentor is someone who serves as guide. A mentor is someone who has experience and is able to help others see the big picture of an issue, in order to lead them into the right direction and give advice from past experience. Good mentors are the ones who are able to help others find a better way to solve problems, make decisions, understand others, and feel at ease all the time. Participant community college leaders found value in utilizing a mentor as well as mentoring other new leaders.

The following emerges from the data that has been provided by participants describing leadership skills through capturing the importance of having a mentor who is trusted and able to guide someone through challenges and difficulties. Participants shared the importance of having a mentor to help them improve and succeed as leaders. Usually, mentors did not solve problems; instead, they stayed neutral and objective. Mentors asked questions and by asking questions they helped community college leaders create solutions for their problems. Having and utilizing a mentor clearly helped many leaders grow in challenging situations.

> I had a mentor who I came to know over the past year, I go to him with a situation or a problem, he won't solve it for me…he won't give me an answer…he will ask a lot of questions. And in a sense he's letting me solve my own situation. I really like that approach because he stays neutral, he stays objective and he lets me figure out answers. He is a prompter. He prompts me to answer my own questions by the way he asks some questions and I really like that and I believe that that's an art that needs to be learned and I've kind of committed myself informally to really learning that and to becoming better at it. That can help me with students and with people that I work with and work for and work for me…(P1).

> I have two wonderful mentors at the community college, the executive vice president and the vice president for instruction. I use my mentors to talk about my concerns. They are the people whom I trust, they have taken me on as a leadership project, and they have helped mold me over the past few years, and this is where they've really helped me grow (P5).

> My mentors want to see [me] successful, so when there are these sharks in the water, trying to take a bite of me, they swat them away. They protect me from all these peo-

> ple that want to see you fail. My mentors believe in me and help me navigate. And as a leader I do that with my people as well (P5).

> Having the ability to debrief it with someone else. Being able to have a confidant that I can say, hey, I had this difficult problem, I wasn't sure how to handle it, this is what I did, how could I have done it differently or better? So I think really having someone else there to listen to me and provide me guidance and more experiences and different alternatives and, better ways of handling it (P9).

So, having a trusted mentor helped community college leaders grow as leaders. Mentors helped them succeed and also protected them from individuals who tried to hurt them, giving them the chance to vent their own concerns and problems in a safe environment. Consequently, finding and utilizing a trusted mentor who could encourage my participant leaders to find better solutions and support them as they handle challenges was important.

Finding and utilizing a mentor was a large part of these leaders' skills, yet being that mentor to another new leader was a subject that got leaders excited about talking. In the following data, leaders offer their mentoring skills by offering advice and describing experiences that would help a new leader succeed.

> For new leaders, find a trusting mentor who does have your best interests at heart and use that person as a mirror to get honest feedback on how you're handling situations. Understand how much you don't know and appreciate how much you do know (P3).

> My advice for new leaders to make sure they know their contracts. Because they always want to make decision knowing what the contract says, and this helps them stay out of trouble. Don't take things too personally. Accept colleagues' feedback (P4).

> Be professional in everything you do and just retain your integrity in everything you do on the job (P6).

> My advice to a new leader is to listen and learn. I recommend the new leader should listen and get to know all of the staff, observe, and learn from them. Work with staff to improve processes for effectiveness and efficiency. Don't just try and change things that are being done well, but really work together and move forward with the staff. Do the reading that needs to be done within the priorities of that office and the federal and the state programs. Don't forget to document important information (P7).

> First advice for the new leader is to take some time to know the people at the college, get to know the culture, provide opportunities for them to get to know you. And a good way to know people is to participate in college committees, know their philosophy and ideas about things. Understand the mission of the college, and respect the history of the college. Don't be quick on making recommendations about change (P8).

> I think that a community college leader needs to be very well read, very well informed as to things that are going on internationally and nationally, that means that you attend conferences, that means that you read, it means you access different information on the internet, that you do a lot of social networking, and however you do that social networking, everybody seems to be comfortable with it at a different level…through different media, I feel that is one of the most important things for a community college leader to be very well informed and well networked (P7).

> Good qualities that a successful leader should acquire such to have the ability to listen, to collaborate, to plan, to organize, gain trust, all those things were acquired after years of experiences (P6).

> My experience here at the community college, I have seen very smart people come and go who were not successful simply because they did not have the characteristics or the skills to work well with other people. I think that comes first before the knowledge. I mean the knowledge is important, none of us can do this job without the knowledge, but the knowledge needs to be matched with the interpersonal skills that a person needs to actually get the job done. I think if we have the right set of interpersonal skills, that if you use those skills effectively, and I think people are more giving and more forgiving if you make mistakes. Whereas, if you've come in with kind of an abrupt, brutal kind of force, and it's either my way or the highway, then when you make the mistake, people are not as forgiving…so I think having those interpersonal skills is a very critical piece to becoming an effective leader on campus (P8).

> It's important for a new leader to know who you are and really make sure that you're consistent with your values so that you don't feel that you're compromising who you are and who you say you are. Also, my advice for new leaders is to use their value system as a guide. Be a good listener, use reflection, be true to yourself and follow who you say you are (P9).

Based on the data, having a mentor and playing the role of mentor together played a powerful role in the leadership skills necessary for these participants. Community college leaders illustrated that being experienced leaders helped them become mentors. Drawing from their experience, they demonstrated that having a trusted, experienced mentor helped them survive during the challenges they faced as community college leaders. In fact, the col-

lege urged new leaders to have mentors who are willing to support them, and provide them with suggestions, recommendations, and guidance to help them be successful.

Conclusion

Community college leaders have reflected on leadership skills to deepen their understanding of the strategies they have employed in situations like decision-making, reflection, conflict resolution, adaptation to changes, self-care, having mentors, etc. By going more deeply into the choices of the leadership styles and skills, we enrich our understanding of how those leaders operate during their role as leaders. According to the data, most community college leaders do not fully understand EI skills, yet they have some knowledge of the concept, and they are still on the horizon of applying EI skills. A few of them reported the explicit use of some of the EI skills, yet most had only heard about or read about the approach. Interestingly, many of the leaders showed the desire to learn skills that align with the EI theory in order to help them with the daily challenges and conflict and to manage relationships among colleagues. Clearly, leaders saw the value of EI, even though they were still struggling to make sense of how EI might be implemented.

In my data, community college leaders identified and explained varieties of leadership approaches, focused on implementing the mission and the policy of the institution. Knowing about a variety of leadership styles helped community college leaders shape their understanding of their leadership skills, which helped improve their professional ability to perform within their role as leaders. Incorporating leadership styles and skills into their profession illustrates that they are committed to helping the institution they serve to succeed. The common skills they have employed throughout their leadership role have outlined their effectiveness as leaders in many different situations.

This chapter on phenomenological research methods allowed me to hear the lived experience of community college leaders at the workplace. From their voices I have gained a more holistic understanding of that experience. Chapter Five will address how these findings relate to my research questions, to the fields of community college leadership, and further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore whether community college leaders implemented EI skills through their lived experiences in their professional role. Through participants' examples of their lived experiences, this study explored leadership philosophies and performance based on leadership qualities and skills. I wanted to understand whether leaders were implementing the skills and values incorporated within EI, and, if not, understand what skills and values they were using and to what leadership theories they related. I interviewed nine experienced community college leaders. Using a theoretical framework of EI, the objective was to identify community college leadership values, philosophies, approaches, and skills. This study will add to the body of knowledge on EI theory by addressing how EI skills have helped and could help community college leaders attain higher levels of personal and professional performance.

Because community college leaders are decision makers, curriculum creators, and policy makers, they have the capabilities to decide which leadership style they will follow at their educational institution. Because they have met with great challenges, this effort should be accompanied with mastering leadership skills that help them achieve the desired outcomes. Fortunately, some higher educational institutions are undergoing significant changes in leadership philosophy and in the way they are exploring professional development for effectiveness. In fact, I've witnessed some effort of educational institutions to create community college leadership programs to introduce new leadership styles, which include EI skills.

This chapter presents a discussion of EI and its relationship to the lived experiences of community college leaders, including what role these leaders chose to use in their profession, as interpreted from the qualitative data using Hycner's (1999) method. This discussion is presented in five sections. The first section reviews the findings that address my research questions. The second section links the analysis and interpretations to the literature which was used as a theoretical basis of this study. The third section includes a summary, while the fourth section suggests recommendations for practitioners of further research. The final section brings the discussion to a conclusion in a practitioner's reflection.

Review of Findings

This research study started with three questions designed to examine the processes and outcomes of the implementation of EI skills: (a) Are community college leaders aware of the theory of EI? (b) Do community college leaders practice EI in their professional leadership experience?, and (c) If community college leaders are not implementing the skills and values incorporated within EI, what skills and values are they using and to what leadership theories do they relate? Nine separate interviews were conducted to understand community college leaders' lived experiences in their leadership role at community colleges, and to discern whether they implemented EI skills during their lived professional role. If they did not, the interviews were designed to discover what skills they used and what theories they related to. The data were collected and coded to tell the story of the lived experiences of community college leaders. Those experiences told several stories worth examining, but I maintained a focus on my initial research questions. The following paragraphs will present the findings relating to the three questions.

Awareness and Practice of Emotional Intelligence

I sifted through the data from my interviews with nine leaders in order to answer the first two research questions: (1) Are community college leaders aware of the theory of EI?, and (2) Do community college leaders practice EI in their professional leadership experience? I expected to hear that the leaders understood EI skills, and I also expected to hear that they applied one or two of the EI skills because I assumed that by attending the community college leadership program they were seeking improvement in terms of performance and professionalism. However, much of the qualitative data provided evidence to the contrary.

At first glance, the data showed evidence of EI in action. Two of nine participants knowingly applied some EI skills in their leadership roles: Participant 1 focused on self-awareness and explained why he implemented EI skills; Participant 3 focused on relationship management, and discussed the importance of this skill and the possibilities of creating a program to fully understand relationship management and be able to implement related skills.

Another participant was clearly aware of EI theory and claimed that EI skills were the key to success in any leadership role. She had read about the four dimensions of EI in *Primal Leadership* (Goleman, Boyantzis, & McKee, 2002): self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. She specifically focused on relationship management, which helped her develop positive relationships among her team members. To improve her EI skills, she brought in an inspirational book called *Simple Truths* and DVDs to build a program around this area at the college where she serves for self-improvement in this area, and to help others improve as well.

One of the participants, without naming it directly, also implemented self-awareness, illustrated as he provided examples of dealing with his new boss (a woman), trying to

understand her (his boss) feelings and perspectives, and controlling his emotions by choosing not to create tension with her. He clearly mentioned that his boss was unable to understand where he was coming from and that she failed to manage her own emotions, although he tried to avoid being "sucked in to" her personal drama. This participant knew that if he had to argue with her, they would create a hostile environment where they wouldn't be able to work together harmoniously. Therefore, he managed his own emotions by understanding her feelings. This participant also made a point of including everyone involved in the process, by getting feedback from everybody because it helped him collect data about the issue and have a clear vision, consequently making a better decision. This participant, without an explicit awareness, applied EI skills because he tried to understand others' feeling and manage his feelings during conflict. The data showed that he was considerate about how others felt, because he respected and valued others even during disagreement.

The few participants who implemented EI skills in their professional leadership roles— whether intentionally or not— reportedly implemented skills that included managing human relations, analyzing and understanding others, controlling emotions, resolving conflicts, and inspiring motivation and collaboration. These implemented skills seemed to work well as they stated an improvement in controlling self emotions, and avoiding conflict escalations.

Most prevalently, however, leaders lacked the knowledge of the theory and the skills of EI. In fact, two participants failed to mention EI at all. Those that did recognize EI claimed to have just read a few articles about the EI theory, but clearly did not fully understand the EI theory. Because they didn't understand the theory, they were unaware or unequipped to fully utilize EI skills.

In summary, most participants did not fully understand the definition of the EI theory and skills. When I asked participants if they were familiar with EI theory and skills, some of them answered that they did not know how to define the theory even though they had read about the approach; they reported believing, however, that EI was a good theory to apply. Still, their self-disclosed experiences showed that employing EI theory in their daily professional lives was a challenge. Only a few participants were aware of the EI theory from their community college leadership program and had implemented some of the skills related to EI in their leadership role.

Skills and Values Leaders Implemented

Core Theme Two answered my third research question: If community college leaders are not implementing the skills and values incorporated within EI, what skills and values are they using and to what leadership theories do they relate? Core Theme Two provided important information regarding the philosophies that participants have adopted outside the EI skills, which affected the skills they implemented in day-to-day practice, particularly in terms of their responsibilities and actions. This theme illustrated that participants most often adopted a blend of various leadership philosophies, values, and approaches based on their knowledge and experience. Some participants focused on adopting different philosophies and different leadership models based solely on the situation with which they were dealing. The leadership styles reported in this study do not necessarily relate to each other, because each style has its own specific characteristics.

Most participants declared that they follow the servant leadership model; however, it was shown from the data that they were following what they *envisioned* to be servant leadership, not necessarily following the true theory of servant leadership. From the examples that

they provided of their lived experiences, it was clear that the definition of *servant leadership* is actually quite different from what they practiced. For example, in servant leadership, to be a leader you have to put the needs of the people first (Greenleaf, 1991), while I noticed that participants put the mission and the policy of the college first, as they said they could not be inclusive, they could not please others, and they were not at the institution to make friends. Additionally, participants dealt with colleagues with whom they were in disagreement in a way that is different from what Greenleaf expressed. For example, most participants dealt with angry colleagues, colleagues who had different views and opinions, colleagues who tried to gossip, who wanted to see them fail, and with individuals who were competitive. This kind of environment showed that the implementation of servant leadership is not pervasive, because servant leadership strives to create environments where individuals work together, help each other improve, and are there to serve each other and the college.

Applying a specific leadership model or style is not a requirement to be a leader within community colleges, so many leaders reportedly did not care what model they acquired so long as they were able to follow the college policies and values and to solve problems that faced them based on the college policies. This was clear in the way they dealt with conflicts among colleagues who operated differently, and when making a decision while others were opposed to their decision, as they stated that they are there to serve the institution and not to please others who are in disagreement. Participant leaders followed the technical skills that they had acquired through years of experience at the college, and added to that their knowledge and implementation of the mission and policies of the college. Their years of experience fully understanding the system of values and purpose at their community college most often informed how they dealt with daily challenges and colleagues. In every environment,

leaders face colleagues who operate differently, and who disagree with others on specific matters. The key to success here among leaders was to be able to deal properly with these differences, to be able to handle personnel, and to create a balance between colleagues in order to reduce conflicts. Conflict among colleagues creates a hostile environment where people have negative attitudes, which affects performance and productivity. Although most of the leaders expressed a desire to acquire skills related to specific areas such as servant leadership, or situational leadership, to improve their leadership qualities, they were unable to authentically implement these skills. What served as a navigational tool for these participant leaders, however, was a strong adherence to any leadership strategies that helped them enact the values and mission of the institution.

Relating Findings to the Research Literature

In Chapter Two I reviewed literature addressing the context and rationale for my research on the community college leaders in terms of knowing the EI theory and applying the skills related to the theory. The following contains two sections: the first section examines my findings according to the literature, and the second section discusses my findings to the recent studies in EI skills and emotional leadership.

Comparing Findings to the Literature

Participants defined varieties of leadership styles that they had learned when attending their community college leadership program. Two primary leadership styles were identified in the data: servant leadership and situational leadership. According to the literature, situational leadership style indicates that good leaders are the ones who are able to adopt different leadership styles based on the situation or the current issues with which they are dealing. While servant leadership style indicates that leaders devote themselves to serve peo-

ple with whom they work (Greenleaf, 1996), the data concluded that community college leaders focused instead on following the mission and the policy of the institution. In their implementation, leaders claimed that they were attracted to these theories and skills, but when dealing with conflicts, and making decisions, the practice showed that they just followed the mission statement and the policy regardless of pleasing others because their purpose for being at the institution was to serve the institution, not to make friends.

Furthermore, according to Goleman, EI includes a variety of areas which boost relationships, enhance stability, performance, and create a balance between life and work. A leader has to have EI skills to align personal and organizational goals. EI skills help leaders create an environment where each person wants to be accountable for better performance. So EI skills, according to Goleman (1998), help focus individuals on a few great performance factors such as developing in each person the desire to be responsible for self-performance, energizing to develop individual capability and competence, and creating an atmosphere in the organization that challenges every person to continually learn.

According to the literature, EI is a combination of competencies. These skills contribute to a person's ability to manage and monitor his or her own emotions, to correctly gauge the emotional state of others and to influence opinions (Caudron, 1999; Goleman, 1998). According to the findings, one participant applied this skill of managing and monitoring his emotions when he dealt with a difficult boss. When he dealt with his boss, he used self management techniques to avoid conflict with this person. This technique helped him keep his emotions under control when he dealt with a person he described to be rude. Self-management or self-regulation is the ability to keep disruptive emotions and impulses in check (self-control), maintain standards of honesty and integrity (trustworthiness), take

responsibility for one's performance (conscientiousness), handle change (adaptability), and be comfortable with novel ideas and approaches (innovation). Using these EI skills clearly helped this participant leader keep a balanced relationship with his boss (Caudron, 1999; Goleman, 1998).

Participant 1 claimed that he learned quite a bit when he dealt with colleagues with whom he did not agree. He asked questions about their feelings, like "Tell me how you feel," "Tell me how this makes you feel," or "If we were to implement this solution, what would that mean for you and your department?" These prompts are indicative of the EI skills, when a person listens to others' concerns, and becomes aware of one's own and other's emotions. He also wrote down concerns when he dealt with those he did not agree with in order to have a better understanding of the person's emotions and issues and to avoid rushing into a judgment.

Goleman (1998) defined *EI* in terms of a person's self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control, commitment and integrity, and a person's ability to communicate, influence, initiate change and accept change (Goleman, 1998). Studies have shown that EI impacts a leader's ability to be effective (Goleman, 1998). Three of the most important decision making aspects of EI are self-awareness, communication and influence. For example, some leaders used the assessment tools to know the self weaknesses and strengths. This, according to Goleman, is part of the self-awareness or the ability to recognize a feeling as it happens, to accurately perform self-assessments and have self-confidence. This self-awareness is the keystone of EI (Goleman, 1995). According to the data, a few leaders clearly applied some of the EI skills. The participants took tests such as the Strength Quest and Myers-Briggs to better recognize their strengths and weaknesses. One participant claimed that she discovered

that she is a feeler, and as a feeler she has the ability to manage her emotions. Knowing themselves better helped them acknowledge their weaknesses, which consequently aided in improvement.

Managers who do not develop their EI have difficulty in building good relationships with peers, subordinates, superiors and clients (Goleman, 1998).Most of the participants in my study, unfortunately, do not apply EI skills in their leadership role. According to Goleman, each area has its own set of behavioral attributes: self-awareness, self-management, motivation, empathy, and social skills. If these skills were fully understood and implemented, leaders would have performed in a different way than they reportedly performed. In fact, most of these skills were not well known among these nine participants. For example, in a situation where a leader lost her temper over a failure of an employee to complete her job on time, the end result of this action was a resignation by the employee. The leader's action and reaction showed an interest of finishing the job, regardless of the employee's concerns. This individual was not valued, while EI skills seek to value individuals and get them to understand that they are an important part of the process. EI skills work by influencing relationships between colleagues. If the skills of EI were implemented, we would have leaders who deal with colleagues more empathetically, by being aware of their needs, perspectives, feelings, concerns, sensing the developmental needs of others (Goleman, 1998).

Also, in situations where leaders had to deal with conflicts, participants returned to the mission statement and the values of the institution, which focused more on serving the institution. For example, one situation where a leader had to make a decision to lay off five full-time faculty members, even though these employees had been serving the institution for a long period of time, the mission statement required that the decision be based on the

economic crisis. These employees were laid off regardless of the financial hardship these employees might have to face. When using EI skills in situations like this, when individuals are valued, leaders concern the needs of those individuals, and find a better way to deal with the situation.

Other examples were illustrated when leaders faced decisions to add a course or keep a center operating for the benefit of the students. Some colleagues opposed the decision, and the result was for the leader to use many different techniques to prove that the decision was right. In this situation, if EI skills had been implemented, the situation would have been solved in a different way, and leaders wouldn't have to deal with each other using the power of authority. According to Goleman (1998), when social skills are employed, situations are solved differently: Social skills are fundamental to EI. They include the ability to be effective, they listen openly and send convincing messages, they inspire and guide groups and individuals, work with others toward a shared goal, and create group synergy in pursuing collective goals.

In another example where a colleague was not performing as needed, the leader asked the colleague to have a better attitude and offered to help change the attitude. If EI skills had been implemented, the situation would be solved using motivational techniques. According to Goleman, motivation is the emotional tendency to achieve goals. EI skills consists commitment, initiative, and optimism (Goleman, 1998).

Recent Studies in Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Leadership

Advocates of EI have claimed that EI skills are essential in almost every area of life. In fact, researchers have suggested that EI skills improve personal and professional performance. The literature review revealed that most researchers focused on leadership and EI

skills at work places in general while few studies have been done that are relevant to the area of community college leaders and EI skills implementation. Therefore, there is a need for research that improves the performance of community college leaders through the use of EI skills.

I found that most of the research related to EI focused on defining the EI theory and implementing EI skills at work and in life in general, which is not yet related directly to community college leaders. For example, according to Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2004), people with strong EI skills can better perceive, understand, use, and manage emotions. They tend to be better in verbal and social intelligence; they also tend to be more open and agreeable than others and tend to avoid engaging in self-destructive and negative behavior. Research using MSCEIT, an EI test, claims that EI skills are important for interpersonal interaction. According to Lopes et al. (2004), who used MSCEIT to measure EI skills among college students, the students who scored higher on the MSCEIT (high in EI skills) reported greater success in their social interactions. Also, according to Salovey and Grewal (2005), a sample of employees of a Fortune 500 insurance company completed the MSCEIT. Employees with higher scores on MSCEIT were rated by their colleagues as easier to deal with because they are capable of creating a positive work environment, they are interpersonally sensitive, more tolerant of stress, more sociable, and have a greater potential for leadership. To further prove that EI skills improve the workplace environment, Vitello-Cicciu (2001) administered the MSCEIT to 50 managers, interviewing 14 in depth. Eleven of those subjects scored high because they perceive emotions and use them as signals in self-understanding and management, showing an understanding of what to do to help keep people working as a

team. According to Lopes, Grewal, Kadis, Gall, and Salovey (in press), their study offers evidence that EI skills play an important role in career success.

Nelson and Low (2003) define EI as the ability to think constructively and behave wisely. Emotionally intelligent behavior is characterized by what we have long called *wisdom*. A wise person is much more than an intelligent person. An intelligent person may possess an extensive vocabulary, exquisite logical reasoning skills, and exceptional abilities and knowledge in areas of science and mathematics and still not be wise or effective in behavior. EI is similar to wisdom in that it links and harmonizes thoughts and feelings into intentional and effective behavior. This wisdom is marked by the ability to make good judgments based on experience. Understanding emotional experience and developing the ability to improve the emotional mind as well as the cognitive mind is essential to developing EI.

Additionally, according to Goleman (1998), mastering leadership skills can be achieved by implementing EI skills that affect performance. Goleman defined in his book, *Working with EI*, a theory of performance and set guidelines for achieving excellent performance at the work place. He claims that EI skills are the main ingredients of excellent performance and outstanding leaders. By understanding the importance of employing EI skills, leaders will construct working and learning environments that allow everyone to improve and succeed. Williams (1994) also argues that there is a relationship among EI skills strength in leaders, the performance of the organization, and the overall climate of the workplace environment.

Several researchers provided recommendations for future research that relates to EI leadership, though their recommendations don’t consider the community college leaders. For example: Salovey and Mayer recommended that for better understanding of the connection

between EI and leadership, researchers might study self-emotions—the regulation, adaptation, and identification of emotions through the use of a conventional scale. Also, researchers might need to examine the role EI plays in enhancing relationships and in maintaining effective social behavior (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Lopes et al. (2004) recommended more research on the validity of EI, consistency of EI as a theory, and the effect of EI skills training on social relationships. Mayer and Geher (1996) recommended creating training programs to educate individuals acquiring EI skills to help them grow in the interpersonal relation area (Mayer & Geher, 1996). Other researchers recommended training programs to help individuals acquire EI skills to better succeed in different areas of life.

The Skills that Leaders Implement

When we study the literature we find that the term *leadership* has been defined in many different ways. Gardner (2007) claims that there is no exact study of leadership, though he defines leadership as the product of bringing people and goals together for a common cause. While Max DePree (2004) says that leadership tends to liberate people to do what is required of them in the most effective and humane way possible. Stephen Covey defines leadership in a different way, stating that leadership tends to improve the standard of living and the quality of life for all individuals.

According to Greenleaf (1991), and as Covey (1997) stated, servant leadership addresses important concepts such as leaders tend to support and empower others they lead, leaders encourage collaboration that is based on trust, and leaders are committed to the personal growth of individuals. Greenleaf (1991) expressed that a servant leader is the one who serves others and empowers them rather them dominates and dictates what to do. The leadership skills that leaders claimed to subscribe to were in conflict with the basic positions

identified in the analysis— that leadership is simply holding the goals of the institution in one hand and the people of the institution in the other.

I believe that because community college leaders have a noble mission, they should seek to implement the skills that help them create, nurture, and place community colleges in a strategic position for further prominence in higher education. As findings took me into a different direction of what this study was intending to explore, literature from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) states that community college leaders should hold certain traits that are found in effective community college leaders. Effective community college leaders must know the skills and qualities that involve the community college values and mission statement. Effective leaders must have the knowledge of communication and educational technology and a clear understanding of how these technologies must be applied to achieve the community college mission. The community college leader must be able to assess the educational, economic, political, and social implications of emerging technological alternatives. This knowledge requires community college leaders to have the skills that evolve around the community college mission and culture. According to the AACC, the following list serves to illustrate the point that effective community college leaders should acquire certain skills and that most of these can be learned and developed, such as vision, integrity, confidence, courage, technical knowledge, collaboration, persistence, good judgment, and a desire to lead. Furthermore, according to AACC, for Community College Leaders to be competent, they should have skills such: Organizational Strategy, resource management, communication collaboration, community college advocacy, professionalism. Leaders who acquire the skills recommended by AACC have succeeded in terms of achieving institutional goals while leaders who acquire skills like EI prove to have a better relationship among

colleagues. In terms of managing relationships, Goleman (1995) discussed that implementing EI skills helped in situations like handling stress, understanding others' emotions, controlling emotions, and being optimistic. These qualities help create a positive atmosphere among colleagues. And because leaders have to deal with colleagues who have different opinions and leadership styles, they have to have the knowledge that helps them reduce conflicts, especially when making decisions.

An effective community college leader implements the skills that help improve the quality of the institution, promote the success of all students based on knowledge of the organization, including the environment to fulfill the mission, vision, and goals of the community college. Community college leaders focus on the implementation of specific skills such as communication and collaboration in varieties of situations such as decision making and conflict resolution among colleagues. The collaboration skills were used to share information regarding issues, like adding a program or laying off staff member, to show, prove, and convince colleagues that their decision is the right one because they believe that the decision is being made for the benefit of the students and the institution.

Leaders dealt with challenges such as conflict resolution and decision making in a different way than it is defined in the EI literature for leaders. Core Theme Two consisted of examples and descriptions of the participants' experiences during their professional role as leaders, often detailing situations where participants had to deal with unhappy colleagues, competition, and conflicts. Such situations included a dean who had to offer a new course, a leader who had to lay off full-time staff members, and other leaders who worked to keep a student center operating at the same place. While making these decisions, participants usually faced colleagues who opposed their decisions, and the result was unhappy colleagues. The

problem is not to deal with colleagues who have different opinions, or who operate differently; the problem is really about the lack of skills that prevent these leaders from establishing a healthy debate among leaders. Even though decisions must to be made based on applying the mission and the policy of the college, leaders who implement EI skills that help them achieve a balanced relationship with colleagues, experience reduced conflicts, anger, and unhappiness among colleagues.

Furthermore, leaders demonstrated in their descriptions that some of the values they submit to were collaboration, integrity, communication, and commitment. The skills that leaders have used in facing challenges, resolving conflicts, and making decisions were developed through merging the values, the mission and the policy of the institution. Specifically, when leaders made decisions, they were faced with colleagues who opposed their decision without providing a rationale behind their opposition. Leaders in this case went ahead and made the decision without considering unhappy colleagues. They claimed that the rationale behind making the decision regardless of having unhappy colleagues was because their mission at the institution was primarily to serve the students and the college. They stated that their responsibility was to do the job, and to be committed to the institution. Even though leaders stated that they have the knowledge of a variety of approaches and skills, they still use specific skills that help master their role around applying the mission of the institution.

The Desire to Learn EI Skills

Although most participants have not yet fully understood EI theory and skills, and were not aware of the implementations of the EI skills, they showed the need to learn skills that match the EI theory premise. For example, leaders showed the need to obtain skills that help them manage their own feelings and the feelings of others to avoid the escalation of

conflict. EI skills—focusing on empathy when communicating with others, having self-management or self-regulation in order to keep disruptive emotions and impulses under control, maintaining standards of honesty and integrity among colleagues, taking responsibility for one's performance, handling change, and being comfortable with different perspectives—are exemplary possibilities for helping leaders solve the issues they most want help solving.

More specifically, one consistent desire among leaders is to learn effective communication skills that help them control anger escalation during conversations with colleagues. It is expressed in the literature that communication skills should be used primarily to help leaders connect with people in order to inspire and motivate them. The application of the EI approach to communication might help many leaders sidestep difficult issues with escalation.

Other participants talked about the desire to build teamwork because they believed that EI leadership theories regarding teamwork focus on encouraging participation and providing a safe environment where colleagues can express their opinions openly without any fear of judgment or rejection.

Others leaders expressed a need to more skillfully manage their own feelings as well as others in conflicted situations. Some EI skills, like empathy when communicating with others, would help encourage a more friendly environment where individuals feel safe. According to Goleman (1995), EI leaders show responsibilities, can handle stress, are aware of their emotions and those of others, are able to understand others, do not get angry easily, and are optimistic. With these abilities leaders can contribute positively to groups and institutions and sustain a balanced relationship with others on a daily basis.

Several leaders expressed the desire to build a team, focusing on encouraging participation and providing a safe environment where colleagues can express their opinion openly without any fear of judgment or rejections. These desires clearly indicate a desire to apply EI skills in their daily practice, even though they still have to align with the mission and the policy of the institution.

Summary

Throughout this study, I analyzed the outcomes to explore each participant's use of EI skills in their professional role. A significant finding in response to the interview questions is that most of the leaders aligned their knowledge with the desire to continue to serve the community college and follow the system, including the mission statement and values. This was explained by how community college leaders viewed themselves, their role in the college environment, their values and philosophies, and the skills they used to deal with daily challenges and conflicts. Following the mission statement and applying the values of the institution they belong to was the most important governing concept during their practice. In fact, the participants often reassured me that *their* values naturally match the values of the institution they serve.

Leaders showed that they have knowledge about important leadership approaches and philosophies. Some of the leaders were able to define servant leadership skills and situational skills, and a few of them were able to define EI skills. Leaders demonstrated, however, accountability to and for the institution alone. Through the participants' examples, I noticed that they were committed first and foremost to serving the college and the students. The data illustrate that leaders, despite what some may have reported, most readily considered the val-

ues and the mission statement of the institution when making important decisions or dealing with conflicts.

According to Goleman, McKee, and Boyatzis (2005), EI skills lead to building an emotionally intelligent organization because EI leaders tend to inspire, motivate, and foster commitment among individuals. They lead by creating resonance at work. Resonance helps guide emotions to a positive direction which helps empower people to reach a higher level of performance, while negative emotions lead to dissonance, which leads to an unharmonious working relationship, which undermines people's potentials. Emotionally intelligent leaders know how to handle their emotions and the emotions of others, which fosters a positive working relationship among colleagues. On the other side, emotional conflict tends to impede a team's performance. The strength of an emotionally resonant leader allows people to collaborate with each other even in the face of conflict and uncertainty. A leader's attitude reinforces synchrony within their team and within the organization.

Leaders implement the skills that evolve from the values and the mission of the institution. Some of the skills they focused on implementing in their leadership role were communication, collaboration, integrity, accountability, and being committed to serve the students' and the institution's needs. These skills helped leaders succeed in achieving institutional goals, but it didn't help them achieve a prosperous relationship among colleagues.

Recommendations for Practice and Research

The data that emerged from this study became the source for recommendations to implement various features of EI skills among community college leaders. Even though community college leaders are aware of the mission and the values of the institutions where they serve, and they show honesty and commitment towards the college they serve, it is still good

to acquire the skills that help them have happy colleagues where everyone feels involved in the learning and the decision making process, and where conflicts are reduced. Goleman (1995) stated that a leader with EI skills has the ability to maintain self-awareness, to balance life and work, to build positive relationships with colleagues, to encourage participation, to motivate others, and to help create an environment where everyone can improve and succeed. All these could be achieved through the application of the five competencies in leaders' professional roles: awareness, empathy, regulation, motivation, and social skills. These skills assist leaders in having better human interactions. In the next section, I offer recommendations toward increasing effectiveness of practice and further research.

Recommendations for Leadership Practice

It is interesting to me that the traditional community college leadership setting could be easily characterized as lacking when it comes to relationship management among colleagues. I, therefore, feel compelled to provide my recommendations for improved practice. Leaders must learn the EI skills that help them develop stronger relationships among colleagues. The purpose of learning these skills is to have better collaboration among colleagues, which leads to including others in the decision making process where they feel included in the process, maintaining a healthier environment, better performance, increased productivity, and happier colleagues. Leaders face a number of daily challenges, especially when dealing with people who are different or difficult. As leaders stated in their interviews, most of the conflict they faced was due to people who oppose their decisions without providing a convincing reason. This forced leaders to go ahead and make the decision anyway in spite of opposition, to serve the institution. The following three recommendations will help leaders to overcome these challenges:

1. Read books and articles that relate to EI skills in order to have a better understanding of the subject.
2. Develop programs that help acquire the EI skills.
3. Attend workshops that help improve these skills.

These recommendations are just some of the ways that the community college leaders could improve their practice and reduce conflicts among colleagues to ultimately help with better performance and more productivity.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings for my study indicate a need for further research. The following are six specific recommendations:

- There is a need for more qualitative studies on the implementation of EI among community college leaders. Such studies would add to the existing knowledge of the impact of EI skills on community college leaders.
- There is a need for extension studies covering the effect of EI skills to build positive relationships with colleagues, to encourage participation, to motivate others, and to help create a happy environment.
- There is a need to have further study to help community college leaders maintain or create a balance between life and work.
- There is a need for more qualitative studies on community college leaders to help them merge the implementation of the mission and the values of the college along with EI skills.
- There is a need for well documented research on community college leaders to better understand their experience and to consider new and better ways of overcoming conflicts

among colleagues.

- There is a need for further study to help community college leaders realize the advantage of implementing EI skills to improve performance.

Practitioner's Reflection

The most rewarding part of the study for me was having the chance to talk to and learn from the participants about their rich lived experiences. The lessons I have learned from the participants were invaluable. From their stories I have gained a better understanding of how challenging it is to be a leader at a community college. I listened through their voices to the need to create an environment where competition, disagreement, and conflict, could be resolved in a more productive way, creating an environment where everyone is happy. The stories of these nine community college leaders have inspired me to confirm that EI skills are the skills that help create an environment where everyone is motivated.

Conclusion

Daniel Goleman's (2003) argument is that effective leaders are distinguished not only by their technical knowledge, but also by their use of EI skills. He claims that a leader with EI skills has a higher probability of succeeding. In fact, leaders who employed EI skills showed a greater effectiveness to coach their staff.

My study adds to that argument by looking closely into the lived experiences of nine experienced community college leaders. Community college leaders, in this study, have shown that (1) their job is extremely challenging, (2) they have wide gaps between performance and potential, (3) they have difficulties transforming their leadership style, and (4) they require a number of emotional competencies to reach influential levels. They are confused between being a community college leader who carries multiple responsibilities and

having to make decisions and face challenging situations, with deadlines, while simultaneously being a leader who has to create an environment where everyone is pleased. A community college leader needs to be able to decide which approach to use in a certain condition, what kind of skill to utilize, and determine how effective they can or should be. This is why their ability sometimes is limited to the use of the institutional policy. Community colleges sometimes require community college leaders to adjust to the expectation of the college. This attitude presents a challenge to leaders because they have to bring in values that match the college values in order to match the college expectations. Leaders will face problems in dealing with each other in a heterogeneous team, where each one has specific responsibilities and challenges, and deadlines. Such an environment needs creative leaders who are able to utilize the skills that help them understand others who have different opinions.

EI skills in such an environment help leaders find a common ground that can build an effective team who handles daily challenges and makes daily decisions without creating hostility among colleagues. Relationship Management helps leaders maintain an emotional understanding while dealing with others. These emotional understandings help them have better communication skills, manage conflict, resolve disagreements, and cultivate team effectiveness.

The emphasis at community colleges is currently focused mainly on technical skills in evaluating their staff and leaders. A leader's responsibility is to get the work done, despite their inability to work with colleagues. My research showed that, in the workplace, participants who kept in mind their roles as leaders and provided understanding of others' emotions and empathy had fewer conflicts than others. They were able to set some kind of cultural,

interpersonal interaction away from the drama. Therefore, leaders' with EI skills affect their teams' emotions and behaviors.

Research and practice clearly demonstrate that EI can be learned. It is important for leaders to understand that building one's EI will not happen without desire and effort. However, to be effective, community colleges must also enhance EI; they must create training programs to help leaders break undesired habits and establish effective ones. The process is not easy; learning a new way of being takes time and commitment. Still, the outcome and the benefits of learning and applying EI skills are well worth the effort.

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